



Arkansas Re-leaf newsletter

For the Commercial Green Industry

Jim Robbins
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Ornamental
Horticulture

Jim's Corner

While the U.S. economy is clearly in the midst of a recession, it appears that the Arkansas economy is doing better than some states like California, Oregon, Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina, Florida and Arizona. Even within the ornamental industry you see a range in economic impact. Field-grown shade tree nurseries and sod producers have been hit very hard by this economy, whereas the sales of anything related to edible plants (e.g., vegetable seeds/transplants, blueberry plants, fruit) is booming. It is unfortunate that Arkansas had such a wet spring (e.g., Little Rock: May rainfall was 9.7" above normal, and this was the second wettest spring on record) which hampered retail sales and landscape installation.

There are a number of excellent educational opportunities coming up in the near future. The first is the tri-state (Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana) MidSouth Greenhouse Growers, Retail Garden Center/Landscape Conference on July 22-23 at the Eagle Ridge Conference Center in Raymond, Mississippi. On the second evening, they will meet at the Mississippi State University Raymond Experiment Station to evaluate the bedding plant trials. On August 5, the University of Arkansas will host its annual Turfgrass Field Day at the Horticulture Farm in Fayetteville. The turfgrass field day provides individuals the opportunity to hear the latest up-to-date information about new products and research studies as well as providing an opportunity to network with others in the turf industry and visit with vendors at the trade show.



MidSouth Greenhouse Growers, Retail Garden Center/ Landscape Conference, July 22-23

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The University of Arkansas Turfgrass Field Day on August 5

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What's Up?

General

The future of plant ID?

According to an article in the *New York Times* (May 10, 2009: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/business/10novel.html?_r=1&emc=eta1), a group of researchers has developed a **prototype hand-held device that identifies tree species** based on the shape of their leaves.



In these challenging economic times, David Funk, in a May 2009 *Digger* article, reminds us that “**service is a product.**” Consistency is a cornerstone. Start with the first contact point and examine the process all the way through to the post-service follow-up.



Dr. Mengmeng Gu (Mississippi State) brought to my attention a new book by C. Colston Burrell titled *Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants* (ISBN: 1889538744). While searching for that online, I also found this list for New England (<http://www.newfs.org/docs/docs/invalt2.pdf>). A Branch-Smith Publishing survey (June 2008) indicated 59 percent of respondents (n=435) feel the market for native plants is growing and 37 percent feel it is staying steady.



Retail

Dr. Gu made me aware of an excellent two-year trial at Texas A&M evaluating **blackspot resistance** in 107 **rose** selections. No surprise, the single red KnockOut ranked #2. You can view and print out the entire list at http://entnem.ufl.edu/Crow_NRP_06.pdf.



Landscape

There was an excellent article in the May 2009 issue of *American Nurseryman* summarizing “Tools for **Tree Decay Testing**” including the resistograph, PiCUS tomography and the TRU electromagnetic wave system.



The Research Series 568: *Arkansas Turfgrass Report 2008* is now posted to the web (<http://turf.uark.edu/research/reports.html>). The *Arkansas Turfgrass Report* is a research series that is published annually (since 2007) by the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station and features significant findings made by turfgrass scientists over the past year. Although this publication primarily summarizes findings from the research program, it also highlights advancements in teaching and extension programs, as well as significant issues that affect the industry as a whole. The goal of this publication is to keep stakeholders abreast of significant changes and advancements that affect the turf/landscape industry.



Greenhouse/Nursery Growers

There was an enlightening article in the May 2009 issue of *American Nurseryman* by Marc Tefteau titled “To Biodegrade or Not to Biodegrade, That Is the Question.” Related to this topic, our own Dr. Mike Evans gave an excellent presentation in January at the AGIA meeting about his research on **biodegradable pots**. Dr. Evans will be giving a paper in July summarizing his work to date on the physical properties of biopots. This work is a collaborative

effort with the University of Arkansas, LSU and Longwood Gardens (<http://ashs.confex.com/ashs/2009/webprogram/Paper1611.html>). Several years ago Dr. Evans had a nice article summarizing his research on pots made from poultry feathers: http://www.agriworld.nl/public/file/pdf/20060926-flt_6.4_1.pdf. Summit Plastic Company and Ball Horticultural Company are offering a new Bio Pot (OP47) made from 100 percent renewable resources that they claim is completely biodegradable and compostable (http://www.greenhousegrower.com/magazine/?story_id=1985).



Live Asset Insurance is a private “**crop insurance**” product designed to cover nursery and greenhouse crops, distributors and garden centers. Arkansas is included in their coverage area. For more information: <http://www.liveassetinsurance.com/blog/>.



OHP has recently introduced Kontos™ **insecticide/miticide** which is the first systemically active product for the control of sucking insects and mites on ornamentals, fruit and nut trees, and vegetable plants in greenhouses, nurseries and interiorscapes. Kontos™ is a new systemic insecticide from the tetramic acid class of chemistry (MOAGroup 23). For more information: http://www.ohp.com/PIB/PDF/kontos_490_pib.pdf.



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

Gray Leafspot of St.
Augustinegrass, Vann,
FSA7566,

Upcoming Events

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July 11-14: OFA Short Course, Columbus, Ohio. Contact <http://www.ofa.org/shortcourseinfo.aspx>.

July 19-24: Perennial Plant Symposium, St. Louis, Missouri. Contact www.perennialplant.org.

July 22-23: MidSouth Greenhouse Growers, Retail Garden Center/Landscape Conference, Eagle Ridge Conference Center, Raymond, Mississippi. Contact 601-919-8111 or www.msnla.org.

August 4: Tennessee Green Industry Field Day, McMinnville, Tennessee. Contact www.tnla.com.

August 5: U of A Turfgrass Field Day, Fayetteville. Contact and online registration at <http://turf.uark.edu/education/field.html>.

August 14-16: Expo, Dallas. Contact <http://www.nurserylandscapeexpo.org>.

August 20-22: FarWest Show, Portland, Oregon. Contact www.farwestshow.com.

August 27: Arkansas Green Industry Association (AGIA) Landscape Contractors Day, Botanic Garden of the Ozarks, Fayetteville. Contact AGIA for details: <http://www.argia.org/>, 501-225-0029.



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