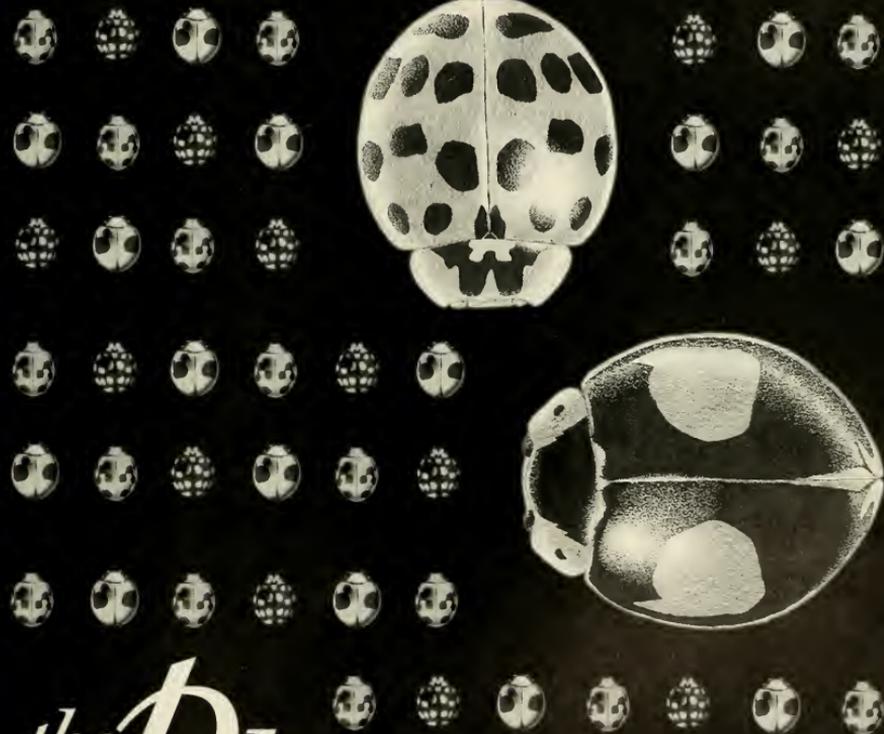
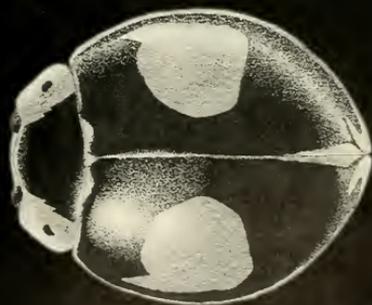
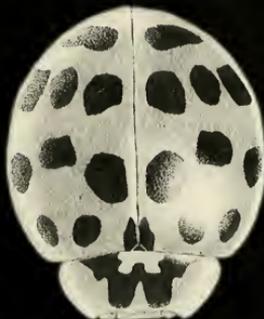


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NEW HAMPSHIRE PLANT GROWERS ASSOCIATION / OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 1994

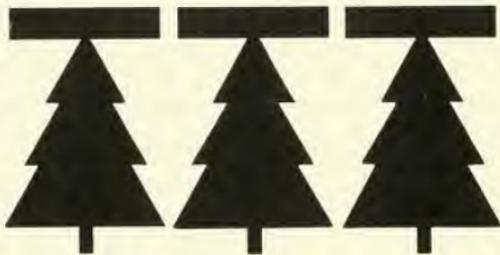
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CALENDAR



October

OCTOBER 17-19 *New England Greenhouse Conference*, Sheraton Sturbridge Inn, Sturbridge, MA; for information: Henry Huntington at (603) 435-8361.

OCTOBER 23 *FTD District I-C Meeting*, Newton Greenhouse, Newton, NH; for information: Debra Defreze at (603) 474-3020.

OCTOBER 27 *Joint Meeting: New Hampshire Landscape Association and GSLA*, Cat and Fiddle, Concord, NH; 1-800-639-5601.

OCTOBER 29 *UNH FFA Interscholastic Contest*, UNH, Durham, NH; for information: Dave Howell at (603) 662-1760.

November

NOVEMBER 7 *Vermont Plant Growers/Department of Parks & Forestry Seminar "Community Tree Care Through an IPM Approach,"* Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT; information: Tina Nyce at (802) 899-3361.

NOVEMBER 9-13 *"From a Grower's Perspective"—Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers' National Conference and Trade Show*, San Jose, CA; for information: (216) 774-2887.

NOVEMBER 12 *Rhode Island Nurserymen's Association 75th Birthday Celebration*, Doubletree Inn, Newport, RI; for information: Ken Lagerquist at (508) 761-9260.

NOVEMBER 15-16 *Massachusetts Nurserymen's Association/Cooperative Extension Business Short Course*, Worcester Marriott, Worcester, MA; information: John Bragg at (508) 534-1775.

NOVEMBER 16 *Maine Landscape & Nursery Association Annual Meeting*, 5 pm, Pine Tree Arboretum, Augusta, ME; for information: Edith Ellis at (207) 225-3998.

December

DECEMBER 5-6 *Seminar "Tree Hazards: The Ultimate Session"* (Shigo & Mattheck), Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA; information: John Kirkland at (503) 254-0482—PST.

January

JANUARY 18 *New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association/New Hampshire Landscape Association Joint Winter Meeting*, Granite Street Bar & Grill, Manchester, NH; for information: Peter van Berkum at (603) 463-7663.

JANUARY 18-19 *Connecticut Nurserymen's Association Winter Meeting*, Aquaturl, Southington, CT; information: (203) 872-2095.

JANUARY 26-28 *New England Grows*, Hynes Convention Center, Boston, MA; (508) 534-1775.

February

FEBRUARY 2-4 *New Hampshire Farm & Forest Exposition*, The Center of New Hampshire/Holiday Inn, Manchester, NH; information: Mary Ellen Pitman at (603) 271-3788.

FEBRUARY 13-14 *Rhode Island Nurserymen's Association Education Day & Trade Show*, Doubletree Inn, Newport, RI; (508) 761-9260.

FEBRUARY 22 *Vermont Association of Professional Horticulturalists Annual Meeting*, Holiday Inn, Rutland, VT; (802) 899-3361.

Looking Ahead

JULY 8-12, 1995 *Ohio International Floral Short Course*, Cincinnati, OH; (614) 487-1117.

JULY 15-16 *Second Annual Seacoast Garden Trail*, Portsmouth, NH; for information: Beth Simpson at (603) 436-2732.

About Our Cover

Our cover illustration, "Habitat views, variations of *Harmonia axyridis*" is reprinted from the *Field Guide to Recently Introduced Species of Coccinellidae (Coleoptera)* in North America, with a Revised Key to North America Genera of Coccinellini by Robert D. Gordon and Natalia Vandenberg, *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington*, Volume 93, Number 4, December 1991.

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The *Plantsman* is published in early February, April, June, August, October, and December with copy deadlines being the first of each prior month. While camera-ready ads are preferred, set-up assistance is available at a nominal fee. Free classified advertising is offered as a member service. We will carry a short message (no artwork or logos) for one or two issues of *The Plantsman*.

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For further information, please contact the editor: Robert Parker at the UNH Research Greenhouses, Durham, NH 03824, (603) 862-2061; or PO Box 5, Newfields, NH 03856, (603) 778-8353.

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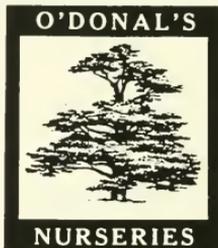
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## Scholarship Available to Members

The New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association scholarships began "sometime in the '60s" when Perley Lee, the owner of Lee Greenhouses in Dover gave \$100, the NHPGA matched it, and the money was given to deserving students in the horticulture programs at UNH. Perley Lee's greenhouses are no longer around, but the scholarship program he initiated has prospered and grown.

Two scholarships are usually given each year. Traditionally, one went to a student in the Bachelor of Science degree program in Plant Biology and one to a student working toward an Associate Degree at the Thompson School, both at the University of New Hampshire. Last year the application base was broadened to include students studying horticultural education in the Department of Adult and Occupational Education.

Once again the application base is being expanded. Now, NHPGA members and their immediate families (spouses and children) who are pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree in a horticulture-related field at any institution are eligible to apply.

Application is simple—it's basically filling out a one-page form and writing (briefly) about how you became interested in horticulture and what your plans are once you've received your degree.

For forms and information, call Chris Robarge at (603) 862-1074. Completed applications for this year's scholarships should be received by November 15. Decisions will be made at the December Board Meeting; winners will be announced at the Winter Meeting on January 18.

Feel free to apply.

## SBA Update

TO: Participating SBA Tree Planting Program Communities and Small Business Vendors  
FROM: Mary Reynolds, Urban Forester

Recently the US Small Business Administration conducted a site review of the SBA Tree Planting Program in selected New Hampshire communities. The following are excerpts of their findings.

"Three criteria were used in evaluating the SBA Tree Planting project sites:

1. Were the trees which SBA paid for actually planted? Could we, in fact, find these trees in the field?
2. Were the trees of good quality and structural form? Were the trees correctly planted and staked using current recommendations?
3. Were the trees being cared for, i.e., was the three-year after-care and maintenance stipulated by the SBA being performed?

The answer to the first question is an unqualified yes. We did, in fact, find the trees and, for the most part, found the trees to be a minimum of 1 3/4 inches in caliper as specified.

The following list highlights problems observed with respect to the answers to question two:

- most trees planted too deeply (70%), i.e., 6-10" too deep;
- mulch levels too deep, i.e., higher than six inches for 85% of trees planted;
- mulch placed right up to base (trunk) of tree (100%);
- incorrect staking methods (60%);
- incorrect staking materials used, e.g., wire and hose (75%);
- poor quality stock (70%);
- burlap around root ball not removed from root ball during planting (65%);
- trees planted under power lines—and in some cases, over underground utilities (60%);
- trees fertilized at planting (70%);
- trees not watered throughout first planting season (40%).

Following problems were most frequently observed with respect to question three:

- extensive string trimmer damage to base of tree while mowing to reduce grass levels at base (90%);
- lack of watering during second growing season, including a pronounced drought period;
- lack of re-mulching to level of 2-3 inches at the beginning of second growing season (85%) (this contributed to weed wacker injury to tree base);
- lack of replacement of dead and nearly dead trees after first and second growing season.

We are very concerned and disappointed with the lack of compliance with current recommendations for planting and maintaining trees. Our 'Requests for Grant Applications' stated that current recommendations for tree planting and after-care *must* be followed for the SBA program.

We scheduled field visitations to all SBA communities this summer. We want to work with communities and small business vendors to bring about compliance with regulations as well as a better understanding of why current recommendations need to be implemented and become mainstream practices for all tree planting and after-care.

As always, call me with any questions or comments at (603) 271-2214.



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## Pesticide Record Forms

Pesticide applicators are required to keep records for several different agencies. UNH Cooperative Extension now has a fact sheet form available. This form has columns to track information required for the NH Division of Pesticide Control's annual pesticide use form, for compliance with the Worker Protection Standard (this information must be displayed in a central location) and with New Hampshire's Statutes and Code of Administrative Rules (for record keeping and reporting). For copies of the form, contact your local Cooperative Extension office.

## New Manual Available from UNH Cooperative Extension

"The interest of New Hampshire plant growers in exploring non-tra-

ditional market channels for bedding plants" has resulted in a thirteen-page manual entitled, *Marketing Bedding Plants to New Hampshire Supermarkets and Mass Merchandisers*. "Research was conducted in association with an Advisory Committee of Extension Educators and Specialists: Nancy Adams, Margaret Hagen, Alberto Manalo, David Seavey and Charles Williams." Principle authors were Lynda Brushett, principle of Niche Marketing, Barrington, NH, and a member of the adjunct faculty at UNH in the Department of Resource Economics and Development; and Michael Sciabarrasi, Extension Specialist, Agricultural Business Management, Department of Resource Economics and Development, UNH.

For a copy, send two dollars to: UNH Cooperative Extension Publications Office, 12B Forest Park, Durham, NH 03824. The phone number there is (603) 862-2346.

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## Past, Present, and Future

Dick Zoerb

SOMETIMES it's difficult to separate the periods addressed in the above title because history always seems to be repeating itself. However, I'd like to touch upon some points which fall into each of the three categories.

I'm certain most growers in the New England area are happy that the spring season of 1994 is behind them. For growers of geraniums, concern began in October of '93, when Fischer's operation in Mexico collapsed (for whatever reasons you may have heard or wish to believe). This prompted a scramble for replacements for the four million or so unrooted cuttings that were to have come from that source. Domestic producers, such as Oglevee, Goldsmith, Ecke, and Bartlett increased production. Fischer was able to supply a portion of that need from their Canary Islands facility. This included varieties usually sold only to the European market that were unfamiliar to US growers—but last fall and winter, variety didn't matter as much as being able to get replacements.

An unfortunate side-effect of the geranium debacle was the higher incidence of disease throughout the country. The demand for replacement cuttings prompted some growers to keep over stock and propagate their own. This was not limited to just small growers—and serves to remind us that disease is always with us and constant vigilance is needed.

(And along with all this, the weather in the Northwest in the summer of 1993 caused shortages in the Easter lily and iris crops.)

This past spring season, unlike 1993, got off to a slow start, due to cooler and wetter weather well into the month of May. Fortunately for most, by the end of that crucial business month, the shortfall had been made up or the demand for

product had extended into June. Unless you were lucky enough to be located in a summer tourist area, the sales period was compressed into a hectic three or four weeks.

BUT GROWERS and retailers, being basically an optimistic breed (e.g., Red Sox fans, Patriots fans, or golfers) always look to "next year" for another go at the brass ring and—once again—there are reasons for optimism.

The anticipated devastating effect that the big discounters (Wal-Mart, Home Depot, etc.) were supposed to have on the bedding plant retailers didn't always materialize. Those who tried to compete on price alone did suffer, but those who emphasized quality, variety, and service did well. In some cases, the very proximity of a discounter was a benefit, in that it created traffic and also made it easier for the public to compare quality. Local growers/retailers won *that* competition hands down.

New varieties and types of plant material are more available than ever before and it behooves producers to offer them in their mix while they are "hit" items. Outstanding examples this year were the trailing petunia cultivars developed in Europe and Japan known by such trade names as "Super-tunias" and *Surfinia* petunias. As a basket or window box item, or as a ground cover offered in four-inch pots, these proved to be the "sleeper" of the season. Along with these were other "proven winners"—*Brachycome* "Ultra," *Scaevola* "Blue Wonder," *Bacopa* "Snowflake," and *Helichrysum* "Golden Beauty."

WHILE THE *Selecta* Series of geraniums by Klemm was available only on a limited basis this past season, Ecke will be up to speed

for '94-'95 with a total of 23 zonal and ivy varieties to choose from.

Ecke will offer 11 new varieties of New Guinea impatiens in their *Pure Beauty* and *Paradise Series*; Oglevee has added six new zonals and two *Floribunds* (renamed "Stardom" geraniums), as well as two *Regal geranium* varieties; Yoder will add ten new garden mums to their *Prophet* series; Walters and Green Leaf have added a host of new bare-root and plug-size perennials, herbs, and grasses.

The new seed varieties are too numerous to mention and if you feel that there are just too many to choose from, think of the alternative: if the industry offered only red, pink, and white geraniums, would there be any reason for people *not* to flock to the discounters? It's the new that attracts customers and keeps them coming back. Extending the season (Yes, I know some of you want to shut down by June 15) with six-inch or larger annuals, perennials, and Asiatic and oriental lilies opens up another area in which discounters do not often choose to compete.

As a final comment, I'd encourage joining the Professional Plant Growers Association, subscribing to one of the fine national industry-oriented magazines, and attending the New England Greenhouse Conference, held in Sturbridge on alternate years. Dr. D.C. Kiplinger, renowned educator at Ohio State and a professor of mine during my three years there, used to encourage his students "not to hide your knowledge under a flower pot," nor to be adverse to change, nor lack the willingness to learn constantly. The options are still applicable—stay the same and stagnate, or adapt and move successfully into the future.

Dick Zoerb is sales representative for Fred C. Gloeckner & Company, Inc., and can be reached at (603) 886-8665.

## New Board Member

Ann Hilton, Grower at Gateway Gardens in Concord, has agreed to serve on the Board of the New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association. She's worked in various areas of New Hampshire's green industry and we welcome the experience and enthusiasm she will bring into the programs of the association. She can be reached at (603) 229-0655.

## New Business

Bob Rimol will be a new visitor to growers in northern New England this year. Bob and his wife and family recently moved to New Hampshire from New Jersey and Bob is representing Jaderloon, a greenhouse construction and supply company from Irmo, South Carolina, that hopes to become better known in the area

Jaderloon greenhouses, designed specifically to stand up in the fiercest of weather (high winds, snowstorms), have earned an enviable reputation since they entered the market in 1976.

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Jaderloon offers a range of greenhouses that goes from simple cold frames to gutter-connected structures. In addition, the company manufactures a wide range of equipment which includes polylocking systems, horizontal air flow fans, evaporative cooling systems, power vents, controls, benching, and trolley systems.

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## TIPS

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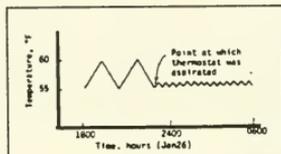
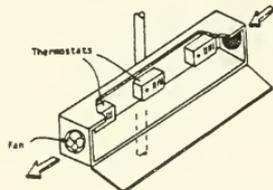


## Inaccurate Thermostats Mean Wasted Dollars

In October, 1989, we reminded you about thermostat calibration, a subject worth repeating. That small controller does a big job for you and if it doesn't do it correctly, it can cost BIG TIME.

As an update, we'd like to add a tip on aspirated shielded thermostats. In these, the bulb is shielded from the heat of the sun and a small fan moves air across them. So they more accurately sense the greenhouse environment. The figure below illustrates a shielded thermostat and compares temperature readings of aspirated and non-aspirated types. The temperature spread lowers from eight degrees (F) with the nonaspirated to two with aspiration. Energy is wasted any time the greenhouse air temperature is above setpoint.

Construct aspirated thermostat shelters with plywood painted white and place them so that they face north and are accessible in the center of the greenhouse. Keep them away from exterior walls or from the direct influence of a unit heater or hot water pipes.



## New Wholesale Directory

This spring, the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture compiled and produced a new publication featuring New Hampshire agricultural products that are available on a wholesale basis. *The New Hampshire Agricultural Products Wholesale Guide* provides source information on a variety of items grown and made here in the Granite State—from flowers and Christmas trees to hogs and wool. This guide was created because the many requests that come to the Department of Agriculture asking where to buy products grown and made in New Hampshire showed that a concise, up-to-date guide was genuinely needed. All businesses listed have wholesale production capacity. Many are also available for contract production.

The guides were introduced at the NH Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism in May. The audience (primarily restaurant, lodging, retail, and tourist information business owners) "eagerly accepted copies and many expressed

their longtime desire to purchase New Hampshire products and their unsureness of how to go about it. They thought this new guide would be a great asset."

The wholesale guide has been distributed to key grocery buyers and to buyers across the country who have requested information about sources of New Hampshire products for resale. The Department has received reports from businesses that buyers have referred to the guide when calling.

The Department of Agriculture has also been working with the UNH Office of Economic Initiatives whose REAP-NH program produced a companion directory of specialty food and giftware producers. The wholesale guide and the specialty products directory have been distributed simultaneously, whenever appropriate, to save costs. The wholesale guide is not intended for the general public and every attempt is being made to distribute it to legitimate resale buyers.

The *New Hampshire Agricultural Products Wholesale Guide* will be updated and published again in 1996. For more information, contact Gal McWilliam, Division of Agricultural Development, NH Department of Agriculture, at (603) 271-3788.

### Good Works

(from *New Hampshire Landscape Association Newsletter*, August, 1994)

The NHLA Board of Directors chose two sites for this year's NHLA landscape projects—the addition to the Christa McAuliffe Museum and Planetarium in Concord and the Children's Museum in Londonderry. These sites were chosen from a dozen or so applicants.

Susan Smith Meyer, a landscape architect from Concord, will design the Concord project in conjunction with Rick Rideout, NHLA vice-president. Doug Miller, landscape architect and owner of Landesign in Merrimack will design the Londonderry project. NHLA members will donate the needed mate-

rial. Work will be completed the first week of October.

### The 1995 North Country Garden Calendar

The Cooperative Extensions of New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont have joined forces to create and offer a garden calendar for 1995. This coordinated effort by the three northern New England Cooperative Extensions provides helpful hints for each day, as well as monthly topics of interest.

Geared toward the home gardening audience, "the calendar makes an ideal gift for the gardening enthusiast. Details concerning wholesale and retail pricing are still being finalized, but as a horticultural business, you may wish to carry supplies on hand for your customers. Also consider using them as your holiday gift to valued customers and employees."

The calendar can be ordered individually or in bulk (wholesale

cost: 1-4 copies/\$5. apiece, 4-24/\$4., 25 or more/\$3.). To order, contact Shirley Durkin, UNH Cooperative Extension Publications Center, 12B Forest Park, Durham, NH 03824. The phone number there is (603) 862-2346.

### A Gift to Future Growers

The Governor's Lilac Commission, working through Rick Barker, coordinator of the state's high school vocational programs, is donating microcuttings of lilacs to interested schools throughout the state.

The 500 cuttings (from Microplant Industries, Gervais, Oregon) will be of two types of *syringa vulgaris*—'Sensation' (purple flowers with a white edge) and 'Maiden's Blush' (pink).

The students will root them, grow them to commercial size, then plant them in public places (around the school, the town) of their own choice. This will be an opportunity for the students—both



### Plan for the Fall

**F**or perennial plant growers, overwintering can cause problems. Nutrition-wise, if you are using a controlled release fertilizer like Osmocote, be sure to use only short-term material three to four months before potting up plants in late summer and fall. Unless you plan a strict watering regime, longer-term fertilizers will continue to release, causing salt build-up and eventual root injury. If you need to keep feeding, it's safer to liquid feed in winter months, then reapply Osmocote in March.

It's not uncommon for certain varieties to have ten percent (or higher) loss over the winter. Overwintering houses and microfoam blankets create a perfect environment in which all sorts of diseases can breed. Poor air circulation and excessively high humidity are primary factors. A broad-based fungicide (e.g., Banrot) prior to covering can greatly reduce the damage.

A layer of plastic laid right on top of the plants inside the overwintering house will give additional protection against extreme cold.

Jim Zablocki, Territory Manager, The Scotts Company, Northeast, is at (603) 224-5583.

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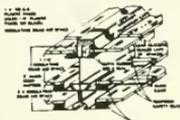
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For more, contact Owen Rogers at (603) 862-3222.

### Increasing Curb Appeal—Up North, Now South

The first in what appears to become a series of annual events in New Hampshire's seacoast region, Seacoast Garden Trail, a self-guided tour of gardens within a 25-mile radius of Portsmouth, took place on August 6 and 7.

Beth Simpson, Rolling Green Landscaping & Nursery, Greenland, bought the franchise from Mt. Washington Garden Trail, Inc. which has been successfully operating now for 32 years. Begun in 1962 by Joan Sherman, co-owner of WMWV, "the tour initially aimed at turning the rivalry of a dozen or so small towns into a beautification campaign that involved cleaning up litter. Among the early winners were a group of 4-H kids who cleaned up the Tamworth town dump." It has evolved and now it has "25 sponsors, 18 judges, close to \$1,700 in gift-certificate prizes from local merchants, a Garden Trail luncheon the week before the tour, and prizes awarded in two divisions (amateur and professional) of 12 categories including vegetable, home, and flower, and small, medium, and large commercial and public properties." It was held August 1-2 this year.

This franchise gives Beth the privilege of reproducing the Mt. Washington Valley event in the seacoast area.

There's no entry fee. Anyone can enter—and 44 did. Included were such well-known local gardens as Fuller Gardens (Hampton), and the Urban Forestry Center, Strawberry Banke, Prescott Park (Portsmouth) and the gardens of the various historic houses in the area, but many

### SAFETY PROGRAMS REQUIRED

The New Hampshire Department of Labor is requiring that "all employers with ten or more employees shall prepare, with the assistance of the commissioner, a current written safety program." This should include the following components: a process of warnings, job suspensions, etc., for violations of safety rules; provision of adequate resources for maintaining standards; provision of medical services, first aid, accident reporting and investigation; provision for the review of current safety programs by all employees.

Also, "all employers of five or more employees (an employee is defined as any person engaged in service to the employer) shall establish and administer a Joint Loss Management Committee composed of equal numbers of employer and employee representatives." The purpose of this committee is "to bring workers and management together in a non-adversarial cooperative effort to promote safety and health in the workplace."

In businesses with 20 or fewer employees, these committees should have a minimum of two members; in businesses with more than 20, the minimum is four.

These committees should meet at least quarterly, keep minutes and make these available for review by all employees. The employer fills out a two-page Safety Summary Form each January first and sends it to the NH Department of Labor.

This is a state regulation (HB 1579 was passed and is in effect as of July first)—there is no federal mandate.

"A fine of \$1000 per day shall be assessed on any employer who is found in non-compliance."

For information (there are 40,000 small businesses in the state and the Department of Labor plans no mass mailings), contact Kathryn Barger, Director of Workers' Compensation, NH Department of Labor, State Office Park South, 95 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH 03301. The phone number there is (603) 271-3176.

of the entries were private home gardens. (There were three divisions: gardens designed, maintained, and planted by the owner; gardens designed, planted, and maintained by landscapers, gardeners, or nursery people; and gardens done by children. In the first two divisions were several categories—vegetable; home flower; small, medium, or large commercial; and public properties—small and large.)

After entries were judged and awards given, the public was invited to a "self-guided tour of prize-winning and notable gardens throughout the NH & ME Seacoast." The map and program were free. The money comes through underwriting, sponsorships, and ads in the program. All proceeds after ex-

penses were donated to the Seacoast Science Center (Odiorne Point) for exhibits and educational programs.

The benefits, along with the funds for the science center, include the creation of another event of interest for area tourists, the chance to see other people's gardens (and get ideas for your own) and the opportunity for local businesses to supply the ideas, equipment, and plant material needed to produce the gardens to begin with. Seacoast Garden Trail is an interesting idea—one with lots of winners—and the second year (the tour dates are July 15-16, 1995) already promises to be "bigger and better."

For information, contact Beth Simpson at (603) 436-2732.

## Name Change

At their summer meeting on August 16, members of the Vermont Plantsmen's Association voted to change their organization's name to the "Vermont Association of Professional Horticulturalists." Part of the reason was the gender issue, but mostly, the change occurred because Vermont is a small state and has one organization for all members—landscapers, greenhouse operators, nurserymen, cut flower growers—of the green industry and people wanted the name to reflect its diversity.

## Forklift Safety

(from the Connecticut Nurserymen's Association News *to Use*, August, 1994)

CNA, in cooperation with Aetna Fire & Surety and their underwriter, Connecticut Insurance Associates, Hamden, scheduled a second training program for forklift operators on September 7 at Prides Corner Farms, Lebanon.

A first clinic, conducted in June, was a great success. Fifteen people received certificates.

Since this is an OSHA-mandated program, class size can be no more than 15 persons. A full-time employee who completes this program is a certified trainer who may train operators back at his firm.

The training consists of an in-depth safety orientation, maintenance check list, equipment familiarization, and operator driving course. A written exam completes the 90-minute program. For information, contact the Con-

necticut Nurserymen's Association at (203) 872-2095.

## Modifications on Posting of Treated Areas

(Update, August 29)

AAN is concerned that the "posting of treated areas" provisions are too burdensome on nurseries, since there may be hundreds of varieties of plants, each with their own requirements and schedules, grown in proximity to each other.

In December, 1993, AAN's Pest Management Committee met with EPA's Occupational Safety Branch chief Therese Murtagh to discuss the posting issue. In that meeting, Walter Suttle of Monrovia Nursery in Oregon presented a possible alternative to EPA's posting requirements, something Monrovia and other growers had found to work effectively.

The AAN Pest Management Committee decided that the best way to seek EPA approval of a posting alternative was to work through a state pesticide enforcement agency. Suttle chaired an Oregon Association of Nurserymen task force that developed an alternative which would allow smaller "flags" to be used in place of the 14 x 16-inch signs. Oregon-OSHA, that state's enforcement agency, reviewed and approved the proposal and sought EPA approval. AAN worked to inform EPA headquarters of the need and the basis for the alternative.

EPA has approved the Oregon proposal. Oregon growers will have the choice of following the WPS posting re-

quirements or using the alternative accepted by OR-OSHA and EPA. AAN is now working to get the same flexibility for growers in other states.

## AAN Board Urges Informed Consideration

(from American Association of Nurserymen *Update*, August 29, 1994)

The AAN Board is initiating an intensive effort to inform its membership about the Garden Council's proposed promotion order.

A promotion order is federal legislation created by request from an individual agricultural commodity group. It is designed to allow the group to fund and implement marketing efforts for its commodity—the government is not in the business of promoting the product. "While gardening will prosper in the short term because it is 'politically correct,' it has the potential to explode and last well beyond the aging of the baby boomers. National advertising is the single best opportunity to gain market share."

The Garden Council has been researching the effectiveness and feasibility of a promotion order for the horticulture industry and has found that "it is not only feasible, but would greatly benefit the industry."

Each wholesale grower would contribute 0.4% of his sales directly to an industry commission. The funds would be managed by an industry board nominated by the industry and chosen by the Secretary of Agriculture. (Other than this, the government is not involved in day-to-day activities of



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## HOW ABOUT HERBS

Plants for America.) "Our analysis has shown that many industry boards collect from large numbers of participants while keeping overhead costs low (no more than 5%). The Beef Council collects from over 1.2 million contributors, the Cotton Commission from 20,000, the Potato Council from 8,000. As we have 20,000 growers and plan to have a minimum sales level, we are confident we can establish collection systems which mirror other councils in efficiency and results."

"In order to sufficiently reach 85% of our target audience, we will need to budget \$20-22 million; we will need another \$1-3 million for regional tie-ins. We will utilize world-class talent to develop a national strategy, theme, and consumer program." An industry symbol would be created "that will add value and represent a high standard of quality, in turn supporting higher prices."

Once the program is funded, a referendum by those paying into the program is mandated for no later than 36 months after passage of the legislation. Fifty percent of those contributing and fifty percent of the total volume of the industry must vote in favor for the promotion to continue. Ten percent of the money collected would be refunded if the referendum fails.

The effort to pass the Plants for America promotion order would cost approximately \$400,000 per year for the next two years. This would pay for industry education, legal work, market research, and public relations.

Plants for America is seen as "the single most significant marketing event to happen to the lawn & garden industry in the 20th century." For information, contact Bob Doli-bois at (202) 789-2900.

### Double-cupped Anthurium

(from *Greenhouse Manager*, August, 1994)

Oglesby Plant Laboratories, Inc., has come out with something really different—a double-cupped anthurium.

The 'Kohara Double' is the first anthurium commercially produced with a

Scented geraniums are claimed as herbs. With winter coming on, customers will be looking for windowsill herbs—and the scented-leaved geraniums fit the bill. Their flowers are small and delicate—quite lovely, but the plants are grown most often for their leaves. Some—the rose, nutmeg, lemon, lime, and peppermint types—are used in tea, cakes, and butters, but mainly they are enjoyed for their fragrance. Here are some of the smaller, more compact varieties suitable for growing in the home.

Nutmeg geranium (*Pelargonium fragrans*) and its variegated look-alike "Snowy Nutmeg" are two of the easiest and most attractive. They have small, rounded, soft grey-green leaves, the Snowy with splashes of creamy white. The white flowers are in small clusters and are lightly marked with carmine.

*P. x graveolens* 'Little Gem' has a spicy-rose scent, deeply lobed, decorative leaves, and small lavender-rose, purple-veined flowers. It's very compact and bushy in habit.

"Lady Mary" (*P. x limoneum*) has a lemon scent and magenta blossoms. *Pelargonium crispum minor* is the smallest variety, with stiff, crisp, strongly-lemon scented leaves and a very upright habit that makes it suitable for growing as standards or topiaries. It was once known as the "fingerbowl geranium" because the Victorian era found elegant dinners enhanced with a finger bowl in which floated a few of these lemon-scented leaves.

Strawberry-scented *P. x scarboroviae* 'Countess of Scarborough' is a favorite of scented-leaf geranium fanciers.

"Red-flowered Rose" (*P. graveolens*) speaks for itself. The ginger geranium (*P. torento*) has a mild sweet ginger scent, light green rounded leaves, and attractive lavender blossoms.

Apple-leaf geranium (*P. odoratissimum*), also called Sweet-scented Cranesbill, is a very old variety with extended branches that drape gracefully downward when it's grown in a hanging basket. Flowers are tiny and white, with pinpoint tips of red.

*P. x nervosum* is compact, with sharp, crisp leaves, a lime fragrance, and darkly-veined lavender flowers.

A very unusual variety is the fernleaf geranium, (*P. denticulatum filicifolium*), with a pungent pine/rose scent and finely dissected bright green leaves. The plant has a taller, more spreading habit; the flowers are tiny—blush pink with touches of carmine.

"Mrs. Kingsley" and "Grey Lady Plymouth" are two old favorites—the first has curled, pungently-scented leaves and striking cherry-red flowers; the second (*P. graveolens variegatum*), handsome rose-scented foliage decorated with a thin white leaf margin.

There are many more, some more difficult to find than others. Names and fragrance interpretations are often argued over by the admirers of these plants, but no one argues about how easy they are to grow or how perfect they are for a winter windowsill.

Tanya Jackson, a well-known area herbalist, can be reached at 603-431-6774

stable double flower. Other characteristics are strong, dark foliage and good branching habit. However, its red double-cupped spathes are its strongest selling point and most eye-catching trait.

The cultivar is best suited for 8- and 10-inch pot production. Liners have been available since September.

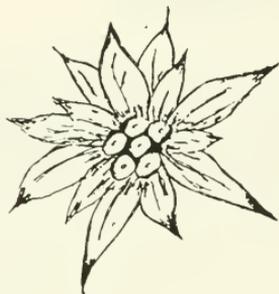
Anthurium 'Lady Ruth' is another new selection from Oglesby. Its

spathes are a deep red-rose color; flowers are large and extend well above the foliage. It's a continuous bloomer and disease-resistant. Its early flowering habit is also a plus.

'Lady Ruth' will be marketed in 5- to 17-inch containers. Finished plants will be available in early 1995.

For more: Oglesby Plant Laboratories, Inc., Route 2 Box 9, Altha, FL 32421; the phone is 1-800-354-8900.

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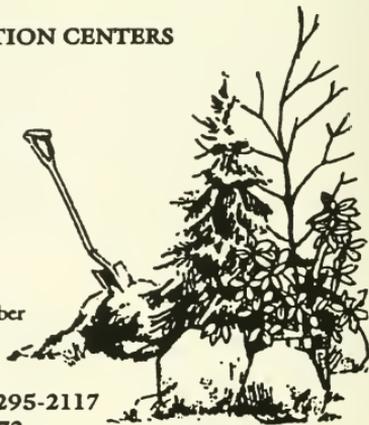
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# Summer Meeting



**THE WEATHER COOPERATED.** The NHPGA's annual Summer Meeting was held on a hazy warm August seventeenth in the Lakes region of New Hampshire. This year's hosts were Ed Person of Ledgewood Farm, Moultonboro, and Bill Stockman, Spider Web Gardens, Center Tuftonboro. Tours (both full of solid doable ideas) and trade show, an all-you-can-eat barbeque and the auction to aid the scholarship fund were the events of an almost vacation-like day at two exceptionally attractive operations.

As at any Plant Growers' event, there are plenty of people to thank. These include our hosts, Ed and Bill, and the folks at Pleasant View Gardens, Pittsfield, who sponsored the bus that brought visitors from one to the other. They include Roger Warren who wrote and organized the questionnaire on the material to be emphasized at next year's Farm & Forest (if you haven't returned it yet, don't forget to do so), our auctioneer, Peter Callioras (the auction raised over \$1300 for our scholarship fund), and the people from Perillo's who created lunch. They also include all the board members who who manned the registration table, helped with the auction, took photographs, and who helped out in general.

Just before the auction got underway, the contributions of three people who've given especially strong support to the NHPGA and its programs were acknowledged. Richard Emerson received a plaque for his services as board member and representative on the New England Greenhouse Conference Committee. Dick Gagne, for his services as president and board member, and Bob Demers, Sr., for his many years of loyalty and support, were given plaques and life memberships.

The door prize this year was a weekend for two at the Christmas Tree Inn in Jackson—and the winner was Norma Stankevitz, Pondsides Nursery, 292 Center Road, Fairfield, Maine.

But you didn't have to win a weekend to have had a pleasant and worthwhile day.

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# SUCCESS

Sue Goulet

**A** few years ago, after working over fifteen years in management positions in flower shops and owning my own business, I decided to go on the road as a sales representative for a wholesale florist. This gave me the opportunity to service well over a hundred florists in Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. During that time I learned a great deal about the floral industry. I found it interesting to see how different florists operate and came to realize that common elements existed in the most successful of them. They diversify; they specialize; they promote their businesses and maintain a professional image; they employ skilled personnel; they manage their money wisely and are constantly looking for ways to improve. My intent here is to offer a little advice on each of these elements.

Diversity not only makes your shop more appealing to more people, but it also helps to even the level of income throughout the year. Add new areas or departments in your shop and offer more services. Some examples are: add a gift corner; offer floral design classes to the public; add a garden center if you have the space; offer landscaping services and materials; create water gardens inside your shop and offer supplies and advice for your customers to create their own; offer interior plant maintenance to individuals and businesses. Where one area of the business may slow down during a period, the level in another area may pick up during that same time; or when a department suffers due to a change in the local economy, another could expand. In the 1980s, some florists serviced commercial accounts with profitable results. During the recession, many commercial customers cut out the plant maintenance services, leaving florists searching for different ways to make up the loss in business. Some ventured into areas that serviced more individual customers. One florist decided to expand his garden center to provide more for home gardeners because there seemed to be a growing demand for that at the time. If you're not able to create new departments in your business, diversify within the departments you do have.

Whether you have a small shop or a large one, be

different from the competition. Offer that special item, that special touch, that special look that only you can provide. If no other shop offers specialty plants, go out and find some—offer bonsai, orchids, herbs, and other interesting material. If the other shop wraps their ordinary cut flowers in ordinary paper, wrap your beautiful and unusual flowers in cellophane and add a pretty bow. Keep up with the times. Read trade magazines, attend trade shows, and communicate with your suppliers. They usually know what the future will bring in new products months in advance. Don't be like all the other shops in your community. Find your niche—something that will keep the customers coming back—and make the most of it.

Most successful shopkeepers will admit that informing the public of what they offer, when they offer it, and where they offer it gives positive results. Most shops in this state use direct mail, newspapers, and radio to draw the attention of the consumer to the goods and services they provide. Whatever method you chose, advertise even during lean periods.

There are many other ways to promote your business: participate in school promotions and local fairs; join business groups; get involved in fund-raisers. If you donate items for a fund-raiser, request that your business be mentioned as a donor. Be certain your delivery vehicles are well-maintained and clearly display your business name and other pertinent information, such as location and telephone number.

Remember that advertising is not to be used to overcome business mistakes such as inadequate service, inexperienced personnel, inferior products, or exorbitantly high prices. The advertising may get people into the store, but it cannot coerce them into buying something that they do not perceive as having value.

Employ knowledgeable and enthusiastic workers. Customers remember when they've been treated with special care, but are turned off by employees who are of little or no help or show no enthusiasm for their jobs. The person who waits on customers or answers the phone should be knowledgeable about the products and

services you're offering and show genuine interest in assisting the customer in a courteous and professional manner. The designers you hire should be skilled in different areas of designing such as funeral work and wedding work and be able to create hi-style designs as well as traditional ones. If you have an employee who shows strengths in a particular area, put that person in charge of it, but also have that person delegate some of that work to other employees, allowing and encouraging them to expand their skills. It is wise to cross-train employees in different departments of your shop. Encourage them to learn as much information as possible about other areas of the business. A multi-skilled employee is more valuable to you. Scheduling is easier if an employee from one department can temporarily replace an employee from another. If you choose to hire someone who has limited skills, make the commitment to train that person and follow up with evaluations. Employees can make or break your business. Tap the knowledge your employees bring to you and encourage them to enhance their knowledge even further. Be certain that they're aware that your business needs them in order to continue to exist and be profitable.

Manage your money wisely. Keep accurate records and budget your expenses. For many shopkeepers whose field of expertise is art, that may not be an easy task. How and when you buy goods affects your bottom line. Don't purchase supplies and perishable goods without having a plan on how you will sell these items to the consumer. Refrain from buying in large quantities to obtain a discount unless you know that you will be able to turn over the stock within a reasonable time. It is better to buy more often at slightly higher prices than to clean out your account on a "good deal." If you do need to purchase in large quantities, check with your suppliers to see who is willing to offer you the best price and who might offer extended terms. If buying is the responsibility of someone other than the owner, that person should know how to buy sensibly. No buyer should have unlimited buying power. This person should be aware of the spending budget for the month or quarter and use common sense in decision-making.

Retail florists must charge prices that reflect the costs of offering full service and providing customers with fresh and interesting product—all the while, remaining competitive. Unlike the limited-service retailer, florists cannot always use pricing as their drawing cards. They must promote their services and skills to draw customers. Cost, competition, and customer profile are factors which influence pricing decisions and all three have to be considered and analyzed before setting prices. Know your prices, especially on goods you purchase frequently. Get price quotes from more than

one source and buy from the supplier who gives you the best price and service. Know what your competition is doing. If they're offering a product for more or less than you are, compare the quality of their product to yours. People are different—they all have different amounts of money and they behave differently. Each time you price an item, assess the makeup of your market. You should be primarily interested in satisfying your customers' wants—at a profit. Meeting both objectives is not always easy and must be constantly evaluated. Because something is selling well at a price you set does not mean it will not sell better at another price. I have seen too often that florists fail to meet the financial needs of their businesses in attempting to satisfy the customer. I can demonstrate here how money is lost when proper accountability of goods is not followed. For example, if a designer creates twenty pieces per day and works two hundred days per year, \$2000. will be lost if that designer is undercharging by only 50¢ on each piece created. So be sure your employees

are aware how their errors can result in serious losses. Set up pricing charts that will aid them in avoiding errors. Have them itemize the goods they incorporate in their designs on the back of the order sheets. This takes very little time and can save lost revenue.

Keep accurate business records and review them to see where your business is strong and where it is weak. Use this information when deciding what to promote and what to delete from the business.

Keep your shop clean and orderly. A big part of your business involves creativity. Show your customers how creative you are by setting up interesting and creative displays. Make the shop a showcase of your work. Make it easy and safe for the customers to browse and allow them to touch and smell the wonderful products you sell. Be sure the items you display for resale are well tagged. If your walk-in trade is heavy, change your displays often to keep them interesting for those who frequent your shop. Maintain a professional look. If you allow your staff to eat on the job, make sure it is not in the presence of customers. Employees who smoke should do so only in designated areas. Many customers do not want to be exposed to second-hand smoke, nor do they want to purchase items that smell smoky. If you have a television set in your shop, tape the programs you want to see and view them later at home.

There are other things you can deal with, but if these common elements are in place, the foundations for a successful shop are pretty much there.

*Sue Goulet is Floral Manager at Studley Flower Gardens, 82 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03807. If you have any questions or comments, she can be reached at (603) 332-4565.*

**U**nlike the

**limited-service retailer,**

**florists cannot always use pricing**

**as their drawing cards.**

**They must promote**

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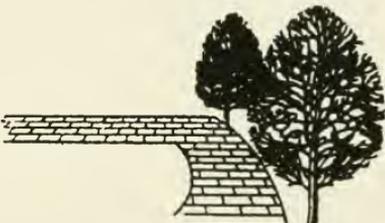
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# ROCKINGHAM ACRES

## Entertaining the Discretionary Dollar



THE FIRST THING YOU SEE IS COLOR. "Even in August, it should look like May," says Bill Smith, owner, with his wife Jean, of Rockingham Acres, a garden center just down the road from the Robert Frost Farm in Derry. The four-acre site is long and narrow with 900 feet of frontage. In August, the bed fronting the stone retaining wall is filled with rudbeckia and sedum, budlia lines the front of the main selling house and planters of salvia—purple and white—cluster around wooden benches filled with jumbo geraniums, impatiens, and marigolds (along with plenty of planters to choose from) Baskets of cascade petunias hang from 2x4 frames. A sign promises "Instant Success!!!"

"We're competing for the consumer's discretionary dollar," Jean says. "It could be spent on a boat or gourmet cooking or travel. We're competing against all these and more, so it's important that we make coming here as pleasant as possible." "Buying should be entertaining," Bill adds.

Entertainment at Rockingham Acres means a rearranged sales area ("we'll bring up the mums, change around the statuary—we try to do something different at least once a week"), free balloons, or a "Kiddie Funstop"—complete with playhouse, sandbox with lots of plastic buckets and tools, and slide and swings—where children play while their parents shop.

It means display gardens specimen plantings dwarf evergreens and weeping forms—Norway spruce, crab apple,

birch—seem to interest customers most); unusual plant combinations—ajuga, liatris, various lily hybrids, a flowering plum—all in magenta and burgundy tones, or unexpected objects—an antique plow used as a trellis for a climbing rose. Some displays are humorous—a single plant of poison ivy with the sign, "We're often told, 'I caught poison ivy, but I don't know what it looks like.' Well, here it is. sorry, it's not for sale."

It means weekly seminars (advertised in each week's ads in two local papers and on their answering machine) by Bill and the staff beginning in May and lasting into July. Each Saturday—from 8 until 9 or ten—sometimes talks are back-to-back—a dozen or so people would bring chairs and sit outside (rain cancels) and enjoy free coffee and doughnuts while learning about "Landscaping the Home Grounds," "Gardening with Herbs," or "Planting to Attract Birds."

It means tours for pre-schoolers but mostly it means water—fountains, water plants, pools, some with bridges, some with waterfalls.

But underneath the sound of all this activity is the hum of the computer. The office (in a small house where Bill and Jean lived when they first bought the property) is Jean's domain—and the computer is central. Inventory is computerized, sales clerks at the two computers at the checkout stand know immediately what is available—stock sold is deleted from the inventory at the end of each day. All

signage is created on their computer each variety offered—3000 or so—has its own 7x3-inch sign. The descriptions are brief—five or six lines, with the most important information in the first three ("most people won't read beyond that"); every plant is tagged (tags are computer generated); when the plant is sold, the part of the tag giving the name and basic cultural information goes to the customer; the rest is saved for Rockingham's records. Jean also has a laminator and uses it to make showier signs that stand up to the weather, but "they just take too much time."

A monthly flier (done on the computer) that goes to a 9,000-name mailing list is a major aspect of advertising. (They also advertise in local papers, concentrating on spring sales. "A three- or four-percent increase in May is a lot more than the same increase in August," Bill says.)

The computer is used for landscape design as well. Bill started Rockingham Acres in 1979 (he'd worked for other people before that), doing design work and landscape maintenance. The retail business began when people began stopping in to see if they could buy the material he'd stockpiled for use on his jobs.

The garden center direction seemed to be the one to follow and in 1985, Bill and Jean put up a 30x60 Nexus greenhouse, custom-designed as a retail area. Two-thirds of it is clear Lexan, on one-third, the front and side is sheathed in clapboards; customers

enter through vaguely colonial double doors Floor is stone dust throughout—the clear section holds plants, the rest is a shop selling fertilizers, insect controls, pots, quality tools.

Two years ago, in 1992, 120 square feet behind the Nexus were filled in and a 30x96 Harnois put up for production Bill had always bought in and he still finds it economically sensible to do so with most standard items But now he grows his own specialties—patio plants (jumbo annuals) in unusual container sizes, potted pansies for fall ("people won't buy them if they're not in pots"), and—especially—big hanging baskets—impatiens, fuchsia, cascade petunias—for spring There's no chance of shipping damage and the quality is his own

The production house seems straight-forward—double poly, dirt floor, oil heat, wood-framed wire benches on cinder blocks, its purloins and ribs hold three layers of hangers But the house is divided into 17 automatically controlled growing zones—for variations in water and feed—and steady temperatures are maintained by a SensorStat control. The sides roll up, giving good ventilation on warm

days, as well as a chance for people driving by to see what's blooming—and ready for sale

THE RETAIL SIDE is primary now, but design work is an essential part Emphasis is on helping customers choose appropriate material—material that matures to the correct size, fits the environment, is easy to maintain The staff will make suggestions, and—if the customer is serious—physically set up an arrangement of the material on the lot Bill can also create a design packet that includes a site plan, descriptions and prices of all material used, and information on its care There's a charge for the packet, but if the customer buys from Rockingham or has Rockingham do the installation, this is subtracted from the bill

Bill's less casual about giving information than he used to be—he doesn't want people to "take my ideas, then go somewhere cheaper," but the willingness to find the right material and to spend the time needed to do this correctly is one of Rockingham Acres' major selling points

ANOTHER AREA of concentration is

water gardens "Our family loves to hike and camp," Bill says, "and what's the real attraction of camping by a stream? It's the soothing, peaceful sound of water") These mountain streams is what he says inspired his interest in water gardening Water gardens can do well in the average New Hampshire yard—they don't need to take up much room and are relatively care-free, if you cover two-thirds of the water surface with plants, their nutrient intake will use excess nitrogen and prevent algae build-up," there are many plants that can survive our winters and fish (usually gold fish or koi) can survive as well if water depth is three feet below ground level and the surface is kept open to allow oxygen intake

"People like instant results," Bill says, "and placing a water lily in a pool is about as 'instant' as you can get Add a few more plants, some fish, maybe a waterfall—it can be as simple or as complex as you want " Rockingham offers water plants as familiar as cattails and as exotic as bamboo (most are grown in a heavier mix and stored under microfoam in winter, dormant water lilies are kept under three feet of water), a wide range of



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pool forms, pumps and filters, and plenty of construction expertise.

**CHANGES ARE PLANNED.** Many of the structures and displays were built when the need occurred and now the concern is about clarity and improved traffic flow. The current gardens and sales area move slightly uphill to a line of mature spruce. Beyond the line is lawn and the office—in what still appears to be a private home. But beyond the lawn is more—mums, display gardens, water lilies.

"The problem is the lawn," Jean says. "We've put up signs and indi-

cated they're welcome, but people are still uncomfortable crossing what appears to someone's private property." So a new design—a master plan—has evolved. Parking will be where the mums are being grown now and the ground floor of the house/office will become a gift shop. With a greenhouse attached. The long-term plan sees a series of connected houses going all the way to the Nexus house, making Rockingham a more attractive place to shop on rainy days.

But that's long-term. Bill and Jean close after Christmas (poinsettias, herbal gift items, wreaths decorated

with dried flowers) each year, then reopen around Easter (hanging baskets, Asiatic lilies). The time between is spent cleaning, growing, organizing, and next spring a new formal garden—a 'scent garden' ('verbenas, scented geraniums, great for kids as well as adults') will be the first aspect of the master plan to take shape. And the pumps will be plugged in and the water will begin flowing and the curtain will rise on another season of color and entertainment. (B.P.)

Bill and Jean Smith are at Rockingham Acres Garden Center, Route 28 in Derry. The phone number there is (603) 434-2817.

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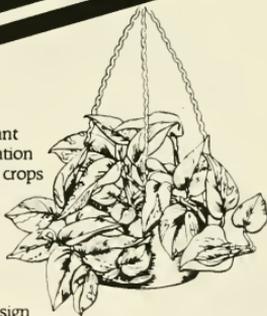
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# Invasion of the Multicolored Asian Lady Beetles

The Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle has been introduced to the United States and has been observed in alarming numbers in other states.

It has just arrived in New Hampshire.

JOHN S. WEAVER



**LADY BEETLES**, also known as ladybugs, ladybirds, and ladybird beetles (and *Coccinellidae* if you happen to be an Entomologist) owe their common name to the Virgin Mary, when during the Middle Ages they were called "Beetles of our Lady." Most species of ladybeetles are predators and are regarded as beneficial insects and several species have been used successfully as biological controls of destructive plant pests such as aphids, mealybugs, and scale insects.

Several coccinellid species have been introduced by the United States Department of Agriculture to control a number of alien pests, such as the recently introduced Russian Wheat Aphid, which has caused a great deal of crop damage in the West. In the history of introducing new species of lady beetles, there have been many successes and many failures. Often a species which has shown promise as a predator in the laboratory will not, for one reason or another, survive after being released into the real world.

The Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle (hereafter MCALEB), *Harmonia axyridis* (Pallas), are native to eastern Asia and are active predators of several forest pests. Numerous introductions of MCALEB were made in the USA from 1916 to 1985. Many releases in the South were made in an attempt to control Pecan Aphids. However, nearly all of these early attempts showed very little measured success. The first notable recoveries of MCALEB in the field were made in 1988 in Louisiana, and later, in 1990, in Georgia and Mississippi. Today this species is known from the Carolinas to Maine.

Along the northern edge of its invasion, MCALEB has gained much notoriety for its curious behavior of aggregating by the thousands in the fall and seeking sheltered overwintering sites, often in people's nice warm homes. In the Carolinas and Virginias, large aggregations of these beetles around the end of October are not uncommon (hence, another common alias for MCALEB is the Halloween Lady Beetle).

The adult MCALEB, like most other coccinellids, is oval and convex. It is 3/16- to 1/4 -inch long and has several different color variations (see cover illustra-

tions). Adults collected in New Hampshire have wing coverings that are orange to orangish-red with as many as 19 black spots, or as few as none. The pronotum is ivory with 4 or 5 black central spots which sometimes coalesce into a dark M-shaped band.

The first specimens of MCALEB were taken this summer in New Hampshire from Rockingham to Coos counties by UNH Extension Specialist Alan Eaton in the course of his integrated pest management work in corn and apples. I have also observed a few MCALEB adults in my garden this summer, and over the past few weeks, have seen them regularly on some milkweed plants, heavily infested with aphids, which I allow to grow among the perennials. These observations suggest that we might be about to witness large aggregations of MCALEBs in New Hampshire similar to those which occurred in Pennsylvania and Ohio last year. The importance of mentioning this now is to inform people of what they might expect to see, so that they won't be alarmed when a few thousand beetles drop by for a visit this October.

In the fall, the lady beetles will mass together and take flight, apparently searching for a warm sheltered place to overwinter, and at this time may resemble a swarm of bees. Several curious observations of "swarming" ladybugs have been reported from other states. In a typical observation, a homeowner might see large numbers of ladybugs arriving suddenly and landing on the house, garage, barn, trees, etc. The beetles might hang around for several days or fly away in a few hours. Often they gather on the warm southwest or sunny side of a building in the afternoon. MCALEBs are attracted to lights and prefer light-colored objects and may congregate near windows and porches or any lighted areas. They will crawl into homes, root cellars, wells, etc., if they can find entry through cracks, vents, or openings into storm windows.

These lady beetles are beneficial and harmless. Hence, insecticides are not recommended as a means of controlling them. To remove ladybugs from the home a mini- or regular vacuum cleaner can be used to collect the live beetles, which can then be released

at another site, such as a barn or empty cabin. One precaution is necessary, the mini-vac or the vacuum cleaner should be clean or have a new collection bag, as large quantities of dirt and dust will probably kill the beetles. This method will save ladybugs that will help control insect pests next year.

What we are probably seeing now in the East is a MCALB population boom, which will probably go down over the next few years. Alien species that become successfully established in new regions of the world, free from their previous natural enemies may increase dramatically. In a few years, as they are discovered by new natural enemies, their population often declines and eventually reaches a state of equilibrium.

However, since this species is new to New England, no one can be certain of what its full impact will be

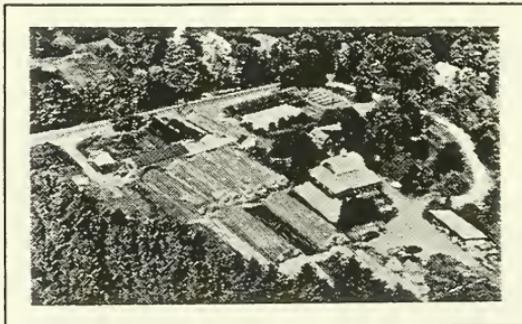
as a biological control agent. Some early research at the University of Connecticut suggests that this species may be an effective predator of Red Pine Scale. Preliminary observations in the laboratory show that MCALB will feed on Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, a exotic pest which threatens to devastate the Eastern Hemlock. Needless to say, New Hampshire would not be the same without its magnificent stands of hemlock, and I am certainly cheering in favor of the MCALBs.

Thanks to the Multicolored Lady Beetle, there is much excitement to look forward to this year, as we all may be in for a trick-and/or-a treat this Halloween.

John is Survey Entomologist in the Entomology Department at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824. Phone: 603 862-1737.

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# When is a Door Not a Door?

Bob Normandeau

You have probably heard the answer to this riddle. But, more importantly, let's consider another mind teaser: "When is an association stronger than the sum of its parts?"

The answer to the above question becomes apparent when your organization uses its size and influence to endorse plans and services at reduced or no cost. This is exactly what has been done. In the near future you will be receiving word about three programs that are being made available exclusively to you under the auspices of The Plant Growers' Association. Here is some introductory information.

## Business Profiles

*Business Profiles* is a nationally recognized, computerized business planning, review, and organizational system used by business strategists with their clients for decades. This program provides the business owner with an up-to-date-business valuation, a comparison of individual financial ratios to industry averages, tax projections, cost projections, and much more.

The *Business Profiles* service begins with the completion of a business fact organizer, as well as a business goal and concern compendium. It all results in a report consisting of organized status pages, graphs, charts and projections that ranges from 12 to over 100 pages.

## Financial Profiles

*Financial Profiles* is a full-scale personal and family planning and organizational system. It has been used by financial planners to set savings and investments goals and strategies for clients with small and large estates and portfolios. This system also provides the size and detail of *Business Profiles* but centers its attention more on personal goals pertaining to retirement, family savings, insurance, and investment programs, as well as tax savings strategies. You can compare your current plans and assets to your goals and consider specific investment results and inflation rates while keeping an eye on risk and stability.

## Discounted Disability programs

*Discounted Disability Programs* have been negotiated for the benefit of the members of your organization. You are now eligible to receive premium, personalized disability income protection at rates below those offered to the

general public. You are not limited to one or two plans like many groups, but may select the program that suits your personal and business needs. Consider the following facts:

1. One of every eight people will enter the hospital in the next 12 months because of injury or illness (source: National Center for Health Statistics).
2. One out of four adults at age 45 and under will be disabled severely enough at some point during working life that they are unable to work for at least 90 days (source: National Safety Council).
3. The median income level of the disable worker drops 62 percent (source: Social Security Administration).

Now, take a moment to read the following survey: If you were disabled:

- a. Would your business rent or mortgage be paid?
- b. Would your employees' salaries be paid?
- c. Would your employees receive the benefits you promised them?
- d. Would your property and casualty insurance premiums be paid?
- e. Would your business taxes be paid?
- f. Would your business utility bills be paid?
- g. Would your inventory bills be paid?

After reading the above facts and answers to the above questions, you can probably begin to appreciate the role of personal and business overhead disability protection.

You are also probably ready to solve the riddle, "When is an association stronger than the sum of its parts?". But what about the answer to the question, "How can I afford the cost of sophisticated annual business and financial planning services?". Once you learn that the fees for *Business and Financial Profiles* have been waived exclusively of The Plant Growers' Association members, this riddle can also be answered.

You will receive more information regarding these new services and how they can help you answer the important questions about your personal and business plans. After all, you already know that a door is not a door when it's ajar.

Bob Normandeau is at Wageman Insurance, 1217 Elm Street, Manchester, NH 03101. He can be reached by phone at (603) 623-2451 or 1-800-439-2451.



The plant pathogens were certainly busy during July and August and they haven't shown any signs of reducing their attacks during the early days of September! Although I haven't done a tally of all the samples received in the lab so far this year, it seems that the sample numbers are up from previous years. (I'm assuming this is a reflection of an increase in the utilization of the PDL and not an increase in our overall disease problems.) The lab was closed for two weeks during August while I attended the national meeting of the American Phytopathological Society (APS) and participated in a two-day workshop on Pythium species identification. The meetings were great! I had the opportunity to talk with many of the diagnosticians from around the country and 'brainstorm' about some of the more unusual diseases we've seen this year.

Several diseases on turf that were problems in June and early July continued to be problematic during the rest of the summer. Pythium blight (foliar), brown patch and leaf spot (Helminthosporium or Drechlera) continued to plague the turf industry. Pythium was a particular problem on putting greens. A interesting note was that several of the greens samples received were showing 'typical' symptoms of Pythium blight, yet Pythium was not isolated. Based on discussions from the APS meetings, the general consensus was that several stress factors are playing a role in the symptom development (high leaf temperatures and overwatering, resulting in a lack of oxygen to the roots, were the two most often mentioned). The other interesting note from the meetings was that the majority of the researchers felt that a disease complex was involved: Pythium was not the only fungus present.

In woody ornamentals, the major diseases were bacterial blight on lilacs, anthracnose on maples, brown rot shoot blight on *Prunus* species, and leaf spots on several different hosts. Two cases of Phytophthora dieback were confirmed on rhododendrons and one case of dogwood anthracnose was diagnosed. The high temperatures and low rainfall caused heat stress problems such as scorch in several locations. The early heat and low rainfall also resulted in significant losses in newly planted Christmas trees.

One of the major problems on annuals and perennials was damage caused by four-lined plant bugs and lace bugs. It seems these two 'critters' really thrived during the hot spells. Fusarium and Verticillium wilt were diagnosed on several crops (sweet pea, asters, and larkspur). The rapid development of symptoms and wilting was once again enhanced by the high temperatures and water stress. As expected, Botrytis was a problem throughout the summer, thanks to the high relative humidity. The flowers of dahlias and marigolds were particularly hard hit by Botrytis blight. Powdery mildew began showing up in mid-July (or earlier) on flox, lilac, and azalea, to name a few.

The most important thing to consider during the next two months is preventative measures to reduce the impact of diseases next season. SANITATION is the most important. Remove all crop debris and destroy it if you know that diseases were a problem. Composting often does not kill the pathogen in the debris: thus, when it is used as a mulch, the pathogen is reintroduced into the crop. Be sure to protect woody ornamentals against winter damage and

desiccation. Now is the time to apply fungicides for control of Rhizosphaera needlecast. The time to apply fungicides for the control of snow molds on turf grasses is early-mid November. Last year, downy mildew occurred on snapdragon during early October. If you are growing snaps, you want to be sure to scout the crop and get a fungicide on at the first sign of the fungus on the undersides of the leaves. The lower leaves of poinsettias should also be examined regularly for powdery mildew. Look for small chlorotic or yellow lesions on the upper surface of the lower leaves, then check the underside for the white-to-gray growth of the fungus. It is good practice to carry a small zip-loc bag around to put infected or suspicious leaves in. If any powdery mildew infections are found, fungicides should be applied immediately—be sure to get good coverage on the undersides of the leaves. A final reminder is to monitor your geranium crops for bacterial blight. A random selection of plants can be placed in an area where the night-time temperatures can be maintained at 27 C (80 F). It takes at least four weeks for symptoms (wilting, v-shaped yellow areas of the leaves) to appear.

If you wish to submit plant material to the PDL for diagnosis, send samples to: Dr. Cheryl Smith, Plant Diagnostic Lab, Nesmith Hall, UNH, Durham, NH 03824. Samples should be accompanied by an identification form (available from your county Cooperative Extension office). There is no fee (at this time). Cheryl Smith is the UNH Cooperative Extension Specialist in Plant Health, and can be reached at (603) 862-3841.

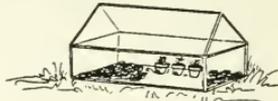
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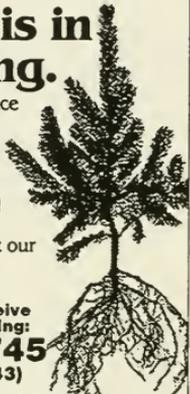
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*Perovskia atriplicifolia* will be heavily promoted as the Perennial Plant Association's Plant of the Year for 1995. The plant will be in good company. Past winners have included die-hards like astilbe 'Sprite,' heuchera 'Palace Purple' and *Carexpsis verticillata* 'Moonbeam,' all of which have enjoyed surges in popularity—and sales—as a result of the PPA designation.

The stems of Russian sage, a member of the mint family, are grayish-white and aromatic. Lavender-blue flowers are arranged in slender, spikelike clusters that extend above the foliage. The plant will grow 3 to 4 feet tall and as wide.

Propagation and growing-on are fairly straightforward.

Tip cuttings can be taken during the summer. Root cuttings in a propagation bench, or go directly to the final container, a 4- or 6-inch pot filled with a light, well-draining medium.

When rooting cuttings, maintain humidity with a plastic tent above the bench rather than by misting to prevent rotting of the cuttings from excessive moisture. Remember, Russian sage prefers dry conditions.

A handful of perennial specialist nurseries around the country sell field-grown rooted divisions, shipped fully dormant.

Russian sage can also be propagated by seed. However, like many perennials, germination is often irregular and occurs over a long period. Chilling at 35°F to 50°F will enhance germination percentage.

Year-old plants can be stepped up to gallon-size containers. Plants overwinter well, and there are no serious problems with diseases and insects.

Expect a small show of flowers the first year, with greater outbursts in subsequent years, generally coming in late summer.

Russian sage is hardy to Zones 5 through 9. In the garden, the plant prefers well-drained soil. It makes an excellent filler in the border and combines easily with almost anything. Remove spent flowers in the summer to lengthen the bloom period.

Russian sage will tolerate some drought when it's established. To promote good growth and flowers, users should cut the plant back to within several inches of the ground in the spring.

For more: Perennial Plant Association, 3383 Schirtzinger Road, Columbus, OH 43026; (614) 292-6027. (Reprinted from *Greenhouse Manager*, August, 1994)



## THE GREEN SPOT

**S**ome people are nervous about bugs—beneficials as well as pests. And the worst reactions come from suggesting the use of wasps. I'll make a suggestion to a client—who perhaps has the beginnings of a white fly problem—to use a parasitic wasp (namely *Encarsia formosa*) and the first words I'll hear are, "Do they sting?"

The answer is, "No." They don't even have stingers. And they're just slightly larger than the period at the end of this sentence.

People will work in their gardens alongside a multitude of wasps. They will notice bees, paper wasps, yellow jackets, medium and large braconid wasps and hover flies (these resemble small yellow jackets). What they usually fail to see are the hundreds of tiny parasitic wasps. And they don't realize that if it were not for these tiny helpers laying their eggs in the various stages of other insects, their gardens would be overrun with pests.

If you consider using wasps as a biological pest control, remember that they're beneficial in the truest sense of the word—and that they do not sting.

(Note: Beneficial wasps are often referred to as parasitic wasps, but this is a misnomer. The wasps commercially available for use in biological pest control are not parasites, but parasitoids. Parasites coexist with their hosts—though not usually to the benefit of the host. Parasitoids, however, kill their hosts—making them popular as pest control agents.)

Mike Cherim, owner of The Green Spot, a company supplying biological pest control agents and related products, is at 603-942-8925.

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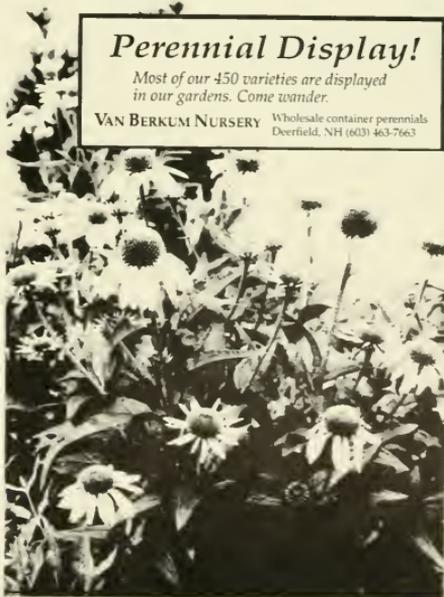
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# Summer Meeting Highlights

See page 14



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