



# Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

For the Commercial Green Industry

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## Jim's Corner



*Freeze stalls spring rush.*

This spring started out with a bang. I heard comments from retailers in March such as "best March ever" to "best weekend sales ever." The March "madness" was related to the unprecedented warm weather. According to NOAA: "It was the warmest March since 1910 and the third warmest March on record since 1880. The average high temperature was the warmest on record for March." We were not alone in this warm weather. For example, by April 2, Lexington, KY, had accumulated 290 growing degree days ([http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/gdd\\_calc.html](http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/gdd_calc.html)) for 2007, which is dramatically more than the 130 accumulated by that date in 2006. All of this unusually warm weather had plants pushing growth and flowers weeks ahead of normal.

As we all know, the other shoe dropped the first weekend in April. It is technically referred to as an advective freeze. While forecasters did an excellent job of making us aware of this freeze event, I doubt any one of us has ever

experienced results like this. In some respects, the ornamentals may be lucky when you compare the outcomes to other fields. Fruit growers in the state, especially blackberry, blueberry, grape and peach growers, were devastated by this sequence of events. While people are pushing us for estimates on the extent of damage to the ornamental industry, I doubt I can give a final assessment at this time. I liken the aftermath of the freeze to developing a photograph in a darkroom. Almost every day brings more clarity to the final picture, but it may be months before we know the final result. Foliar damage was visible within days and tip dieback should be known within one month following the freeze; however, trunk damage may take months to be expressed. Depending on the cultivar and location in the state, we should expect to see anywhere from minor tip dieback to death of entire shoots on crape myrtle. I expect those with extreme shoot dieback to come back from the roots. Bark "popping" or splitting may be common on azalea, boxwood, some evergreen hollies and some cultivars of red maple (October Glory™), but this may not show for several more weeks. It is likely that some plants will send out a new flush that may end up wilting and dying due to unnoticed damage to internal plumbing. Some plants may appear fine until July when our annual heat stress may test these plants again. As plants attempt to re-flush new foliage, they will have to draw upon already depleted starch reserves. Any additional stress during this growing season – drought, insects, diseases and even fertilizer – could cause plants to be weakened further or possibly die in some situations. Be careful of fertilizer applications this year. Trying to regain lost growth

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<http://www.uaex.edu>

## Jim's Corner (cont.)

may overtax the plant and cause further damage or plant death. I do have special concerns about Japanese maples. Starting in 2006, we (Dr. Rick Cartwright, Sherrie Smith) observed a dramatic increase in tip dieback due to several fungi. Some of these fungi enter the plant via wounds. The 2007 freeze has caused an alarming increase in wounds on this species; therefore, we anticipate even more twig death due to these fungal pathogens. At this time, we would strongly encourage growers or retailers to spray valuable Japanese maples with either Daconil (chlorothalonil) or Heritage (azoxystrobin) according to label directions. Retailers may want to encourage homeowners to spray their valuable Japanese maples with a homeowner product containing chlorothalonil.

As of May 1, Governor Beebe had declared an emergency in 52 of the 75 counties based on the freeze. The declaration supports efforts to apply for assistance from the federal government for farmers who suffered crop damage during the cold snap.

For those who have crop insurance, I believe you had 15 days after the disaster occurrence to file a Notice of Loss under the current Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provisions. Producers who did not purchase NAP coverage may still file a Notice of Loss with the local Arkansas Farm Service Agency (<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=ar&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>) or may stay abreast of what is available to growers who sustained a loss from emergency requests (doubtful).

How about some good news? In the past month, I visited both Garvan Woodland Gardens (<http://www.garvangardens.org/>) in Hot Springs and The Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO) (<http://www.bgo.org/>) in Fayetteville. **WOW** is the only word to express what I saw at both. I am very proud of what both organizations are doing. The new Anthony Chapel is an awesome addition to an already impressive start at Garvan. BGO is doing some remarkable things

under the direction of Scott Starr. The children's garden designed by Dr. Gerald Klingaman is nothing short of remarkable. I encourage all of you to visit and support these horticulture assets in Arkansas.

In the January newsletter, I told you we hired a superb new faculty member. **Dr. Aaron Patton** has already created a separate Turfgrass Science web site (<http://turf.uark.edu/>), written some fact sheets and offered a workshop. The web site will post turf information, dates for workshops and field days and much more.

I am saddened to report that the famed horticulturist, **Polly Hill**, died the last week of April at the age of 100. Polly Hill is credited with introducing a large number of plants especially hollies, rhododendrons, dogwoods and Stewartia. The Polly Hill Arboretum (<http://www.pollyhillarboretum.org/>) on Martha's Vineyard is a tribute to her vast contribution to ornamental horticulture.

## What's Up

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### General

#### What Is in a Name?

1. The Entomological Society of America's Common Names Committee has changed the name **Asian ambrosia beetle** to **granulated ambrosia beetle**. This will only cause further confusion because this insect will now be known by two names. Mark Halcomb, UT 3/28/07
2. Leyland cypress's botanical name has been changed from *x Cupressocyparis leylandii* to *x Cuprocyparis leylandii*, and Nootka cypress's name has been changed from *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* to *Xanthocyparis nootkatensis*. These changes occurred after a new species of conifer was discovered in Vietnam, giving rise to a new genus.

Golden Vietnamese cypress or *Xanthocyparis vietnamensis* is the first new conifer genus to be found since *Wollemia nobilis* was discovered in Australia in 1994 and only the third since 1948. The tree was found growing on a rugged limestone ridge in 1999 by a team of botanists from Russia, the UK, USA and Vietnam. Samples confirmed that the plant was a species new to science by Ajos Farjon, taxonomist for gymnosperms at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. Scientists also demonstrated that Nootka cypress is distinctly different from other members of the *Chamaecyparis* genus and realized that it is closely related to the new Vietnamese conifer. It has been transferred from the *Chamaecyparis* genus to the *Xanthocyparis* genus. Leyland's name had to be changed because one

of the parents of this hybrid is the Nootka cypress.

Source: Nursery Notes UT, April 4, 2007

(Other Source: <http://www.rhs.org.uk/publications/pubs/garden0202/newsconifer.asp>)



### Plant Patents

The Plant Patents web site (<http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html>) is useful when you know the plant patent number. But something new is being offered by Google. Just above the blank space where you type a word is a line with several words (*web, images, video, news, maps* and the word *more*). Click on *more*. Then click on the word *patents* when it appears in a

list. In the blank space, type the cultivar name, the complete common name or the complete botanical name with cultivar name or the patent number. The best method is to type the complete botanical name with the cultivar name. Or type the number this way (PP13098).

Source: Nursery Notes UT, April 4, 2007

[I typed in *Hydrangea macrophylla* Blushing Bride™ and got this: <http://www.google.com/patents?id=zR7AAAAEBAJ&dq=Hydrangea+macrophylla+Blushing+Bride.>]



### Granulated Ambrosia Beetle (formerly Asian ambrosia beetle)

This tiny insect continues to rear its ugly head in central Arkansas in landscapes, nurseries and garden centers. Unlike some other states, we have weak trapping data to help us know exactly when the first emergence occurs. Based on data from other states, we expect to see activity by mid-March. To reduce chemical inputs, we encourage growers or retailers to use traps to monitor insect activity. Usually, only a few types of plants are attacked at a given location, but the plant types they do attack can sustain considerable mortality. Trapping is not a reasonable activity for homeowners. If young trees have been attacked, you should see 1 mm diameter frass tubes sticking out of the trunk. The wood frass looks like a toothpick and is caused by the adult digging out a brood tunnel inside the tree to lay eggs. We have seen these frass tubes from late March until early June. Remember that death is not caused by the boring insect but by the fungi that the adults carry on their bodies. These fungi plug up the “plumbing” in plants, and that is what ultimately causes plant death. In areas where previous outbreaks have occurred or for high value ornamental plants (e.g., Japanese maple, redbud, young red maple), a protective trunk spray of permethrin is most often recommended. Products such as Astro (permethrin) and Onyx (bifenthrin) from FMC are labeled for commercial use in landscapes.



Left: BGO Children's Garden; right: Anthony Chapel, Garvan

Perm-UP (permethrin) is labeled for field-grown ornamental nursery stock and Dursban 50W (chlorpyrifos) for ornamentals grown in nurseries. One example for homeowner use would be Hi-Yield 38 Plus. Research from Virginia Tech University published in the 2002 SNA Research proceedings (page 167, <http://www.sna.org/research/02proceedings/section0337.html>) suggests permethrin can potentially cause the Asian ambrosia beetle to back out of the hole and, if the treatment is applied early enough, possibly preventing damage if the fungi has not been introduced. Refer to the Extension Service fact sheet (FSA7064) for more information ([http://www.uaex.edu/Other\\_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-7064.pdf](http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-7064.pdf)).

## Retail

### Garden Centers Projected to Overtake Mass Merchants in 2007

Big news from the **Garden Writers Association**, a group that publishes garden consumer surveys throughout the year: for the first time in years, more consumers say they plan to shop at garden centers (47 percent) than mass merchants (44 percent), according to GWA's **Early Spring Gardening Trends Research Report**. (Membership required for free report. Can be purchased by nonmembers for \$50).

This hasn't been a neck and neck race. A mere 39 percent of consumers planned to shop at garden centers in 2006, compared to 52 percent wanting to shop at mass merchants. The split was similar in 2005, at

40 to 51 percent. So this year's turnaround is a major shift. What's driving the change in consumer attitudes? Quality-driven consumers, according to GWA.

The number of these quality consumers is intriguing and indicates a turn in how mass merchants and garden centers are perceived. As a start, what percentage of gardening consumers that cite “best quality” as the most important criteria prefer garden centers to mass merchants?

I'm guessing you think it's a high percentage. Actually, it's 51 percent, while 41 percent shop at mass merchants. The bigger surprise is that this is a major improvement over the past couple of years. In 2006 and 2005, only 43 percent of quality-driven shoppers planned to shop at garden centers (compared to, gulp, 48 percent choosing mass merchants).

The report had another section that caught my eye: the organic products consumers want. When asked, “those who spend money on garden-related items” (to quote the report) showed a surprising desire for organic products across the board.

Most retailers have said they do not get many requests for organic

**NEW!**

**New Publications  
(read/download at  
[www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu)):**

**MP465**, Plant Flash Cards  
[http://www.uaex.edu/plant\\_card.htm](http://www.uaex.edu/plant_card.htm).



Arkansas Re-leaf

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goods beyond the usual fertilizers. In this report, though, 19 percent said they want organically grown flowering plants, trees and shrubs. That's about one in five. And it's not too far off the leading category, organic plant food or fertilizer (29 percent).

The second most popular? Garden fruit or vegetable plants at 28 percent. Something to think about, isn't it.

Source: Carol Miller. Open Register Blog ([http://branchsmith.typepad.com/open\\_register/2007/03/breaking\\_news\\_g.html](http://branchsmith.typepad.com/open_register/2007/03/breaking_news_g.html))

## Landscape

If you have ever struggled to convert labeled pesticide rates to the smaller quantities found in backpack or hand-held sprayers, this Univ. of Kentucky fact sheet (*Dry Pesticide Rates of Hand-held Sprayers*) may be helpful to you: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ho/ho83/ho83.pdf>.

## Greenhouse/Nursery Growers

### Calibrachoa Taking Hit From Insect, Disease

Calibrachoa is coming under attack from tobacco aphid, *Myzus nicotianae*, Cornell Univ. entomologist Dan Gilrein said at SAF Pest Management Conference. Some growers reported the tobacco aphid is more difficult to control than other aphids. In preliminary studies by Gilrein, two spray applications of Aria, Marathon and Scimitar were effective. Orthene, which is not labeled for this crop, was effective with just one treatment. Calibrachoa is also susceptible to tobacco mosaic virus. **Fischer USA** recently asked growers to discard cuttings of Callie Orange calibrachoa from its propagation facility in Ethiopia. Stock plants there were infected with tobacco mosaic virus. Callie Orange cuttings from its Portugal and China facilities were determined to be virus free.

Source: Greenbeam 3/12/07

## Upcoming Events

**June 4-6** – Mid-South Greenhouse Conference. Raymond, MS. Contact: <http://www.msna.org/>

**June 14** – Univ. of Ark. Hope Research/Exten. Cntr. Field Day.

**June 18** – Plant Propagation Workshop presented by Univ. of Ark., Conway, AR. For details, call Jim Robbins, 501-671-2307.

**August 1** – Univ. of Ark. Dept. of Hort. Turf Field Day, Fayetteville.

**August 9-11** – Southern Nursery Assoc. (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>

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