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Getting in ship shape together

My main thought as we start March and the beginning of shipping season, is simple — good luck. This is what we are all here for; to sell plants.

That's true whether you provide necessary items such as fertilizer, soil, or the plants themselves. Maybe you are the grower. Maybe you sell the containers. Or perhaps you are the retailers that just received their first shipment of beautiful plant material from Oregon.

Regardless of how you fit into this industry, we are all here together for this moment, where we see our hard work being sold to the end customer. Some growers may ship year-round, but for all of us associated with this incredible industry, spring is the busiest time of the year.

I have heard my husband say many times to our buyers, "Your success is my success. When you have a good year, we all have a good year." And it's absolutely the truth. The retailers experience the final "sale" of our product, but their success means that the rest of us have done something right to get to this point. We therefore all succeed with them.

But man! With this time of year comes those crazy hours. It is something I know my crew looks forward to. My family does also.

My kids have come to the same understanding that I had. There will never (and I mean, never) be a spring break vacation trip in our future. But instead of a "vacation," they get to experience a lot of excitement around the nursery during that week off from school. They look forward to it, and I am grateful to have them home to help.

When I was young and in school, I would hear about all the vacations my friends would go on. I also acknowledged and comprehended what was going on at our nursery at that time of year, and how crucial it was to our business. I knew the



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importance of spring then, and am truly living it now.

As exciting as this time of the year can be, it is undoubtedly also the most stressful. I have heard others talk about "how many springs" a person can realistically make it through before it gets to be too much, or they experience burnout. I have heard varying numbers, but let's just say if you have over 15 years of spring craziness under your belt, you are a hero in my book and deserve a gold star.

I have to be honest, though. I love it right now. Every part of it. Without the crazy, we would all be out of a job. So, I am thankful for every early morning, every late night loading trucks by tractor headlights, and every emergency dig so we can get more trees onto trucks. We will see if I feel the same way a decade from now. I sure hope so.

So, as we begin this exciting season, remember I wish all of you the best of luck. From the newbies who are experiencing this for the first time, to the old timers that have "one more spring" in them, and everyone in between. Remember that our success as an industry relies on each other, and we succeed together.

And finally, to those retailers? Go sell the heck out of our plants! ☺

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