

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

If there is one thing I've learned working in the horticulture industry over the past 13 years, it's been that when it really matters there is no competition and everyone comes together — like family.

I'm sure you're tired of reading about anything coronavirus related. Believe me, I'm tired of writing about it. But there is some positivity in all this. So before I get into anything else, let's start with something truly good!

Each month, I send out a brief, informal survey to our readers — just to pick your brains about a current topic or something relevant to that specific month's editorial features. And your responses are reported in our Chat Room column. It seems this global pandemic has been the ONLY topic on our minds recently. So I had to ask and find out how you and your businesses are coping. As expected, times are tough. But even through it all, I read so many hopeful messages and it was truly uplifting!

One respondent had an inspiring story to share. When asked to provide words of encouragement for her peers, this New York-based grower/florist said, "We send out a weekly e-newsletter. We talked about our beautiful crop of Easter lilies and other Easter plants but all our churches have canceled their orders because they are not holding services. A gentleman called and had read the newsletter. He ordered \$500 worth of the Easter plants and had them delivered to a local nursing home anonymously. He was adamant that no one knows who he was. We were just blown away and grateful!"

Turn to page 10 to read the survey results and see what other growers had to say about the situation.

There is so much support for the industry out there, even from the consumer side. At the professional level, many industry members across the globe are taking part in various movements intended to promote plants and flowers. Have you seen the trending hashtags: #lethopebloom or #buyflowersnottoiletpaper? If not, look them up and see how the floriculture industry is going viral.



In a video posted across social media, West Country Media shows the impact the crisis is having on the demand for flowers — 50% of the flowers at Royal FloraHolland (located in the Netherlands) being thrown away at auction.

A TOAST TO THE FUTURE

We do indeed have even more to celebrate — this month, we officially announce GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2020! This is now our ninth year honoring the young people of our industry, the ones who shape the future of horticulture and are truly dedicated to its success.

I have no doubt these 40 men and women are more than prepared to lift our industry back up, pick up the pieces and not only recover what may have been lost but rejuvenate and elevate it to new levels.

Turn to page 14 to learn about these accomplished and dedicated growers, retailers, academics, researchers and other horticulturists. And join me in a virtual toast in their honor!



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