

Our Poinsettia Connection:

THE DAY ECKE RANCH CALLED

A Vision. A Need. A Solution.

It's no secret that poinsettias hold a special place in our hearts here at Oasis Grower Solutions. Around the world, these beloved plants are synonymous with holiday celebrations and Christmas cheer. But that wasn't always the case.

It took "Mr. Poinsettia" Paul Ecke, Sr. to leverage a revolutionary grafting technology and turn poinsettias into an enduring tradition. The story could have ended with California's Ecke Ranch, but it didn't. We're very grateful we had a hand in helping the Eckes make poinsettias what they are today.



V.L. Smithers had a vision.

Smithers-Oasis, the parent company of Oasis Grower Solutions, was founded in 1954. That's the year that Vernon "V.L." Smithers revolutionized the floral industry with the creation of OASIS® Floral Foam.

Even in those early years, V.L. envisioned a foam growing media that could help elevate plant growers to greater success. But it wasn't until 1969 that we introduced our first propagation media for commercial greenhouse growers. It was called OASIS® O-903 Rooting Blocks.

That single product launched what's now known, nearly 55 years later, as Oasis Grower Solutions. The new foam propagation media offered stable pH, higher yields and uniform growth. Commercial greenhouse growers took note.



Ecke Ranch had a need.

Paul Ecke, Jr. was one of the growers who zeroed in on the new OASIS® propagation media. By the early 1970s, Ecke Ranch was the largest poinsettia supplier in the United States — probably the world.

But while Paul Ecke, Sr. had focused on selling mother plants to growers, his son saw a new opportunity. Paul Ecke, Jr. saw the future. He urged his father to sell growers poinsettia cuttings instead.

With rapid advances in jet air freight, the Eckes could ship their famed poinsettia cuttings to growers everywhere. In turn, those growers could get mature poinsettias to market more efficiently and profitably than ever before.

But one hurdle stood in the way: Paul Ecke, Jr. didn't have a rooting media he could trust to ship worldwide and stay intact. That's when he reached out to us to develop the media he needed to accomplish the task.

Oasis Grower Solutions had a solution.

When Ecke called, our team at Smithers-Oasis was already focused on solutions to meet growers' needs. The team rose to the challenge and started innovating. We developed a new foam substrate formula that allowed Ecke poinsettia cuttings to ship anywhere demand and duty called.

Young plants from Ecke Ranch began shipping in the new OASIS® ROOTCUBES® Growing Medium to poinsettia growers everywhere. Other commercial growers paid attention and followed Ecke's lead. Soon OASIS® ROOTCUBES® developed a loyal following.

In the mid-1980s, we built our first research greenhouse at our Kent, Ohio campus. That facility laid the foundation for our Oasis Grower Solutions Research, Innovation & Development (RI&D) facility, built 10 years ago. It's where new generations of engineered foam substrate, like our new OASIS® RhizoPlug™ products, and other grower-driven innovations are born.

In the years since Ecke Ranch called and Oasis Grower Solutions answered, we've remained dedicated to inventing solutions that solve real-world problems for our customers. Leading poinsettia breeders and young plant growers worldwide still rely on OASIS® media for success. But our commitment to growers extends far beyond poinsettias.

Whatever your crop, whatever your hurdle, we have a solution – or we're ready to listen to your wish list. It just may spur something entirely new.

We're Oasis Grower Solutions. Propagating Innovation. It's what we do.