IPPS Eastern Region of North America

Sharing Plant Production Knowledge Globally

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Final Thoughts as President of IPPS Eastern Region



As I end my year as the President of IPPS Eastern Region I would just like to say how grateful I am to have had this opportunity. The people that I have worked with have made it all worthwhile! It is why IPPS is such a great organization to belong to!

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank a few people who made my time as President so fulfilling. If it were not for Liz Dunham, I would not be here! Thank you, Liz! A big thank you to Margot Bridgen who has done more behind the scenes work over the past two years than anyone realizes! We should all be giving Margot a big Thank You!!! Shelby French has been a constant presence making sure everything continues to run smoothly! Thanks for all your dedication and time Shelby! Finally, a big thank you to our new Executive Secretary-Treasurer Lynn Lorio, who has jumped in and really has taken on the leadership role of the organization! I am so excited to see how we are going to progress with Lynn on board. She has made such a positive impact in such a short time since joining us!

The same can be said for the nursery owners in the organization. We have been blessed with very loyal supporters in the industry. We need to cultivate the next generation of nursery owners into the organization. The number of nursery members we currently have is such a small fraction of the nurseries that are doing business in the Eastern Region! This begs the question of why? Have we not invited them? We have changed our name to be more inclusive of production but is that really known out there? Have we not made the case for why this is such a valuable organization to belong to? Have we made the process too difficult to join? There has to be a little of all the above going on because at $150 membership there is absolutely no reason every nursery worth their salt should not be a member! This is something I feel we can really improve on in the coming year! But we are going to have to change the way we are doing business.







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As I look back at the last year as President there are a few things that really stand out to me that I would like us all to think about. Times are changing! Looking at the makeup of the organization, a big part of it has always been Professors who taught Propagation and Production classes that we all knew and were always present at the conferences. The group that we have been so lucky to have had over the past 30-40 years are all retiring! Bob Geneve, David Sanford, Brian Maynard, Bob McNeil, Win Dunwell, and last but not least, our next President, Dr. Mark Bridgen. We need to find a way to connect with the next leaders of Horticulture through the Universities that are still teaching Plants, Propagation and Production. So, challenge number one is to target this group and invite the next set of university leaders to our organization!

Botanical Gardens and Arboretums are another underrepresented group in membership. This may be a case of thinking that if you are not the propagator then the organization is not for you! Arboretums and Botanical Gardens seem to be going through an identity crisis lately. Let's make this simple. Arboretums and Botanical Gardens are the repositories for our plant collections. So, any Arboretum or Botanical Garden that has a plant collection and would like to share their knowledge of plants with others are certainly welcome to join IPPS! We all have plants that we are proud of and would like to share with one another.



As we look to the future there are so many things we have to look forward to as an organization. We are in a position now where we have some of the greatest assets to share with the new generation of IPPS members.

Let's take advantage of this opportunity by really putting in the effort of inviting new members into the fold. Let us make it easy and worthwhile to join IPPS.

While this will be my last message as President, I will be back working behind the scenes helping with Membership and Educational opportunities for IPPS members. Thank you again for giving me this opportunity to serve IPPS. It has truly been a rewarding experience!

Steve Foltz
2026 President - IPPS Eastern Region