



Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

Jim Robbins
Extension Specialist -
Ornamental
Horticulture

Jim's Corner

Information gained during my in-state travels suggests that March (March weather summary available at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ftproot/lzk/html/clmmar2002.htm>) was terrible for our garden centers but that business rebounded nicely in April and May. Our hope is that the late spring push means everyone will have a successful year.

For those interested in the University of Arkansas Plant Evaluation Program, remember that you can view the plant list and annual reports on the internet (http://www.uark.edu/campus-resources/cotinus/arboretum_html/planteval.html). Also, note that the three trial sites (University of Arkansas Research and Extension Center - Hope; Cooperative Extension State Headquarters - Little Rock; Horticulture Farm - University of Arkansas at Fayetteville) are open to the public. Plants at all three sites are now labeled. So far the program has been very beneficial in establishing hardiness ranges for a number of woody plants.



In September 2001, Dr. Steve Vann, Joel Stout and I rated over 650 daylily cultivars for susceptibility to the new disease, daylily rust. The entire list will be available by the time you read this newsletter at the Cooperative Extension Service website: www.uaex.edu. Remember that the Extension website also has lots of useful information on plants, including plant use lists: http://www.aragriculture.org/commhort/ACN/material_list.asp; lists of

Plant Materials Workshop
Cooperative Extension Service
Little Rock
August 6, 2002

toxic plants: <http://www.aragriculture.org/commhort/ACN/toxic.asp>, and plant photographs: <http://www.aragriculture.org/commhort/ACN/default.asp#Trees>.

Horticulture Survey

Dr. Ron Rainey (Extension agricultural economist) and I continue to work on pursuing funds for a statewide horticulture business survey. While Ron continues to scour records for information, I continue to work on developing a massive database of horticulture businesses. Preliminary information from one source suggests that the florist industry in Arkansas has sales of \$195 million and landscape services sales of \$175 million. The total for all of horticulture (i.e., fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, turf) has been estimated at between \$2.1 and \$5.4 billion!

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Product Report



I feel strongly that we need to promote products with a focus on the environment and that are manufactured in Arkansas. This product fits that bill exactly.

Davis Rubber Co. in downtown Little Rock is one of the designated handlers for used rubber tires. Rather than simply burying tires in a landfill, they are trying to develop useful landscape products. They initially offered colored rubber chunks in bulk or bag and then branched out into landscape disks that fit around trees. The rubber chunks have been used for many years in horse riding arenas, playgrounds, etc.

Roger and Phillip Davis have continued to pursue options for the landscape and came up with a binder so rubber chunks can be formed into paths and tree-wells. I am personally most excited about the tree-well option since this approach offers some unique advantages. First, the nature of the material means the tree trunk can grow and not be restricted by the standard rigid metal grates. The poured rubber pad also allows water and air to penetrate but does not catch trash like loose mulch. Pedestrians will find the material spongy when they walk on it. You can view an example of the tree-well application on Scott Street between 2nd and 3rd in downtown Little Rock.

For more information, contact Davis Rubber Co. at 501-374-2166.

What's Up?

Interesting websites!

Last December, a group of green industry professionals and government experts gathered at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis for the Workshop on Linking Ecology and Horticulture to Prevent Plant Invasions. The experts explored new ways of fighting unwanted species.

This spring, the group released the "St. Louis Declaration on Invasive Plant Species," which includes a proposed "**Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct**" with specific action items for government agencies, the public, botanical gardens and arboreturns, nursery professionals and landscape architects. Check it out at <http://www.mobot.org/iss/nurserycode2.htm>.

The group says the voluntary codes are needed because the infiltration of invasive plants has turned into an onslaught, causing large-scale environmental damage and economic

losses running into the billions of dollars. A second meeting to further refine the group's draft voluntary codes is scheduled for this fall at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

The March/April issue of *City Trees* includes a number of useful articles on urban forestry, including "Compaction Tolerant Trees" by Dr. Kim Coder of the University of Georgia.

"Tolerant species were selected for their effectiveness in reacting to mechanical damage quickly, in surviving anaerobic soil conditions and in adjusting their root systems to new conditions," writes Coder. The full text of Coder's article, including a list of more than 40 compaction-tolerant trees, is now available online at <http://www.urban-forestry.com/citytrees/v38n2a09.html>.

Before you send your crews out for the day, take advantage of a great free resource from the National Weather Service (NWS). On the NWS home page, an interactive map of the United States shows where there are

hazardous weather and flood warnings. By clicking on your state, you can drill down to maps and advisories at the county and city level. To go directly to weather alerts for your locality, you can also fill in your city and state in the search box on the home page, <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>. For several years I have used the North Little Rock NOAA site to gain information on current and past weather data. Check out <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ftproot/lzk/html/wxcnt13.htm>.

Greenhouse structure and equipment manufacturer/supplier Nexus Corp. formed a new division, Garden Center Images. GCI will focus on helping garden center owners upgrade existing locations. Products and services include interior/exterior displays, layout/design services and seasonal structures. Website: <http://www.toddmc@gcimages.com/index.html>.

Toro offers free sprayer calibration software at <http://www.toro.com/golf/CUSTSVC/svcedu/sprayer-software.html>.

Plant Profile

Adina rubella Hance

Dr. Jon T. Lindstrom

Assistant Professor, Univ. of Ark. Dept. of Horticulture

The four top-selling shrubs in northwest Arkansas have got to be heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica* cultivars), japanese holly (*Ilex crenata* cultivars), boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens* and *B. microphylla* cultivars) and azaleas (*Rhododendron* cultivars). If I want to take a nap in the afternoon and don't feel sleepy, I'll go look at a landscape, and there are plenty, where this is the palette of shrubs in use. Yawn, I'm feeling tired already.

In the interests of adding some novelty to the landscape please try the following plant; I don't need to sleep all the time. *Adina rubella*, the chinese buttonbush, is the Asiatic relation of our native buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*). Native to China (obviously), this species is a member of a small genus of approximately 25 species in the Rubiaceae family. The only other member of the genus I have grown is *A. pilulifera*, a tender, evergreen species.

On the chinese buttonbush, in mid to late summer and continuing to frost, small, pinkish-white spheres of flowers appear on the tips of the new growth. The flowers are small and not noticeable at a distance but when seen close-up resemble the spherical satellites so common in 1960s science fiction movies. They draw a smile from all those who see them.



I'd grow the chinese buttonbush for its foliage alone. It is glossy, fine-textured, medium to dark green in color. The new growth is a contrasting red throughout the summer. On our plant in Fayetteville, the growth habit is upright and arching to spreading. Like chaste tree or butterfly bush, cold winters will kill the plant to the ground, but growth resumes from the base of the plant in the spring and flowers appear on new growth. All that cold weather does is limit the final height of the plant; our plant is 2.5 feet tall. Where winter are less severe, plants may reach 8 feet.

The chinese buttonbush can be used both in sun or part shade. Our plant is in full sun and has not suffered from this exposure. The native buttonbush grows well in wet sites, but the chinese buttonbush prefers a better-drained soil. It may even be worth experimenting with this plant in dry shade. So far, no pests and diseases seem to have taken a liking to this plant.

For those wanting more chinese buttonbush, it is easy to propagate from cuttings taken in mid-summer and treated with a 1:10 dilution of Dip and Grow®. Cuttings placed under intermittent mist root in 2 to 3 weeks, then continue to grow once removed from the mist bed. Rooted cuttings should be overwintered with some protection the first winter before being planted out into their permanent location the following spring.



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Jim's Corner

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Plant Materials Workshop

Dr. Klingaman and I will offer a full-day plant materials workshop for the ornamental industry on Tuesday, August 6. The program features talks on annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, bamboo and shrubs. Terry Howe from PanAmerica seed will give a keynote presentation on "Growing Tips for Annuals," and Norman Winter from Mississippi State University will give a slide show on his California Pac Trial trip. To make a reservation, call Tomeka Nolen at 501-671-2226.

Arkansas Green Industry Trade Show and Conference

AGIA's annual trade show and conference has been set for February 7 and 8, 2003, in Hot Springs. Clay Parks of Parks Brothers Farms has already put together an exceptional educational conference including the esteemed plant pathologist Dr. Ann Chase and nationally recognized expert on plant growth regulators, Dr. James Barrett.

Upcoming Events

July 7-13: 20th Perennial Plant Symposium, Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Rosemont, IL. Contact: PPA, 614-771-8431; e-mail, ppa@perennialplant.org; <http://www.perennialplant.org>

July 13-17: Ohio Florists' Association Short Course, Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH. Contact OFA, 614-487-1117.

August 1-4: SNA 2002 - Southern Nursery Association Researcher's Conference and Trade Show. Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA. Contact: SNA, 770-953-3311; <http://www.sna.org>

August 6: Plant Materials Workshop. University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Headquarters in Little Rock. For reservations and details, call 501-671-2226.

August 16-18: The Nursery/Landscape Expo. George Brown Convention Center, Houston. Contact 1-800-880-0343 or http://www.txnla.org/green_industry/tradeshow.html.

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

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