



Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

For the Commercial Green Industry

Jim Robbins
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Jim's Corner

The past few months have been dominated by attendance at several outstanding out-of-state meetings. These trips, while costly to my wallet and sleep schedule, pay triple dividends in the knowledge gained about plants and production techniques, in addition to the incredible networking with friends and colleagues. The Biannual Southern Plant Conference (this year in Mobile, Alabama) and International Plant Propagators Society meetings continue to be incredible meetings to attend.

While on my way to the Southern Plant Conference, Stan Brown (Blossomberry Nursery, Clarksville) and I stopped at the Mississippi State University Truck Crops Experiment Station at Crystal Springs to recheck their annual bedding plant trials. We had first checked the trial in early June, and so we wanted to see what annuals were still holding up well in our southern heat.

Those annuals that had that 'wow' (five out of five stars) factor and really looked good in early September are *Euphorbia* Diamond Frost[®] (Proven Winners/PW), *Calibrachoa* 'Callie Dark Blue'



Petunia cultivars: Mississippi State University, Crystal Springs

(Fischer), *Alternanthera* 'Royal Tapestry' (PanAmericanSeed/PAS), *Hibiscus acetosella* 'Maple Sugar' (PW), *Coleus* 'Chocolate Mint' (PAS), *Coleus* 'Electric Lime', *Coleus* Big Red Judy[™] (PW), *Coleus* 'Lemon Sensation' (PW), *Petunia* Blanket[™] 'Purple' (PW) – also exceptional in June, and *Petunia* 'Opera Supreme Pink Morn' (2007 AAS Winner).

Those plants that also caught my attention (four out of five stars) include *Petunia* 'Plush Salmon', *Petunia* Supertunia[®] 'Vista Bubblegum', *Petunia* 'Raspberry Blast', *Petunia* Wave[®] Blue, *Zinnia* maritime 'Solcito', *Verbena* 'Rapunzel Violet', *Verbena* 'Lanei Red', *Calibrachoa*

'Caberet Light Pink', and snapdragon 'Speedy Sonnet Rose'.

If you feel that the drive to Crystal Springs, Mississippi, is too much, try checking out the West Tennessee Research and Extension Center at Jackson, Tennessee (<http://westtennessee.tennessee.edu/>). That site is an All-American Selections (<http://www.all-america-selections.org/>) trial garden.

In case you had not noticed, this is the sixth edition for what is supposed to be a quarterly newsletter. Somehow I got carried away in 2007! It is my annual tradition to express my sincere thanks to those folks who make my program a success. Again this year, I want to

Vol. 8, No. 6 December 2007

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Jim's Corner (cont.)

express my most sincere thanks to Joel Stout (Cricket Hill Farms, Conway) for allowing me to conduct *extensive* research trials at his nursery. Joel's generosity makes it possible for me to have a research program. Tracey and Donna Bemis (Bemis Tree Farm, Little Rock) have also opened their field nursery up to me for several important research projects including the statewide Plant Evaluation Program (http://www.uark.edu/campus-resources/cotinus/arboretum_html/planteval.html). Dr. Jon Lindstrom and I would both like to thank the

Arkansas Green Industry Association (www.argia.org) for their continued financial support of the Plant Evaluation Program. Thanks also to Manjula Carter,

Mike McCorkle, Qingfang Chen and, especially, Paul Ballantyne for their technical help. Wishing the entire Arkansas Green Industry a safe and prosperous 2008!



Battery-powered controllers. Not a bad idea for growers.

What's Up?

General

EPA has received a petition to cancel all uses of **chlorpyrifos**. The public comments deadline is December 11, 2007. Instructions on how to file public comments are contained in the EPA FR Notice. <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-PEST/2007/October/Day-17/p20442.htm>



No-match Ruling Remains on Hold

The Social Security no-match rule, originally scheduled to go into effect in September, has been delayed again. Last week a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction blocking implementation of the no-match rule until the court can fully examine the issue. No-match letters are triggered when an employer has employees whose names and Social Security numbers do not match the employer's W-2 form. "While this is very good news, this is no time to sit down and rest," said Robert J. Dolibois, ANLA's executive vice president. He cautioned that the only solution to the "broken immigration system" is passage of legislation. The no-match regulation is likely to remain in limbo for several months at least, until the court issues its final ruling.

Source: *Greenbeam* 10/22/07



The University of Illinois has developed a CD, Bilingual Self-Study **CD: Horticultural Tools, Equipment and Practices**, which is available at <https://pubsplus.uiuc.edu/HORT01.html>.



Several good extension e-newsletters on **ornamental diseases**:

University of Tennessee:
<http://soilplantandpest.utk.edu/publications/ornamentalnwsltr.html>.

University of Arkansas CES:
http://www.aragriculture.org/News/plant_clinic/default.htm.



MidSouth **Hydrangea** Society has a new website: <http://www.midsouthhydrangea.com/>.



Small Business Owners Can Set Up HRAs

Larry Brian, Center Director, UA Fayetteville SBDC

As **health insurance premiums** soar, many small business employers are turning to "consumer-driven" health plans to motivate employees to use medical services wisely and to keep a lid on health costs. Health reimbursement

arrangements, or HRAs, are one possible way to do that. In an HRA, employers set aside money to reimburse employees' deductibles or qualified out-of-pocket medical expenses up to a predetermined amount. HRAs are coupled with high-deductible insurance plans. Employees can generally roll unused money over from year to year, though the money technically belongs to the employer. Since employers are partially self-insuring their employees' medical costs, they can buy a more limited health insurance plan and cover some health care costs on an as-needed basis. If the employee leaves, the money is returned to the employer. Contributions to HRAs are tax deductible. Some insurers still don't offer HRAs, but many third party administrators do. Please contact a health insurance provider for details.

Source: *Arkansas SBDC E-News* 10/1/2007



Don't forget about the incredible on-line or on-site classes the Arkansas **Small Business Development Center** (ASBDC) offers – classes such as web design, introductory and intermediate Quickbooks and much, much more. Check them out at <http://asbdc.uarl.edu/training/>.



Retail

Record \$45 Billion Spent on Lawn, Landscape Services

A new market research study (http://assoc.garden.org/press/-press.php?q=show&id=2880&pr=pr_research) by the National Gardening Association found that homeowners spent a record \$44.7 billion to hire professional lawn and landscape services in 2006. Thirty percent of all households, or an estimated 34.5 million households, hire at least one type of lawn and landscape service. Lawn care and landscape maintenance services, hired by 27.8 million households last year, were the most popular services. Tree care services came in second, hired by 11.5 million households. Installation and construction services were hired by 6.9 million households. Landscape design services were hired by 2.3 million households.

Source: *Greenbeam* 8/29/07



The University of Tennessee has posted the 2006 results from their ‘no-spray rose’ trial. You can view these results at <http://west.tennessee.tennessee.edu/ornamentals/NoSprayRoses.pdf>.



Beginning in January, Wal-Mart stores will no longer offer **cypress mulch** harvested, bagged or manufactured in *Louisiana*, according to Save Our Cypress Coalition. Environmentalists are concerned about the effects cypress harvesting has on forests and swamps. The coalition is also pressuring Home Depot and Lowe’s to stop selling Louisiana cypress mulch.

Source: *Greenbeam* 9/27/07

[There is some discussion floating around about using **cypress mulch**. These are some comments from a colleague at LSU. “There is considerable discussion about where cypress mulch comes from and how much cypress mulch is used in the horticulture industry. All of this

came about from a coastal forest study panel in Louisiana that studied timber harvesting in Louisiana – especially in coastal forest areas – and whether the timber being harvested was coming from forest areas that can regenerate themselves or cannot regenerate themselves.”]



Landscape

Remember to remind your employees to scout for **sour hardwood mulch**. I continue to hear about cases where sour mulch burns up landscape plants and costs landscapers big money. Sour mulch will typically have a foul smell that may smell like vinegar, ammonia or sulfur. The toxic vapors should burn or sting your eyes. In every case so far, the bark has been atypically dark black. The problem can be easily avoided by keeping stockpiles small or turning large piles to ventilate the pile. For more information you can read:

- <http://www.ext.vt.edu/departments/envirohort/factsheets2/landsmaint/jul94pr5.html>
- <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/sourmulch.html>
- http://extension.unh.edu/news/2007/06/watch_out_for_sour_mulch.html
- <http://www.pddl.purdue.edu/PPDL/weeklypics/6-25-07.html>



Greenhouse/Nursery Growers

The 2007 USDA **Floriculture and Nursery survey** is available: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/Flo/2007/09Sep/FLO2007.pdf>.



Insect and Mite Management in Greenhouses: The University of Tennessee offers this outstanding publication on-line at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/pbfiles/PB1594.pdf>.



Mini Poinsettias Can Be Easy to Produce

For the past two years, researchers at **Cornell University Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center** in Riverhead, New York, have been growing mini poinsettias (2 1/2- and 3 1/2-inch pots). More than 30 cultivars were trialed in 2006. Plants were spaced five pots per square foot of bench area and kept in preformed trays to avoid being tipped over. The growing medium was kept on the dry side to eliminate the need for growth regulators. Both pinched and non-pinched plants were produced. Some cultivars didn’t require pinching, while others didn’t respond well to pinching. Cultivars that rated “excellent” were ‘Christmas Feelings White’ and ‘Da Vinci.’ Source: *Greenbeam* 8/29/07



Container blow-over options include a wire trellis; rebar driven diagonally through pot; commercially molded plastic trays for 1-3 gal (www.containerslik.com); gallons staggered in concrete reinforcement wire or hog panels; above ground PNP; 1/2" rebar bent into a ‘C’ that is used as a large staple to connect two pots; Multi-leg Wire Stabilizer for 3-25 gal (multiple sources: <http://www.cherokeemfg.com/containerstabilizers.htm>; Alabama Wire calls theirs a Container Stabilization Basket: <http://www.alabama.wire.com/nursery.html>).

Source: *Nursery Notes* by Mark Halcomb, University of Tennessee, September 12, 2007.

NEW!

New Publications
(read/download at www.uaex.edu):

Mowing Your Lawn
(Patton/Boyd), **FSA6023**
Slime Molds – Landscape
Curiosities (Vann),
FSA7537



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Cooperative Extension Service
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Upcoming Events

December 11: Landscape Maintenance Workshop. Little Rock. CES Headquarters. Contact <http://turf.uark.edu/education/landscape.html>.

December 13: Landscape Maintenance Workshop. Bentonville. Contact <http://turf.uark.edu/education/landscape.html>.

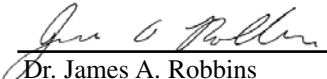
January 6-8: The Western Nursery Show, Overland Park, Kansas. Contact <http://www.wnla.org/>.

January 18-19: Gulf States Horticultural Expo, Mobile, Alabama. Contact <http://www.gshe.org/tradeshows.html>.

January 23-24: Arkansas Turfgrass Association and Arkansas Green Industry Association Conference and Trade Show, Hot Springs. Contact AGIA (<http://argia.org/argia2/home2.shtml>) or ATA (<http://www.arkansasturf.org/>).

February 6: Fort Smith Landscape Maintenance Seminar. Contact Dustin Blakey, dblakey@uaex.edu or 479-484-7737.

February 22-24: 17th Annual Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, Little Rock Convention Center. Contact <http://www.arflowerandgardenshow.org/>.


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No endorsement is implied or discrimination intended for firms or references included or excluded from this newsletter.

Printed by University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Printing Services.