



Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

SPECIAL ISSUE

Jim Robbins
Extension Specialist -
Ornamental
Horticulture

Jim's Corner

Jim Robbins and Ron Rainey

We are pleased to announce the Cooperative Extension Service and Arkansas Agriculture Statistics Service will conduct a first-ever **statewide horticulture survey!** The survey will include ALL areas of horticulture including the **production, sales and service** sectors of **turf, ornamentals, fruits, vegetables and herbs.**

Our preliminary findings suggest that the total economic impact of all horticulture sectors could be greater than traditional areas of agriculture such as rice, cotton, soybeans and poultry. The collection of numbers that truly represent our industry, its size and its economic contribution to the state's economy are important to the sustained growth of our industry. These results are important to understanding the research needs of our industry and ensuring adequate research and promotional efforts are ongoing. We all know that the big dogs are the first to eat. The same holds true whether it is setting research priorities, examining legislative/regulatory assistance or providing development and/or promotional programs. We need your help to show researchers, policy

makers and industry stakeholders just how much our industry contributes.

We discovered while working with individual producers/industry organizations on this project that one of the biggest concerns in conducting this survey is confidentiality of individual responses. **We want to assure all prospective survey recipients, that your individual responses will be kept completely confidential.**

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Jim's Corner (cont.)

Summarized data collected from this survey will be used by trade associations and other groups to promote and enhance horticulture in Arkansas. Seven (7) different surveys will be distributed investigating in detail the size and needs of different sectors of our industry. These are Turf production, Golf courses, Vegetable/fruit production, Vegetable/fruit processors/sales, Nursery/greenhouse production, Ornamental sales and service (landscape installation and maintenance; arborist; florist; garden centers) and Landscape architects.

The original plan was to have four surveys, but we found that the length of each survey was too long and cumbersome. For some of you, your business may encompass more than one area. For example, you may have a significant greenhouse operation and also operate a significant garden center business. In some cases, we know who you are and will mail you more than one survey. If you feel the survey you receive does not adequately reflect your business, you will have an opportunity to contact us to receive other pertinent surveys.

We encourage all horticulture businesses to complete the survey, as the quality of the survey is dependent on your responses. The importance of this survey is recognized and supported by the Arkansas Green Industry Association, the Arkansas Turfgrass Association, the Arkansas Farm Bureau and other horticulture trade associations.

What's Up?

Notes from the Plant Board:
David Blackburn

Talking about regulatory horticulture makes me feel a bit like Elizabeth Taylor's 8th husband. I know what to do and say, but there's really no way to make this news any more interesting or new. However, bear with me and we'll get through this. There are several topics that probably need to be "refreshed" and revisited.

First of all, lets talk about the FFF, the Florida foliage folks. You know, the ones that set up circus tents on vacant fields or parking lots selling tropical foliage plants. Most of them have run into us before and know that we don't regulate "house" plants in Arkansas; however, some slip up and carry in some woody plants that will survive an Arkansas winter (i.e., nursery stock). For those we require a nursery dealers license. Hibiscus is one that they sometimes bring which poses another problem. Pink Hibiscus Mealybug has now made its way up through the Caribbean and has now been detected in Florida. This bug is a "bad actor" to be sure. It has wide host range, and although not figured to be a real problem with outdoor host this far north, it can certainly cause major problems in the environs of our greenhouse industry. (Look it up on the net or call me for more info.) Anyway, as you are out and about and see the FFF, give your local Plant Board Inspector a call to see if they've checked on them. I've said it before and you'll get tired of me saying it again, but the more tips and help we receive from you, the better we can enforce the law.

Along this same line, let's just talk about licensing a bit. If you are a landscape contractor or a nursery dealer and bid a landscape job against an outfit that you're not familiar with, call us and we can tell you if they are licensed. And if they're not, any information you can provide us will definitely help and will be in confidence. We want fair competition

so help us get apples to apples. Your industry's image is worth protecting.

If you are just starting out or expanding into different horticultural services or maybe just want to brush up on being in the business, I highly recommend an excellent Cooperative Extension publication compiled by Dr. Jim Robbins titled "Ornamental Horticulture Businesses: License." These are available from any Cooperative Extension office or can be downloaded off their web site at: <http://www.uaex.edu>. This fact sheet has a wealth of information as to what type of business needs license and how to get them and much more. If there are still questions, you can contact the Plant Board (Plant Industry Division) via phone at 501-225-1598 or via our web site at: <http://www.plantboard.org>. License applications, rules, regulations and lists can all be downloaded these days.

One of the items to note for the coming license season is that after 18 years of holding the line on nursery fees, alas, the rates must rise. As you receive your particular nursery category renewal notice for the 2003 season (generally in the mail around the end of August or early September), you will notice the minimum license fee is now \$150 and that we have eliminated the acreage add-on fees. Although the size increments increase \$150 per level, the vast majority of our small businesses will qualify for the minimum fee level. I realize that none of us like fee increases. All I can say is that the Plant Board has been able to operate efficiently in the past and is committed to continually providing better service to you in the future.

(Jim's Note: After many years at the helm of the Plant Industry Division, David has elected to go back into the field in a different capacity for the Plant Board. Early this fall he moved to the Fayetteville area. Our sincere THANKS to David for his incredible leadership and open minded thinking which has benefitted the green industry for so many years!)

Horticulture Department News

The Department of Horticulture has established a new Horticulture Alumni Scholarship as a way for past students to help those of the future, according to David Hensley, Department Head. The endowed scholarship will accumulate funds and draw interest until it reaches its goal of \$25,000. The endowed Horticulture Alumni Scholarship will provide funding for students in perpetuity. "This is a long-term effort that will provide dividends far into the future," according to Hensley.

A scholarship is critical to higher education for many high ability students. Providing more financial opportunities enhances the horticulture industry in

Arkansas. A major goal of the Department of Horticulture and the Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food, and Life Science is to increase the quality and quantity of the student body. "The Horticulture Alumni Scholarship will play a significant role in meeting this goal through the creation of an endowed scholarship fund for worthy students in the department at the University of Arkansas," according to Mark Powers, Director of Development for the Bumpers College.

According to Mark, this effort is a unique way for the department and its alumni to reach out to future students. Gifts can be in any amount. If each of the department's alumni gave even a small donation, we could quickly reach the goal for the first awards. Donations are

Interesting Web Site!

I can't remember how I found this, but for those interested in a simple primer on the biology of soils, this is a great site:
http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/SoilBiology/soil_biology_primer.htm.

also tax deductible. Donations in any amount can be sent to: Horticulture Alumni Scholarship, Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food and Life Science, U of A, E-204 AFLS, Fayetteville, AR 72701. Their phone is (479) 575-2270. Dr. Hensley may be contacted at 479-575-7319 or dhensley@uark.edu.



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Upcoming Events

Oct. 4-5 – Tennessee Nursery Association (TNA) Horticultural Trade Show. McMinnville Civic Center, McMinnville, TN, Contact 931-668-7322 or <http://www.mtna.com>.

Jan. 7-8 – Arkansas Turfgrass Association 15th Annual Conference and Trade Show. Hot Springs Convention Center, Contact 501-224-4840.

Feb. 7-8 – Professional Landscape and Nursery Trade Show. Hot Springs Convention Center, Contact AGIA at 501-225-0029 or www.argia.org.



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