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# Mad About March Madness

## March Madness By The Numbers — NCAA-style

**Number of teams in NCAA men's basketball tournament:** 65

**Number of Americans with Internet access at work:** 79.1 million

**Number of employees who will check tournament-related sites at work:** 22.9 million

**Estimated cost of lost productivity for first two days of the tournament:** \$260 million

**Estimated cost of lost productivity for the entire tournament:** \$1.2 billion

**Estimated amount of money wagered on tournament:** \$2.5 billion

**Odds of picking the perfect bracket:** 1 in 9.2 quintillion!!!

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, MSNBC.com



It's that time of year — March Madness! Depending on your specific job responsibilities, March Madness means totally different things to different people.

Sports fans equate March Madness with the excitement of the Big Dance — the NCAA men's college basketball tournament. But for many growers, March Madness is just another busy month during the year.

But now it's game time! The waiting is over and now it is time for your crops to perform. Which varieties will be your superstars this selling season? What crop will be your MVP — most valuable plant?

### The Cost Of March Madness?

In many "traditional" workplaces, even the most casual sports fan will be surfing the Internet to find out the latest scores or constantly checking the brackets in their office pool to see how their favorite college basketball teams are doing in the NCAA tournament. According to a study done by the Chicago-based human resources consulting firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, more than 79 million workers have Internet access at work, 22.9 million of them will be checking Internet sites and watching streaming video on their computers during the workday to see how they are doing in the office pool or how their alma mater did in the opening round.

Challenger, Gray & Christmas surveyed 100 human resources professionals to find out their companies' views and policies pertaining to the NCAA tournament. The HR consulting firm found that 94 percent of the companies do not consider the productivity loss during the tournament a problem. In fact, 23 percent of the companies plan to embrace their employees' tourney fever and plan special events around it. They will use the tournament as a way to boost morale and promote camaraderie in the workplace. Only 6 percent of the HR directors said their companies planned to actually block Internet access to tournament-related Web sites.

Despite what the survey respondents said, all totaled, Challenger, Gray & Christmas estimates the NCAA tournament could cost employers more than \$1.2 billion in lost productivity by the time the national championship game takes place in Atlanta on April 2.

### Brackets Versus Bracts

My guess is the impact of the NCAA tournament will not be as severe for growers as it is for many other businesses. March is too important of a month for growers. For the rest of the working world it will seem like everyone is hardly working, but most of the people in this business will be working hard!

We all know the greenhouse business is not a "traditional" business. While employees at other businesses will be checking their tournament brackets to see how they are performing, your greenhouse employees will be inspecting the bracts on the plants to see how they are performing.

Mother's Day is just a few short weeks away and everyone is working feverishly to be sure their crops will be ready to ship. Most of your employees probably don't have Internet access while they are on the job, so they won't know who is winning and who is losing. Instead, they will be focused on growing winners in the greenhouse.

Which crop will be your Cinderella at the end of this season? Do you have any bracket buster blossoms in your product offerings? Do you have any dark horses that could perform beyond your wildest expectations?

By now, hopefully you have eliminated the madness from your March and you've made the winning choices that will move your business into the next round.

Let me know how March Madness treated you this year. You can reach me at thodson@sgcmail.com. 