

Keeping Current

While doing our daily jobs and other responsibilities to keep our businesses running smoothly, are we keeping current on what's going on in the industry? You might be thinking that you don't have time or the funds to go to industry meetings, so you find yourself at a crossroad. What will you do?

You need to keep current, plain and simple. Will you take the time to go to some of the meetings or listen in on timely webinars or even read the magazines that come across your desk or email? Or will you stay in your office and send someone else or at least pass on the things that catch your attention? It all depends on your circumstances. Even if you are the owner, it never hurts to sit in on a meeting that applies to spray applications along with your spray applicator person.

MEETING OPPORTUNITIES

Ann and I (Mike) recently attended a meeting put on by Nufarm on June 12-14. This meeting occurs every two years when Nufarm invites key industry leaders in Extension and research for pest control in ornamentals. This time, it took place in Park City, Utah, and attendees came from all over the U.S. For a day and a half, entomologists, plant pathologists and weed scientists along with a few greenhouse/nursery company representatives discussed current problems, regulations, new products and new technology for the ornamental industry. Some of the attendees have been coming for 20 years, while the growers were all new to the meeting. In addition, Nufarm research staff as well as key business team members listened to the discussion, which was free of formal (or even informal) presentations. As usual, there was no real consensus about many of the details since the ornamental industry is so complex.

USE THE INTERNET WISELY

Actually attending meetings can be very expensive and hard to work into production schedules. But there are other ways to keep current. Let's not forget about using the internet as a resource for current information. This is often the best way to hear what is going on with new products, new problems and even new regulations. The only real drawback is understanding what you are reading. Is it unbiased? Is it even accurate? There is absolutely no vetting process for getting virtually anything on the internet you want.

You can start by creating a list of websites that you can trust to be honest and unbiased. This list should definitely include the

industry magazines, such as Greenhouse Product News (www.gpnmag.com). When visiting websites, check to see if they are sponsored by someone. This can lead to lots of unwanted and biased commercials. But as long as you pay attention, you can usually see if they have any real information.

Most of us have smartphones. If you haven't already done so, create a list of favorites. Maybe call it "Resources." Then when you have issues you need to look up, you can call or go to the website and get the right information right from your list. A good resource will have to keep current with what's going on in the industry, otherwise they will lose credibility.

THE VALUE OF UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

Keep in mind that you may have to pay for a lot of the information you find from different resources. Why? Because of the value that information holds. Everything is not free. You are asking for technical information, and that usually comes with a price. If it's free advice you're looking for, keep in mind the resource — are they current?

Webinars are often good resources. When the webinar is archived for future viewing it is especially helpful. Keeping current in our industry is required for some of us such as those who apply pesticides. They have to attend classes (in person and online) every year for their pesticide applicator or other licenses.

A good resource will have to keep current with what's going on in the industry, otherwise they will lose credibility.

If you are an owner, another area to keep current in is your business insurance. As the cost of building materials goes up, make sure you have adequate replacement costs covered; you don't want to be underinsured. Health insurance, taxes, all utilities — keeping current in these areas might let you make adjustments and save money. Actually, if you are the owner, you are probably more focused on these things as they immediately impact your business. As a grower, your main focus is probably just trying to keep the crop irrigated and scheduled to meet a market window.

But remember it is good for everyone to take a break from the day-to-day business to look up and see what is going on. It is necessary and also can rejuvenate you and your employees. [gpnm](http://www.gpnmag.com)



Chase Agricultural Consulting, LLC was formed in 2011 by Ann (A.R.) Chase and Mike Zemke. Ann has more than 35 years experience in research, diagnostics and practical consulting in plant pathology. She has been retired from the University of Florida since 1994 but remains on staff as a Professor Emeritus. Mike holds an Associate of Applied Science in manufacturing drafting and started his education in horticulture when he and Ann were married in 1995. He specializes in communications of all sorts within the industry.