



# Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

For the Commercial Green Industry

**Jim Robbins**  
Extension Specialist -  
Ornamental  
Horticulture

## Jim's Corner

Hopefully everyone who receives this newsletter received a postcard requesting that you indicate your continued interest in receiving materials from the University of Arkansas. Technically, I am supposed to do this annually, but I have not done it in many years. IF you did not receive the postcard and want to continue receiving my information, you **MUST** send me an e-mail (jrobbs@uaex.edu) including your name and contact information or you will be dropped from the mailing list.

In 2005 I started a research project, partially funded by the Arkansas Green Industry Association, to evaluate the landscape performance of 23 different cultivars of Japanese maples growing in full sun at two locations (Fayetteville and Hope). Everything was going well until the Easter freeze of 2007. As a result of that historic weather event, every plant (92 total) in the Fayetteville plots was killed and 75% were killed at Hope. Here is the final report from Hope: 100% survival (Inaba shidare); 75% (Bloodgood); 50%



*Tour of P. Allen Smith's Garden Home Retreat near Roland prior to UofA Specialty Cut Flower Workshop: Betty Freeze (left), Pam Arnosky (Texas Specialty Cut Flowers: <http://www.texascolor.com/>), P. Allen Smith, Frank Arnosky, Dr. Mengmeng Gu (Miss. State Univ.)*

(Alpenweiss, Emperor One, Sekimori, Spring Delight, Tamukeyama), 25% (Crimson Queen, Seiryu, Shaina, Shojo nomura, Trompenburg, Viridis) and 0% survival (Aka shigitatsu sawa – two different sources, Beni shien, Garnet, Fireglow, Moonfire, Purple Ghost, Sango kaku, Sherwood Flame, Waterfall). 'Inaba shidare', a deeply dissected purple-leaf form, came out smelling like a rose (or should that be Japanese maple?).

The highlight for me in this year-end issue is

the opportunity to THANK those individuals who make my research and extension programs a success. As most of you know, I do not have access to research facilities here in Little Rock, so I depend entirely on growers for help in putting out trials. Friends like Tracey and Donna Bemis (Bemis Tree Farm), Joel Stout (Cricket Hill Farm), and David and Deena Culberson (Culberson Greenhouse) continue to let me test things on their property. Paul Ballantyne, Qinfang Chen, Jon

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## Arkansas Is Our Campus

Visit our web site at:  
<http://www.uaex.edu>

## Jim's Corner (cont.)

Trappe, Dr. Aaron Patton, Dr. John Boyd, Dr. Steve Vann, Dr. John Hopkins, Sherrie Smith, Dr. Rick Cartwright, the staff in our

Communications Department and others continue to keep me moving forward and out of trouble.

*Permeable surface parking:  
Heifer International Head-  
quarters, Little Rock*



## What's Up?

### General

A nursery grower asked me about the effectiveness of using neem oil for control of fall web-worm. I am not an entomologist, and Dr. John Hopkins was unavailable. In researching the issue, I stumbled on an excellent website from Cornell called the Resource Guide for Organic Insect and Disease Management: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/resourceguide/mfs/08neem.php>. The website covers how products work, their efficacy, brand names, etc. Another valuable resource in answering this question was our own MP144 (*Insecticide Recommendations for Arkansas*) which is accessible by the internet: [http://www.uaex.edu/Other\\_Areas/publications/HTML/MP-144.asp](http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/HTML/MP-144.asp). Similarly, if you have a disease problem, consult our *Arkansas Plant Disease Control Products Guide*, MP154: [http://www.uaex.edu/Other\\_Areas/publications/HTML/MP-154.asp](http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/HTML/MP-154.asp). Both of these publications are updated annually by our specialists. Both resources should be bookmarked as "favorites" in your web browser.



The University of Tennessee produces an outstanding *Ornamental Pest and Disease Update*, and the current issue (<http://soilplantandpest.utk.edu/pdf/OPandDUupdates/oct-31-2008.pdf>) is no exception. The current issue focuses on root rot diseases. My attention was caught by

a picture of 'Soft Touch' holly at the bottom of the first page with yellowish foliage that I have seen many times before. The cause was *Thielaviopsis* black root rot. On page 3, they indicate that *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* are not "currently considered a fungus, but are more closely related to algae."



### Department of Labor Unveils Personnel Recordkeeping Tool

Laura Fine, Assistant State Director

The U.S. Department of Labor has debuted the First-Step Record-keeping, Reporting and Notices Advisor, an online tool that helps employers determine which record-keeping and notice laws apply to them, the publication *HR Specialist Employment Law* has reported.

The tool is part of the agency's website's "eLaws" advisors. The free, web-based tools, designed to help employers and workers understand the major federal employment laws, are available at [www.dol.gov/elaws/FirstStepRRN.htm](http://www.dol.gov/elaws/FirstStepRRN.htm).

Source: *Arkansas SBDC E-News*, 9/17/2008



### Search Engine Marketing Success in 10 Minutes a Day

Timothy Lee, Associate Extension Specialist, UALR Lead Center

Carrie Hill of Search Engine Watch offers 10 tasks small businesses can complete in about 10 minutes or less that can deliver

results worth many times that level of effort.

Carrie recommends:

1. Update your keyword research.
2. Re-optimize your homepage.
3. Login and claim/update your Google Maps listing.
4. Rewrite a poorly-performing PPC ad.
5. Submit your site to Best of the Web.
6. Update a page.
7. Place your address and phone number on every page.
8. Update your sitemap.
9. Start twittering.
10. Add some awesome new feeds to your feed reader.

For short explanations of each task, read Carrie's article at <http://searchenginewatch.com/showPage.html?page=3630567>.

The Arkansas SBDC provides keyword research and search engine optimization analysis services at no charge for Arkansas small businesses. Contact your local ASBDC office for assistance.

Source: *SBDC E-News*, 10/15/2008



I rarely get to quote research studies, but I heard this interesting story on NPR that estimated the number of trees worldwide, and then divided that number by the world population. Based on that, they estimate there are 61 trees per person: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=96758439>.



## Retail

The University of Tennessee has updated its brochure summarizing research on No-spray Roses: [http://soilplantandpest.utk.edu/pdf/files/gardensolutions/nosprayroses\\_2008.pdf](http://soilplantandpest.utk.edu/pdf/files/gardensolutions/nosprayroses_2008.pdf).



The October 2008 *Arkansas Gardener* had an excellent article by Laura Bruner on cool-season container designs.



## Landscape

*Addendum:* In the last issue I had a news piece about potential changes in the availability of Pendulum EC, WDG and 2G formulations from BASF. Kathie Kalmowitz, a market development specialist with BASF, wanted to clarify the situation.

“When a product is discontinued in production, it takes two years from that date for us to feel that it might be cleared from distribution,” she said. “With that said, I think they will produce 2G for at least the 2009 calendar year since California is not registered yet. Also, WDG was discontinued two years ago, and we do not make it and only occasionally still find it in a distributor house. If I get a question on it, I still support it and will take the call – it is still our product. On the EC – yes, we still make it and consider it the brand that some end users still ask for. I do not know for a fact, but our fall plans have not been announced yet, and so for now I know we will continue to sell it as currently labeled, which includes all turf and ornamental uses.”



Tina Buxton made me aware of this resource if you are working with the Arkansas Highway

and Transportation Department and need some plant suggestions: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rdsduse/ar.htm>.



## Employee or Independent Contractor?

Paul Considine, Center Director, SAU SBTDC

Many companies think they can avoid employment withholding taxes by calling workers independent contractors. The IRS has strict rules covering this difference, and penalties can be severe for businesses that do not comply with the rules. In the determination, all information that provides evidence of the degree of control and independence must be considered. Broadly, the rules fall into three categories.

*Behavioral:* Does the company control what the worker does and how it is done? This also includes controlling the start and stop time of the work.

*Financial:* Does the company control how the worker is paid, provide the tools and determine whether job-related expenses are reimbursed?

*Type of relationship:* Are there written contracts or employee-type benefits such as pensions, vacation pay or insurance? Will the relationship last for a long period of time, and is the work performed a key aspect of the business?

The IRS has developed a tool to help businesses determine the difference between employees and contractors. The questions asked in this tool are very specific and include discussions about many facets of the work-related activities. It is Form SS-8 and can be found in the Forms section of the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

Source: *Arkansas SBDC E-News*, 11/13/2008



## Greenhouse/Nursery Growers

Well, I thought I had seen it all, but then Dr. Gu at Mississippi State University sent me a link for a “botanical foam” used to provide short-term frost protection for growers. Check it out at <http://www.jackfrostfoam.com/>.



I know of two growers in the state who are using fabric bags in lieu of rigid plastic pots. I received this advertisement about one type of bags system: <http://www.proptek.com/pages/shrubs/pots/>.



Interested in comparing alternative fuel costs? Check out <http://www.hrt.msu.edu/Energy/pdf/Comparing%20Fuel%20Costs.pdf> and an excellent composite of resources about greenhouse energy issues, <http://www.hrt.msu.edu/Energy/consumption.htm>.



Looking for alternatives to plastic pots? Here are some suppliers' websites.

**Bio-Line Pots** (St. Louis: <http://www.cantonplastics.com/>)

**BioPots** (China: <http://www.biopots.com/default.htm>)

**Circle of Life Pots** (Chicago: [http://www.circleoflifeplants.com/about\\_us.aspx](http://www.circleoflifeplants.com/about_us.aspx))

**Enviroarc Pots** (Australia: <http://www.enviroarc.net/index.php>)

**Fertilpots** (New Zealand: <http://www.biogrow.co.nz/about-fertilpots.php>)

**Jiffy Pots** (Ohio: <http://www.jiffypot.com/index.asp>)

**Straw Pot** (New York: <http://www.ivyacres.com/strawpot.html>).



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Cooperative Extension Service  
University of Arkansas  
P.O. Box 391  
Little Rock, AR 72203

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## Upcoming Events

**December 16:** Basic Tree Planting and Tree Care Workshop. Fort Smith, Creekmore Community College. [info@arkansas-trees.org](mailto:info@arkansas-trees.org)

**January 4-6, 2009:** Western Trade Show, Overland Park, Kansas. Contact <http://www.wnla.org/>

**January 13-14:** Turfgrass Short Course. Univ. of Ark. CES, Little Rock. Contact <http://turf.uark.edu>

**January 15-16:** Advanced Turfgrass Short Course: Univ. of Ark. CES, Little Rock. Contact <http://turf.uark.edu>

**January 16-17:** Horticulture Industries Show (HIS), Holiday Inn City Center, Fort Smith. Contact <http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/his.htm>

**January 21-22:** Ark. Green Ind. Assoc. (AGIA)/Ark. Turfgrass Assoc. (ATA) Trade Show and Conf., Hot Springs. Contact [www.argia.org](http://www.argia.org) or [www.arkansasturf.org](http://www.arkansasturf.org)

**January 21-24:** Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG) Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms, Chattanooga Convention Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Contact <http://www.ssawg.org/conference-.html>

**January 29-31:** Gulf States Horticultural Expo, Mobile, Alabama. Contact <http://www.gshe.org/>

**February 14:** Jefferson County Home and Garden Seminar and Show, Pine Bluff Convention Center. Contact [rmorris@uaex.edu](mailto:rmorris@uaex.edu)

**February 27 - March 1:** Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, Little Rock

**July 22-23:** Mid South Greenhouse Growers, Retail Garden Center/Landscape Conference. Eagle Ridge Conference Center, Raymond, Mississippi. Contact: 601-919-8111

**August 5:** UofA Turfgrass Field Day, Fayetteville

Dr. James A. Robbins  
Extension Specialist -  
Ornamental Horticulture

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