

# Ball Ingenuity: Passion for Plants, Passion for Partnerships

By Joan Mazat, Head of New Product Development

If I can speak on behalf of the team behind Ball Ingenuity, I'm proud to say we dare to be different. We absolutely get our kicks launching the weird, wild and wonderful to the plant-loving masses.

When it comes to finding unique exclusives for Ball Seed®, North America's leading horticultural distributor, Ball Ingenuity looks at all the possibilities: on-trend plant categories, new market opportunities, diverse plant classes. Something for just about everyone, inside and out. That's the goal: To live up to the definition of "ingenuity" by fueling the imagination, collaborating to bring innovations to market and identifying customer solutions.

The key to our success is cultivating creativity and working with those breeders with the talent to think outside the box. Be they large or small, breeders who bring their plant to Ball Ingenuity for consideration want to partner with us because they see our passion for new plants.

Let's examine the three main areas Ball Ingenuity focuses on to get a plant from sampled to sold:

**TRIALING.** Through internal and external trial partners, we test all our new plants to understand their production needs, as well as their end-user performance.

**SUPPLY CHAIN.** Working with the Ball Seed supply team of experts,

Ball Ingenuity ensures a sound supply is in place for each plant program we choose to develop. This includes multiple product form options—from seed to vegetative cutting, and even tissue culture.

**SALES & MARKETING.** A successful—and exciting!—product launch is the result of closely working with the marketing and sales departments at Ball Seed. Promotion and visibility is how we achieve market demand.

## Success Story: The Jurassic™ Rex Begonia

In 2006, Gary Crook started PlantSmith Nursery and wanted to grow plants no one else was. He decided his niche would be Rex Begonias. Seeing that they didn't perform well in Oregon, he began his own breeding program for Rexes—selecting for those that would thrive in low light and temperatures.

Enter Ball Ingenuity, who saw the potential in Gary's breeding. Our development team partnered with PlantSmith and helped Jurassic "make dinosaur-sized tracks" in the industry, just as new plant parents created indoor "jungalows" with a resurgence of the houseplant category.

This year, we're launching an exciting, expanded assortment of Jurassic Rex Begonias—the deep-shade and indoor foliage begonias

that continue to thrill plant lovers all over North America. And now, through working with more contributors like Steve Rosenbaum at Steve's Leaves, we have a foliage begonia size made for everyone from large to small. Four years ago, Steve's idea led to the "hatching" of the largest of this expanded begonia group: the Jurassic Megalo™ series. Steve's passion for plants started in his early teens and continues to thrive.

The Jurassic collection is now propagated by tissue culture, meaning through our production partners at Ball Seed we can supply hundreds of thousands of inputs versus the few thousands that kicked off the start of the collaboration. Now, there are enquiries for global potential for this amazing program and we (plus, PlantSmith and Steve's Leaves) can't be more pleased.

Well, that's not true. We certainly can be "more pleased" because Ball Ingenuity commits to this type of partnership with each plant submitted for our review, from plants in the tropical category—like Philodendron Shangri-La, which modernizes the popular split-leaf with more elegance and a designer habit—to

specialty garden items, like the stunning patio Hydrangea Kanmara® that radiates glamour with its large, majestic blooms.

I'm proud to be joined by an equally passionate team ready to color the world with their unique contributions to launch success. Jesus Benitez and his research and development colleagues get to know these plants intimately and develop full culture guides for customer education. Kelsey Minalga tests the plants' limits through sampling programs and trials with just the right industry influencers. All the while, Stephan Lovelace is building supply and availability through the best-possible channels at Ball Seed.

So the question is: How can Ball Ingenuity help you?

You can start the conversation by meeting us in-person at Cultivate'22 at Booth 3146. Kelsey and I will be there showing off our latest introductions and connecting with more potential superstars. Reserve your appointment with us at [www.ballingenuity.com/meeting](http://www.ballingenuity.com/meeting).

We can't wait to explore the next big thing with you.



From left to right: Kelsey Minalga, Stephan Lovelace, Joan Mazat and Jesus Benitez.



Jurassic Jr. Rex Begonia

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