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Thanks



by MARIA ZAMPINI

I'm happy I chose
a profession full of
such wonderfully
giving, salt-of-the-
earth people who are
willing to contend
with whatever Mother
Nature throws
their way.

Maria Zampini is president of Lake County New Plants LLC, Madison, Ohio. She co-founded the company with her father, Jim Zampini. Their focus is sales and marketing of LCN Selections along with research and development of new plant introductions. She can be reached at maria.zampini@yahoo.com.

Have you ever had one of “those” days that are, well, just one of “those” days? That’s me as I attempt to write something worthwhile for you good folks to read. Just like you, I’m feeling overwhelmed with too much to do and not enough time to do everything. All morning my mind has focused on the negative and not the positive. That is, until I stepped outside for a breather. It’s a glorious, Indian Summer day here in northeast Ohio. I’m looking up at a gorgeous, cerulean blue sky, feeling the sun on my face and admiring the beauty of nature we get to work with and among each and every day. It has simply reminded me how lucky I am not to be looking up at roots!

In this month when we typically gather with family and friends, stuffing ourselves full of turkey until we can barely keep our eyes open to watch football, I feel compelled to count my blessings. I’d like to share just a few of the thing I’m thankful for—including, but not limited to, the following, which appear in no particular order.

I am grateful for the writing opportunities in trade journals and consumer magazines that continue to come my way. Never in a million years did I think writing would be part of my life. I just wish I remembered the name of my freshman English professor at Wilmington College so I could thank her for seeing something in me way back when, even though I didn’t.

I’m happy I chose a profession full of such wonderfully giving, salt-of-the-earth people who are willing to contend with whatever Mother Nature throws their way, and who never give up despite a plethora of continual obstacles (just see Craig Regelbrugge’s article on the labor crisis if you’re in doubt).

I’ve been fortunate to work with many fine associations and have them represent me and my business interests on local (NGLCO), state (ONLA and OLA) and national (ANLA) levels. In my inaugural speech as the first woman president of the ONLA (way back in 2001), I paraphrased President Kennedy. I think what I said then rings just as true today; “Ask not what your associa-

tion can do for you, but what you can do for your association.” I encourage you to get involved!

I am indebted to Facebook. Although I resisted it at first, it has become an invaluable business tool allowing me to connect with others at lightning speed. The relationships I’ve garnered have enabled me to achieve a level I couldn’t have otherwise. On the flip side, I’m happy trade shows are hanging in there. Nothing beats face-to-face communication. There is no other way to see so many customers in such a short time in one spot. I’m still optimistic that the younger generation realizes this fact and actually helps bolster attendance.

I’ve been told that people come into your life when they are meant to. I have gained many new friends and business associates this year. Each have touched me and enriched my life in different ways. My only conclusion is karma: If and when you give off positive light, it comes back at you in return, be it professionally and/or personally. I’d be remiss if I didn’t give a shout out to those friends who stuck through me in the dark times as well!

I recently interviewed Mark Gilson of Gilson Gardens for another article I was writing. He mentioned how he realizes it is up to us to promote our companies in our communities—to create our own grassroots efforts, if you will. I couldn’t agree more. I serve on the Salvation Army Board of Advisors. I’m proud to say that for the second year in a row, Annette Howard (of Gilson’s and the Executive Director of the Nursery Growers of Lake County, Ohio), is organizing volunteers from the NGLCO to man a Red Kettle for a day. What a wonderful way to give back to the community without having to reach into their pocket for dollars to do so! It’s a great chance for them to spread the good word of the green industry and be visible in the local community—kudos!

Of course I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge my family. Each of them does what they can to help me navigate through this increasingly crazy maze called life so I don’t end up in the funny farm. I sincerely appreciate them

but am not sure I always tell them such. So, if I haven't said it lately, "thank you" from the bottom of my heart. If you haven't thanked your loved ones lately, may I suggest there is no time like the present!

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Lastly, as another year is quickly coming to an end, I'd like to take this chance to thank you for allowing me to share my sometimes rambling comments and opinions. I must confess it isn't always easy "laying it on the line" each month. Sometimes I feel like Indiana Jones in The Last Crusade as he takes his step of faith; I'm not sure if what I'm saying is on the mark or out in left field. Then again, maybe that is just a typical writer's insecurity. Hopefully, if nothing else, it is thought-provoking. And we can always agree to disagree on our viewpoints and still work together in harmony. Don't forget, if you have suggested topic, please e-mail it to me at maria.zampini@yahoo.com.

In closing, I wanted to mention that you won't be seeing my column again until 2012. Just like last year, December's issue will be overflowing with new plant introductions you'll surely want to read. When I do appear again, I'll have a new company name and logo due to a rebranding effort. If you want to receive my newsletter, please shoot me an email. Until then, I hope to see you at the trade shows (please stop me and say hello) and I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a new year filled with much happiness, good health and prosperity!

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