



Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

For the Commercial Green Industry

Jim Robbins
Extension Specialist -
Ornamental
Horticulture

Jim's Corner

There are certain days when I become discouraged about the impact my program is having in the state, and the photo at right is a good example. To add insult to my wounds, I learned recently that the same landscape wants to plant green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) as a street tree. Green ash may not be the lowest suggestion on my street tree list, but it is darn close.

There was some good news recently (and it was not that I saved money on my car insurance by switching companies). Dustin Blakey (agri agent for Sebastian County) hosted another exceptional workshop in Fort Smith for landscapers. Dustin conducted a survey of attendees on various landscape topics. The results were interesting. Although we see lots of topping (lopping, dehorning) of shade trees, the survey indicated most attendees understand that we do not endorse topping (nonselective heading back of branches) and, that the use of pruning paints is not recommended. If you need some help convincing your clients why topping is not recommended, try this fact sheet from Virginia Tech: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/nursery/430-458/430-458.html>. According to the survey, there is significant confusion about the value of staking trees. Staking DOES NOT encourage the development of a stronger trunk. It continues to amaze me why a landscape maintenance firm would not be anxious to remove 't'-post stakes in a hurry so they could be reused



Topping trees in Little Rock

on new jobs. Check out Myth #1 at the ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) web site: <http://www.treesaregood.com/pressrelease/press/top10myths.aspx>. Oh well, more work to do.

Retailers and landscapers need to be advised that the soil testing process associated with the University of Arkansas has been radically overhauled as of January 1, 2006. So far the feedback

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Mulch rumor: A hot rumor right now is that formosan termites are being spread from the New Orleans area via mulch. For more information consult http://www.nationalplantboard.org/la_mulch.html and <http://www.mulchandsoilcouncil.org/Inforesorce/Pressrelease5.html>.

Plant Profile

Manfreda virginica (L.) Salisb. ex Rose x *Polianthes tuberosa* L.

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Susan Verhoek first reported on the cross between the Arkansas native *Manfreda virginica* and *Polianthes tuberosa* in 1975. This hybridization was part of her Ph.D. dissertation at Cornell University. Later, both Scott Ogden in his book *Garden Bulbs for the South* and Thad Howard in *Bulbs for Warm Climates* wrote highly of the cross. Yet neither of these authors shows a picture of the plant or flowers, and as far as I know, it has never been produced commercially. So in 2003, I remade the cross, taking pollen from *Polianthes tuberosa* and placing it on the stigma of *Manfreda virginica*. The resulting seeds were sown at the beginning of 2004 and 14 progeny raised. In 2005, the seedlings were old enough to flower, and now I can see why everyone has been so impressed. On tall, 4- to 5-foot stems, inflorescent, fragrant white flowers open over a 4- to 6-week period in summer and fall. On some progeny



the flowers are tinged pink. The hybrids are vigorous, and several of the plants flowered more than once during the summer. *Manfreda virginica* confers winter hardiness to the hybrid, and I look forward to more evaluation this summer. Additional crosses between *M. virginica* and other *Polianthes* species and hybrids have also been made; perhaps these plants will be just as nice as the first.

Jim's Corner (cont.)

from county offices has not been all-favorable, so I met with a group of retailers and agents to discuss possible changes that we could suggest to the lab. While I hope we can simplify the report for homeowner tests, the industry needs to understand that some of the changes are now being driven by environmental regulations in the state. More to follow.

I am pleased to report that the January 2006 issue of *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine had a six-page color spread about the personal landscape at Chris Olsen's (Botanica Gardens in Little Rock) home. Very impressive article on one of our industry leaders.

Worker Protection Standard

The Federal Worker Protection Standard

Although the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) was implemented in 1994, there are some indications that enforcement activities may increase in the near future. The WPS is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Arkansas State Plant Board. It is designed to protect agricultural workers and pesticide handlers from exposure to pesticides. Employers are required to provide certain protections for their employees who handle or are exposed to pesticides. The WPS covers ALL pesticide uses (herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, etc.) on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses for the production of agricultural plants. All persons who employ agricultural workers should obtain and read the WPS "How to Comply" manual. Downloadable copies are available at <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/htc.html>.

Here are a few key definitions regarding WPS.

Employer – Any person who hires or contracts for the services of workers for the production of agricultural plants.

Handler – Any person who mixes, loads, applies, cleans application equipment or disposes of pesticides. Handlers also include flaggers.

Worker – Any person involved with the production of agricultural plants but not in handling or applying pesticides.

Restricted Entry Interval (REI) – The time after the end of a pesticide application during which entry into the treated area is restricted (usually 12 to 48 hours for most pesticides).

Some of the key points or requirements for employers are:

- **Posting of information at a central location on the farm.** Must include EPA-approved safety poster, information on the nearest medical facility, pesticide application records (product name, EPA registration number, location and description of the treated area, time, date and the restricted entry interval for the product.). The records must be posted for 30 days after the expiration of the restricted entry interval.
- **Safety training for employees.** Certified (licensed) applicators may train their own employees, and they must be retrained every 5 years. If you do the

training, you must use EPA-approved materials (videotapes are available from Gempler's Inc., <http://www.gemplers.com>) and answer questions. Employees may be trained as workers or handlers depending on their job activities. The Extension Service, AmeriCorp volunteers and approved trainers can provide training. Handlers must be trained before any handling activity or task. Workers must be trained before working for five days.

The best thing to do is to buy the videotape and make sure all employees are trained before they begin work on your operation. Verify the training by recording the date, the specific training materials used and the signature of the employee.

- **Providing and maintaining personal protective equipment for employees.** Employers must provide and maintain personal protective equipment (PPE). Employers must make sure it is worn, cleaned and inspected each day before use. Employers must also take steps to prevent heat illness with their employees. Employers must provide a pesticide-free area for putting on and taking off PPE.
- **Decontamination or cleanup supplies.** Decontamination supplies must be provided within 1/4 mile of all workers and handlers. There must be enough water for routine and emergency washing (1 to 3 gallons per person). Soap and single-use towels must be included in the kit.

Handlers must have supplies when removing PPE. The decontamination kit must be immediately available at the mixing/loading site.
- **Notifying employees of pesticide applications on the farm.** Employers must notify workers about pesticide applications on the farm. Employers must orally warn workers and post treated areas IF the label requires it (for most pesticides you will have a choice of one of these two methods). Employers should tell workers which method of notification is in effect.

Post all greenhouse applications. The EPA-approved sign must be used when posting the information. Remove the posting signs within 3 days after the restricted entry interval expires.
- **Providing emergency assistance to employees poisoned or injured by pesticides.** Employers must provide emergency assistance when employees may have been poisoned or injured by pesticides while on

the job. Employers must provide prompt transportation to a medical facility. They must provide information (product name, EPA registration number, active ingredient, etc.) to the victim and medical personnel.

- **Information exchange between commercial applicators and agricultural employers.**

Certain types of information must be exchanged between the employer and commercial applicators who make applications on the farm.

- **Commercial applicators must provide the following information to agricultural employers:** the location and description of the treated area, the time and date of application, the product name, EPA registration number, active ingredient(s), the restricted entry interval and the type of notification required.

- **Agricultural employers must provide the following information to commercial applicators who will be making applications on their farm:** location and description of treated areas on the farm where pesticides will be applied or where a restricted entry interval is in effect while commercial applicators are on the farm. The employer must also provide the restrictions on entering these areas.

- **There are exemptions from certain WPS requirements if all the employees on your farm are immediate family members.** Agricultural owners DO NOT have to provide the following for themselves or their immediate family members: information at a central location, safety training, decontamination supplies, emergency assistance, notification of applications, or provide, clean and maintain personal protective equipment (the label specified PPE must still be worn).

What's Up?

[I have decided to try something new. Since my position covers the entire Green Industry (landscape installation/maintenance, nursery/greenhouse producers and retailers), I will attempt to provide one 'What's Up' for each business sector per issue.]

General

I was searching for some housing information and stumbled into an amazing web site with all kinds of free **demographics** information: <http://www.city-data.com/>.



Need help with **weed ID**? In addition to our limited database (http://www.aragriculture.org/horticulture/ornamentals/nursery_production/weed_id/default.htm), several others are good at actually keying out weeds (Univ. of Illinois: <http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/weedid/>; Virginia Tech: <http://www.ppws.vt.edu/weedindex.htm>).



Tips for Employers Who Outsource Payroll Duties

by Laura Fine, Assistant State Director, UALR ASBDC
(Source: *Arkansas SBDC E-News - Biz Bytes*, 2/14/06)

Many employers outsource some of their payroll and related tax duties to third-party payroll service providers. They can help assure filing deadlines and deposit requirements are met. Some of the services they provide are:

- Administering payroll and employment taxes on behalf of the employer, where the employer provides the funds initially to the third party.
- Reporting, collecting and depositing employment taxes with state and federal authorities.

Employers who outsource some or all of their payroll responsibilities should consider the following.

- The employer is ultimately responsible for the deposit and payment of federal tax liabilities even though they have

outsourced the process. If the third-party fails to make the federal tax payments, the IRS may assess penalties and interest on the employer's account. The employer may also be held personally liable for certain unpaid federal taxes.

- If there are any issues with an account, the IRS will contact the employer. IRS correspondence is sent to the address of record, so it is strongly suggested that the address not be changed to that of the payroll service provider.
- For the employer's protection, the payroll service provider should be asked if they have a fiduciary bond in place. This could protect the employer in the event of default.

Employers should ask the service provider to enroll in and use EFTPS (Electronic Federal Tax Payment System), so the employer can confirm payments made on their behalf. For more information, employers can enroll online at <http://www.eftps.gov> or call EFTPS

Customer Service at 1-800-555-4477 for an enrollment form.



Toll-Free Helpline Provides Assistance With Employment Law Questions

by Laura Fine, Assistant State Director

Ever have questions regarding employment law issues such as pay and overtime, family and medical leave or workplace safety and health but don't know where to turn for answers?

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) operates a toll-free helpline (1-866-4-USA-DOL) that provides a central access point to all of its programs, services and regulatory information, including assistance navigating the DOL web site's compliance assistance resources. Live operator assistance is available in both English and Spanish from 8 a.m to 8 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday to Friday. Employers are assured that their requests for assistance through DOL's helpline are confidential. (*ASBDC Biz-bytes*, 6/27/05)

Landscape

Based on the severity of the **Asian ambrosia beetle** infestation in 2005, we are strongly encouraging landscapers to monitor and possibly spray the trunks of critical trees with a protective spray of pyrethroid (permethrin) starting in early March. The beetle attacks seemingly healthy, thin-barked trunks or branches from one inch to two and a half inches in diameter. Tree species that seem most susceptible to attack include Japanese maple, redbud, dogwood, red maple, peach, ornamental cherries and

pecan. This borer is different than other trunk borers in that death is caused by a fungus that the insect carries with it, not the insect feeding itself. A detailed fact sheet on this insect is available at the Cooperative Extension Service web site: http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-7064.pdf.



We recently purchased copies of the latest edition of Grounds Maintenance *Estimating Guidelines, 8th Edition*, from the Professional Grounds Management Society. It is full of tables of national standards for task times, capital cost calculations and more. The cost is \$35 plus S/H (<http://www.pgms.org/pgmpublications.htm>). I think I mentioned in the past that the business library at the UALR Small Business Development Center has copies of the excellent pricing guidelines produced by Nilsson Associates (<http://nilssonbooks.com/>). Books include *Labor Time Data Handbook*, *Maintenance Estimating Kit*, *Pricing Your Services* and *Maintenance Contracting*. I was surprised how inexpensive the books are for the value in their content.

Greenhouse/Nursery Growers

A new book is now available to help **greenhouse growers** achieve profitability: <http://www.nraes.org/publications/nraes164.html>.



As a critical part of your **IPM** program, professionals need to be very concerned about switching/alternating the mode of action

when applying many chemicals. Rotating out of a particular mode of action class/group is recommended. At a recent conference, I learned about a great web site that provides critical **mode of action** information: http://www.irac-online.org/documents/moa/MoAv5_1.pdf. I have mentioned this before, but this web site is very helpful in getting **label/MSDS** information: <http://www.cdms.net/pfa/LUpdateMsg.asp>.



The January 2006 issue of *NM Pro* had an article for growers on **alternative heating fuels**, a hot topic this winter. The January 2006 issue of *GM Pro* had several outstanding articles including "Managing Mealybugs" (p. 82-90), "Minimizing Bedding Plant Production Time to Offset High Fuel Costs" (p. 76-80) and results from University of Florida pansy trials (p. 71-74).

NEW!

New/Updated Publications
(read/download at <http://www.uaex.edu>):

New:

FSA6123, Weed Control in Container Nurseries.

Updated:

FSA6109, Sources and References for the Landscape Industry-2006.

FSA6096, Sources and References for the Nursery Industry-2006.

FSA6100, Sources and References for the Greenhouse Industry-2006.



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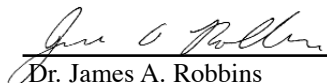
Upcoming Events

April 24 – University of Arkansas Golf and Sports Turf Classic, Fayetteville. Contact <http://www.uark.edu/ArkHort/> or mmccord@uark.edu.

June 5-6 – Mid-South Greenhouse Conference, Jackson, Mississippi.

June 21-24 – Southeastern Greenhouse Conference, Greenville, South Carolina. Contact <http://www.sgcts.org/>.

July 8-11 – OFA Short Course, Columbus, Ohio. Contact <http://www.ofa.org/>.


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