



Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

For the Commercial Green Industry

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Jim's Corner



MidSouth Greenhouse Conference: David and Deena Culberson, Stan and Cindy Brown, Rebecca and James Cosby

It has finally happened. This is supposed to be a quarterly newsletter, but I have too much information to share with the Green Industry businesses in Arkansas in a timely manner, so issues will appear more frequently as needed.

Again this year I returned from the MidSouth Greenhouse Conference in Raymond, MS, full of ideas. Dr. Mengmeng Gu at Mississippi State University has placed PowerPoint presentations for eight of the talks on her web site (<http://msucares.com/crops/comhort/green/greenhouse.html>). I will highlight some of the talks.

Kerry Meyer from Proven Winners had an excellent talk about adding value by designing and marketing mixed containers. Everyone knows that mixed containers are **HOT**. Kerry offered seven tips:

- 1 Have an area to custom plant containers for customers.
- 2 Offer a pick-up/delivery or at-home planting service for containers. Keep a record/index card of past containers and projects.

- 3 Make container swapping easy! Use a drop-in plastic insert. You sell the outer decorative pot once. Try to standardize your container offerings. Market large containers since they are easier to care for (i.e., dry out slower).
- 4 Encourage customers to swap-out plants several times per year. Keeps things fresh and changing.
- 5 Guarantee availability of container color at most times of year. We are no longer selling plants. Sell color, decorating, beauty and ease.
- 6 Designate at least one employee as a container design specialist.
- 7 Encourage a container program contract. For a fixed price, you will offer.....

Terry Howe with Pan American Seed always gives excellent presentations. This year Terry gave two talks. The first talk, "Today's Market Trends," was developed by the Garden Media Group and summarizes their marketing trends survey and report. According to their survey, mega trend #1 is the shift from inside the home to the outdoors. Outdoor living products and services reached \$62.5 billion in 2004 and are projected to reach \$90 billion by 2010. Plants accounted for only 31 percent of the total market in 2004. Look for plasma TVs, Viking grills and outdoor fireplaces complete with art over the mantel, she says. Mega trend #2 is exterior decorating. Forty-seven percent surveyed said they decorate with containers. The lines between inside and outside are blurring. Other mega trends discussed were container gardening, color-color-color, water-water-everywhere, gardens in small spaces, annuals are back, super size and branding and eco is chic. The National

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Jim's Corner (cont.)

Garden Association predicts that the demand for earth-friendly products will quadruple in the next few years.

There was an excellent panel discussion of market trends. I may get in trouble with breeders/growers after suggesting that the number of new, and I suggest poorly tested, plants is getting out of hand.

Dr. Allen Owings from LSU had an outstanding presentation that summarized their research comparing the performance of roses. It was nice to see some actual plant evaluation data for the landscape shrub roses. Based on 2006 data from Baton Rouge, Knock Out™ Red (Conard-Pyle) and Home Run™ (Weeks Roses) have fewer disease problems than Wild Thing™ (Jackson and Perkins) and 'Nearly Wild'. I concluded from the presentation that KnockOut Rainbow may not be quite as good as others in that series.

The highlight of the MidSouth is the annual tour of the MSU Crystal Springs Research Center where they conduct bedding plant selection trials. This is probably the best location to evaluate bedding plants in a climate similar to ours. Not the only plant, but Blanket Purple petunia from Bodger really caught my eye (see picture).

Hidden prize: I collected one set of most of the handouts at the conference and will mail them to the



Blanket Purple petunia from Bodger at Crystal Springs, MS

first person who contacts me via e-mail. **Note in the subject line "MidSouth contest" and include your mailing address in the e-mail body.**



Three times this year I have had landscapers call with problems with "sour" hardwood mulch. I wrote about this in January 2005. The burned foliage is due to harmful vapors that develop when large piles of moist mulch go anaerobic. To avoid the problem, do not store mulch in large piles and try to turn the mulch to get air into the pile. For more information, consult http://extension.unh.edu/news/2007/06/watch_out_for_sour_mulch.html or <http://www.ext.vt.edu/>

departments/envirohort/factsheets2/landsmaint/jul94pr5.html.



I was saddened to learn that William Flemer III of Princeton Nurseries passed away on April 22. Bill is responsible for introducing many fine trees, including October Glory™, Princeton Sentry™ ginkgo, 'Shademaster' honeylocust, 'Green Vase' Zelkova and 'Greenspire' linden. I was fortunate to meet Bill early in my career and even was a classmate with his son, William IV. Mr. Flemer was a bright, kind individual and a true leader in the nursery industry. For more read <http://obits.nj.com/Trenton/Obituaries.asp?Page=LifeStory&PersonId=87693510>.

What's Up

General

VeriSign Inc., the master-keeper of **Internet addresses** announced in April that the annual levy for ".com" will increase 7 percent to \$6.42 and the ".net" fee will go up 10 percent to \$3.85 effective Oct. 15. The price hike applies only to new name registrations and renewals, and customers can lock in the old prices until Oct. 14. Many brokers, known as registrars, offer multiyear deals for up to 10 years. Network Solutions,

formerly owned by VeriSign, even offers a 100-year package.

Source: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17972743/>, April 4, 2007



In the past, I have recommended a useful web site in case you need quick access to a **pesticide label** or MSDS sheet. One of those that I recommended, CDMS, has changed its URL and web site. Update your favorite bookmark with <http://www.cdms.net/LabelsMsds/LMDefault.aspx?t=>

The database may not be perfect. In the general "search" I looked for Astro insecticide, but it was surprisingly not in their database. By the way, I checked on the other label/MSDS service and found its URL (<http://www.bluebooktor.com/>) was not functioning.

Retail

Four-Minute Waits Dampen Customer Satisfaction

Just how fast should the checkout process be? A **study**

(<http://www.marcresearch.com/pdf/MarchMeasurePressRelease.pdf>) from National In-Store and M/A/R/C Research showed that when the process takes four or five minutes, customer satisfaction levels fall below 80 percent for all but club stores, where shoppers are somewhat more tolerant. Waits longer than five minutes caused satisfaction levels to plummet to 30 percent, in some cases. Men are more likely to forego a purchase because of long checkout times, as are adults in the 35-54 age group.

Source: Greenbeam 04/23/07

Landscape

New Turf Fact Sheets

Dr. Aaron Patton has been very busy and has produced two excellent new fact sheets: *Seeding a Lawn in Arkansas* (FSA2113) and *Choosing a Grass for Arkansas Lawns* (FSA2112). Both can be viewed and printed at the Cooperative Extension Service web site (www.uaex.edu).



Group Launches National “Call Before You Dig” Hotline

People are being encouraged to dial 811 before digging holes for trees, shrubs and backyard ponds. The new national hotline was launched this month to help prevent injuries caused by inadvertently striking a utility line. Callers can request that technicians come out and mark the approximate location of all utility lines. The 811 number was created to eliminate confusion caused by multiple “call before you dig” numbers across the country. For more information, go to <http://www.call811.com/default.aspx>.

Source: Greenbeam 5/18/07



Employee or Independent Contractor?

by Vonelle Vanzant, Center Director, UA Fort Smith SBDC

Many business owners mistakenly think an agreement between them and a job applicant determines whether the applicant is an employee or an

independent contractor. Often, business owners prefer to classify an individual as an independent contractor to avoid accounting for employment taxes, purchasing workers' compensation insurance or involving the company in some other employment-related liability.

The IRS, however, has rules and guidelines about how workers are classified. According to the IRS web site, the “...general rule is that an individual is an independent contractor if the person for whom the services are performed has the right to control or direct only the result of the work, and not what will be done and how it will be done or [the] method of accomplishing the result.” The IRS can levy steep penalties against the business when workers are not correctly classified.

For more information on this important topic, be sure to read the article at www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=99921,00.html.

Source: Arkansas SBDC E-News 5/30/2007

Greenhouse/Nursery Growers

Ball Publishing is offering two great conferences for retailers (Sept. 8-9, Green Profits: Retail Experience) and for greenhouse growers (Sept. 9-12, Grower Talks Greenhouse Experience). Both conferences are being held at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland, OH. Contact: <http://www.ballpublishing.com/>.



Everything You Want to Know About Vegetables But Were Afraid to Ask

At the MidSouth Greenhouse Conference, Dr. Donald Ferrin from LSU referred to an excellent online publication (<http://www.sripmc.org/docs/2007SEVegetables.pdf>) that summarizes recommendations for the Southeast. This 269-page booklet is updated every year and summarizes the most recent recommendations for disease, insect and weed control for vegetables.



IPM Calendar for Nursery Growers

This is a must-have for a nursery grower. The only advice is we need to adjust the timing slightly due to our warmer climate (<http://www.ca.uky.edu/HLA/Dunwell/2007ipm.pdf>).



Virtual Greenhouse Construction

Growers can now build and heat a “virtual” greenhouse – or upgrade existing greenhouses – on a computer to find out how much it would cost to heat with different fuels, heating schedules, heaters, building designs and materials. To estimate energy requirements and costs using Virtual Grower, users input the dimensions of their greenhouse and its construction materials, such as poured-concrete floor, glass sides and roof or concrete-block walls. They also choose design features such as roof shape and orientation to the sun. A historical database gives a year’s worth of typical weather for the city nearest to the greenhouse location – including factors such as temperature, sunlight and cloud cover – for each hour of the day.

Growers choose a heating schedule and set the temperatures they want to maintain during day and night or for each hour. The program then calculates per-square-foot heating costs by the month or year (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/services/software/download.htm?softwareid=108>).



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

FSA2112 – Choosing a Grass for Arkansas Lawns)

FSA2113 – Seeding a Lawn in Arkansas

FSA7552 – Wetwood of Shade Trees (color)

FSA7553 – Algal Leaf Spot of Magnolia (color)

FSA7555 – Sooty Mold of Woody Ornamentals (color)

FSA7554 – Lichens of Woody Ornamentals (color)



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Upcoming Events

July 14-17 – OFA Greenhouse Short Course, Columbus, OH. Contact: <http://www.ofa.org/index2.html>

July 28 - August 1 – International Society for Arboriculture (ISA), Honolulu, HI. Contact: <http://www.isa-arbor.com/conference.asp>

August 1 – Univ. of Ark. Dept. of Hort. Turf Field Day, Fayetteville. Contact: <http://turf.uark.edu/education/Registration%20form%20flyer%20Turfgrass%20Field%20Day%202007.pdf>

August 5-12 – Perennial Plant Symposium, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus, OH. Contact: <http://www.perennialplant.org/>

August 9-11 – Southern Nursery Association (SNA) Trade Show, Atlanta, GA. Contact: <http://www.sna.org/tradeshows/index.shtml>

September 6-8 – SNA Southern Plant Conference, Mobile, AL. Contact: <http://www.sna.org/conferences/SPC2007/spc.shtml>


September 19 – AGIA NW Ark. meeting and field day at the Botanic Garden of the Ozarks, Fayetteville. Contact: <http://argia.org/argia2/home2.shtml>

September 19-20 – Arkansas Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional (ACNLP) review and test, Botanic Garden of the Ozarks, Fayetteville. Contact: <http://argia.org/argia2/home2.shtml>

October 5-6 – Middle Tennessee Nursery Association (MTNA) Horticultural Trade Show, McMinnville Civic Center, McMinnville, TN. Contact: <http://www.mtna.com>

October 6-9 – ASLA Annual Meeting and EXPO!, San Francisco, CA. Contact: American Society of Landscape Architects, <http://www.asla.org/nonmembers/meetings.html>

October 28-31 – Southern Region of North America International Plant Propagators' Society, Inc. (IPPS) 32nd Annual Meeting, Chattanooga Marriott Hotel at the Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN. Contact: Dr. David L. Morgan, e-mail: DavidLMorgan@sbcglobal.net, url: <http://www.ipps.org/southernna/>


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