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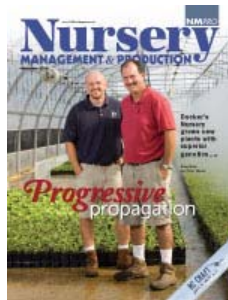
Battling the Down Economy: For Altman's pest control, it's all hands on deck

FEATURES - INSERT

When you spot a pest infestation early, it's easier and less expensive to control.

November 18, 2010

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When you spot a pest infestation early, it's easier and less expensive to control.

Altman Plants has growing facilities in Southern

California, Arizona and Florida, so there is no seasonal down time in the fight against insect pests. The company trains its field workers to be on the lookout for problems as they're going about their regular duties.

"The people out in the fields, whether they're watering or pulling orders or whatever, they're the ones closest to the plants," said grower Stephanie Christensen. "We train them that when they see something, take it to the office or take it to a manager."

While all employees might not be able to refer to each pest by name, each crew leader should be able to identify the most common problems, such as whiteflies, aphids or leaf miners.

"We're in a major agricultural area. We have prevailing winds and we know when farmers are turning over certain material, that's going to drive a migration of pests our way," Christensen said.

The staff members at Altman Plants try to rotate chemical controls between broad-spectrum, knock-down sprays and softer insect growth regulators (IGRs), she said.

Good knock-down products include Mavrik and Decathlon. A common IGR used is Enstar.

Other products in Altman Plants' arsenal are Flagship, Marathon, Safari and

Name: Altman Plants

Founded: 1973 by Deena and Ken Altman.

Locations: More than 880 acres in production in California (San Diego County, Riverside County and Salinas), Florida (Loxahatchee) and Arizona (Phoenix).

Crops: Specialty crops including perennials, succulents, herbs, roses, annuals and holiday potted plants.

Customers: Retailers, including mass market outlets, across the United States.

Did you know?

In 2008 Altman Plants founded the Center for Applied Horticultural Research at the company's Vista, Calif., location. The center is designed to conduct joint research projects with university personnel. The facility features greenhouses, a lab and a conference center. It was designed after the Center for Applied Nursery Research at McCorkle Nurseries in Dearing, Ga.

Quotable:

"Our field employees are our first line of defense in scouting. They may not know exactly what the pest is, but they can spot the problem and bring it to our attention."

— Stephanie Christensen

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"We try to use softer products with the lowest re-entry intervals as possible," Christensen said. "And we try to avoid organophosphates. "

For more: Altman Plants, (760) 744-8191, www.altmanplants.com.



Add a comment:

Altman Plants' employees are instructed to look for outbreaks of whiteflies, especially when neighboring agricultural crops are turned under. Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org

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