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The Plantsman

SPRING 2003




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The Plantsman

SPRING 2003

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May

11 Mother's Day
 11 Mother's Day at Tower Hill Botanic Garden; Free admission to all mothers! Special menu in Twigs Café by reservation. Tower Hill Botanic Garden. Boylston, MA

26 Memorial Day Observed Nationally

31 18th Annual Plant Sale; Tower Hill Botanic Garden; Boylston, MA (11 A.M.–5 p.m. member hours 9–11 A.M.) Sale features a wide assortment of unique plants; Free Admission all day. \$1 parking fee

July 2003

12–16 Ohio Florists Association Short Course; Greater Columbus Convention Center; Columbus, OH; contact 614-487-1117

15 MNLA Summer Meeting & Trade Show; Plimouth Plantation, Plymouth, MA; contact 413-369-4731 or www.mnla.com

16–20 ANLA Convention & Executive Learning Retreat; Boston, MA; 202-789-2900 or www.anla.org

27–Aug. 3 Perennial Plant Symposium, Sacramento and San Francisco, CA; contact 614-771-8431 or www.perennialplant.org

August

5–6 NENA Summer Expo; Pleasant View Gardens, Loudon, NH; Nursery Tours on Aug. 5; contact: NENA 508-653-3112 or www.NensyAssn.org

September 2003

24–27 Society of American Florists Annual Convention; Boca Raton Resort & Club, Boca Raton, FL; contact 703-836-8700

30–Oct. 4 American Society for Horticultural Science 100th Anniversary; Providence Rhode Island; Contact ASHS 703-836-4606 or www.ashs.org

October 2003

12–15 Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Association National Conference & Trade Show; Fairmont Hotel-Vancouver, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; contact 440-774-2887

21–23 IPPS Eastern Region; Portland, Maine; Contact Margot Bridgen; 860-429-6818

Visit www.nhplantgrowers.org for additional calendar items

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On the cover:
 Narcissus 'Accent.' Photograph courtesy the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center.

The Plantsman is published in early February, April, June, August, October, and December with copy deadlines on 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: Melissa Moore, 845 Loudon Ridge Road, Loudon, N.H. 03307; phone 603-267-8492; e-mail, Moore@worldpath.net



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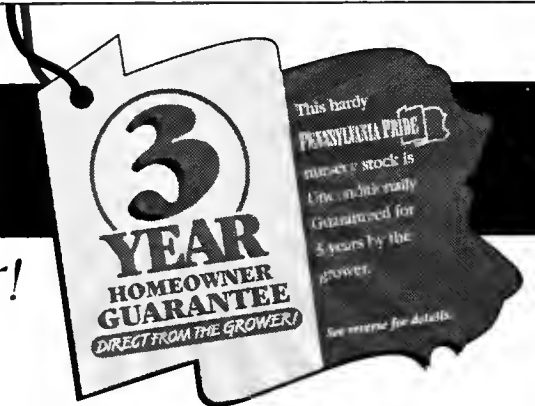
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Seasons

BRETT ANDRUS

As I write this article for *The Plantsman*, a very frigid wind blows outside on this afternoon. Does life exist in such harsh extremes? The answer is "yes." I had my proof at the 2003 Joint Winter Meeting of the NHPGA and NHLA.

Once again, our membership came out in strong support of this annual educational event. The quest for coming together and learning brings us out no matter what "Mother Nature" throws at us!

Now, of course, with time on my hands, I started to think about the meetings we put on and the value it brings to our membership. NHPGA offers winter, twilight, and summer meetings each year. A new and positive twist to the meetings has been sponsorship from vendors. This has proved to be an important part of the upgrading of these programs, and

we thank them all for participating. In addition, we have brought in guest speakers from across the country to raise the level of our meetings. The best part of all is the result—member attendance is high!

As with the seasons, our business environment is changing. We now see unemployment and fuel prices rising along with the constant uncertainty overseas. The storm of change is here and NHPGA will be in the forefront charting a course. This course will be dictated very much from our membership.

There are many ways in which the members can have a say in this organization. Program suggestions are a great way each of you can have input into the direction of the NHPGA. Anytime we come together, let us know what pressing issues or topics are of interest to you. Or, contact the NHPGA office with your ideas

and we will listen!

Yes, I see a great year ahead for our programs. This summer NENA will be hosting its summer meeting at Pleasant View in Loudon. There is even talk now of having an annual golf day. These are just some of the programs we can put together, but in this changing world, ideas from all are welcomed and needed.

Just as the seasons change, these cool days will turn into short sleeve weather and full parking lots. We, the board members of the NHPGA are here to help weather any storm that may hit so our members can stay the course.

Submit your speaker idea, topic idea, Twilight Meeting location and other items of interest to nhpga@totalnetnh.net or facsimile to 603-225-0653

Thanks for your comments and suggestions!

Cary Award Winners Just Announced!

Paperbark Maple, *Acer Griseum*, was recently named a 2003 Cary Award Winner. The Paperbark Maple is cinnamon-colored with exfoliating bark. This award winner is a slow-growing rounded tree which eventually reaches a height of 30–40 feet. The Paperbark Maple is pest and disease resistant.

Little Leaf Laurels were also named as 2003 Cary Award Winners. These hardy laurels plants include *Kalmia latifolia v. myrtifolia* "Elf," "Minuet," "Tiddlywinks," "Tinkerbelle," and "Little Linda."

The Laurels are compact plants, reaching an ultimate height of 3–4 feet. They are evergreen with various pink to white blossoms. The Little Leaf Laurels are hardy in most areas in Zone 4–9.

Cary Award News Release and Tower Hill Botanic Garden

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NHPGA and NHLA Annual Winter Meeting

JANUARY 15, 2003

WAYFARER INN, BEDFORD, NH



Rick Churchill, with People, Places, and Plants, was the afternoon keynote speaker. Churchill's lively presentation focused on outstanding gardeners throughout New England.



Paul Belhumeur presented a marketing and promotion update to the membership at the annual meeting.



Nicole Carito, a floriculture student at Thompson School of Applied Sciences accepts her NHPGA Scholarship from Rick Simpson, NHPGA President.



Ron Hill accepts the 2003 Young Nursery Professional of the Year Award.



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NHPGA Scholarship Winner, Heather A. Warren receives her award from NHPGA President, Rick Simpson.



Cathy Neal UnH Extension Educator and Bill Stockman, owner of Spider Web Gardens, examine a root system that demonstrates how roots are sometimes prone to circling.

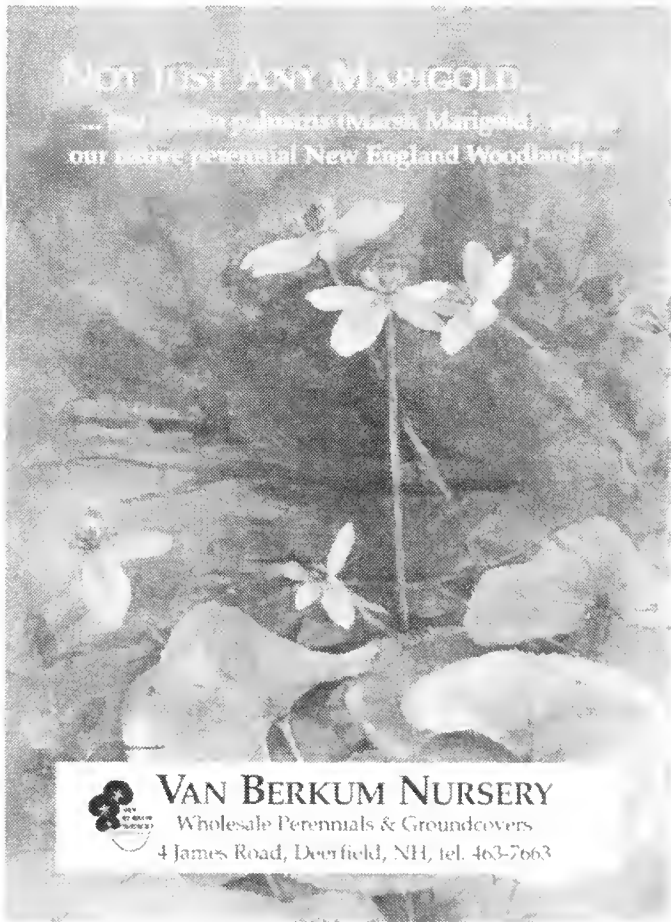


Tim Leary with Tuckahoe Turf Farms of Litchfield, NH participated in the Winter Meeting as an exhibitor. He presented information on the company's wide selection of bulk materials including sod, lime, seed, and mulches.



Vicki and Bill Dowley owners of New England Heather in Keene, NH. Vicki and Bill have over 1,000 heather plants planted at their Keene location to use in their propagation program. They are focusing on varieties that perform well in New Hampshire's varied climate. Those varieties that perform best after overwintering are promoted in their breeding program.

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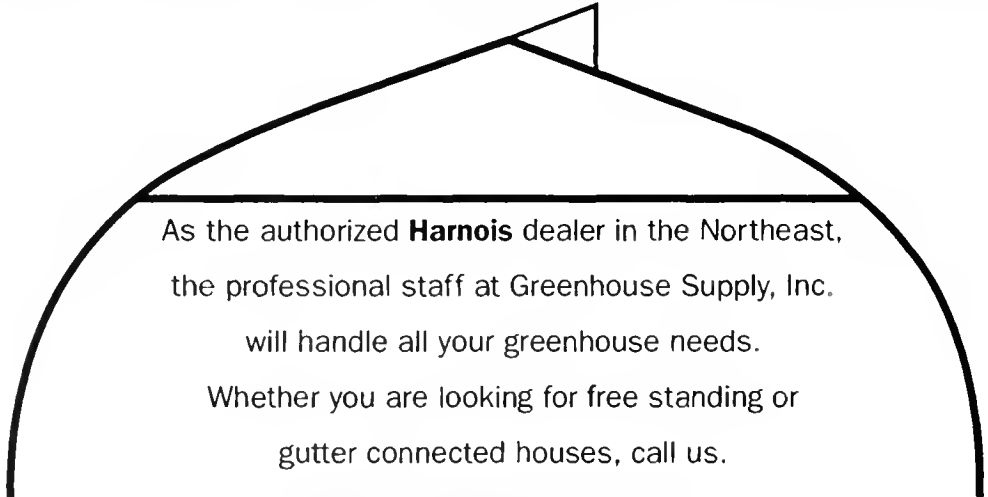
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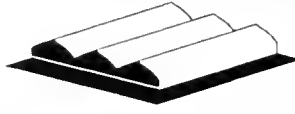
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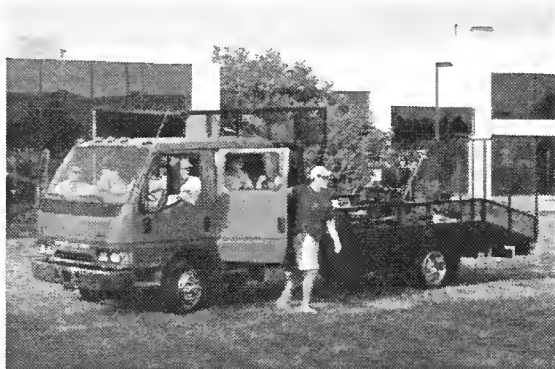
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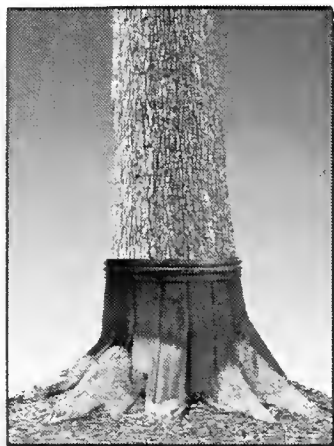
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NHPGA Receives Grant

The New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association has received a NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food Mini-Grant in the amount of \$500. The grant money will be used for the development of a new retail directory for our organization.

Robert Demers, of Demers Garden Center and a long-time NHPGA Board of Director, spearheaded the grant proposal. Demers plans to develop, create and distribute a directory of all NHPGA retail members to distribute to the general public at events like the Farm & Forest Expo as well as other state and local events that involve the green industry and the gardening public.

The directory will be in booklet form with a color cover. NHPGA retail members will be listed by region (north, central-lakes, west, south & seacoast) with each region representing a separate section of the booklet. Retailer information would be listed: firm name, address, contact information, business descriptive and possibly directions from a major highway. The booklet will also include advertisements and coupons.

The NHPGA Retail Directory will increase the general public's awareness of our association and its excellent products and services. The directory will be completed for distribution at Farm & Forest 2004.

12,695 Attend New England Grows in Boston

Move to New Convention Center Announced

The winter of 2003 held true to form with a storm that dropped 12" of snow on Boston during New England Grows. Despite the weather, 12,695 hardy New Englanders braved the storm and made their way to the annual conference, held February 6-8, 2003 at the Hynes Convention Center in downtown Boston.

A highlight of New England Grows is the educational conference that brings the "best and the brightest" speakers from around the globe to provide more than 35 hours of top-notch training. Industry luminaries such as Patrick Chasse, Rick Darke, Peter del Tredicci, Gordon Hayward, Kevin Kehoe, and David Minor received rave reviews from conference participants.

The New England Grows marketplace featured 620 exhibiting firms in more than 925 booth spaces. The five exhibit halls, which covered 200,000 square feet, were brimming with the latest plant material, products, equipment and services for green industry professionals.

Once again, New England Grows presented grant awards to the six New England state cooperative extension systems. This year, \$30,000 was given to support services that directly impact the green industry. Since its inception, the New England Grows endowment fund has contributed more than \$225,000 to the region's extension systems.

In another development, the New England Grows board of directors announced plans to move the conference and marketplace in February 2005 to the new Boston Convention and Exposition Center—a \$800 million convention facility currently being built on Boston's waterfront.

"We are very enthusiastic about our decision to change venues in 2005," said Scott McPhee, president of New England Grows. "The board spent more than three years deliberating the pros and cons of such a move and we're confident we've made the right decision for all of New England Grows' stakeholders."

Upon completion, the Boston Convention and Exposition Center (BCEC) will rival any major convention center in the world. The 600,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space will allow current New England Grows exhibitors the opportunity to increase their display space,

as well as accommodate more than 100 companies who have been waiting years to exhibit. The expanded marketplace, combined with mid-week dates, more parking, and a state-of-the-art convention facility promise an event not to be missed in early February 2005.

Started in 1993, New England Grows is sponsored by the New England Nursery Association, Associated Landscape Contractors of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Arborists Association, and the Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association.

New England Grows 2004 is scheduled for Thursday, February 5 through Saturday, February 7 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA. For more information, contact New England Grows by phone at (508) 653-3009, by e-mail at NEGrows@aol.com, or visit www.NEGrows.org.

2003 Farms of Distinction

As reported in the *Weekly Market Bulletin*, twelve outstanding agricultural operations were named New Hampshire Farms of Distinction for 2003. Two of these outstanding operations have ties to the NH Plant Growers' Association:

Goudreault Farm, Plaistow NH

This family owned and managed farm is a landmark amid the suburban neighborhoods next to the Massachusetts border. Once a dairy farm, it has been transformed into a thriving horticultural enterprise, featuring annuals, perennials, and poinsettias in season, plus pumpkins and vegetables, all marketed through a farm store. The Goudreault Farm is a NHPGA member.

Windswept Maples Farm, Loudon NH

This is the oldest continuously operated family farm in Loudon, and is now operated by the sixth, seventh and eight generations of the Moore



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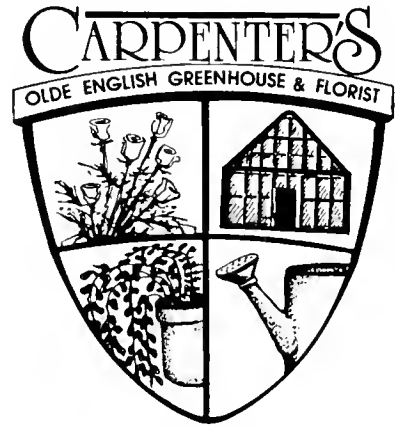
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family, which includes our own Plantsman editor, Melissa Moore! The Moore family produces maple products along with beef, beef jerky, lamb, sweet corn, pumpkins and other vegetables, much of which is marketed through its sugarhouse/farmstand set on scenic Loudon Ridge.

The Farms of Distinction program is administered by the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food and supported by Champions of New Hampshire Farms, a foundation that encourages good land stewardship and economic health of the agricultural sector. Congratulations to both of these fine operations!

New England Anemones

When Governor Craig Benson was inaugurated, New England Anemones graced the podium. These colorful flowers are grown by Gary and

Sabrina Matteson of Epsom, NH. Together with their three sons, the Matteson Family tend this horticultural crop that is marketed through wholesale outlets in New England and the region.

Gary Matteson, says the appearance of anemones was linked to their participation in the NH Stories Program. A wide array of NH made products were featured during the inaugural festivities.

Invasives

It's time to start thinking about what plants are going to be ready to step in when the big three—Norway Maple, Japanese Barberry, and Burning Bush are subjected to the Invasive Law prohibiting their sale.

To launch the discussion, UNH Extension sponsored a discussion March 12 to identify some alternatives. In order to have a supply ready to offer homeowners other retail customers and landscapers, now is the time to look ahead and gear up for supplying viable alternatives.

Invasive Species Committee Amended

During this year's legislative session, a House Bill was introduced to add two new members to the Invasive Species Committee. If the bill arrives on the governor's desk unchanged it will add a representative from UNH Extension to the Committee along with a person who shall represent livestock owners and feed growers interests. Visit www.state.nh.us and click on NH Laws to begin a search for the status of all pending legislative bills.

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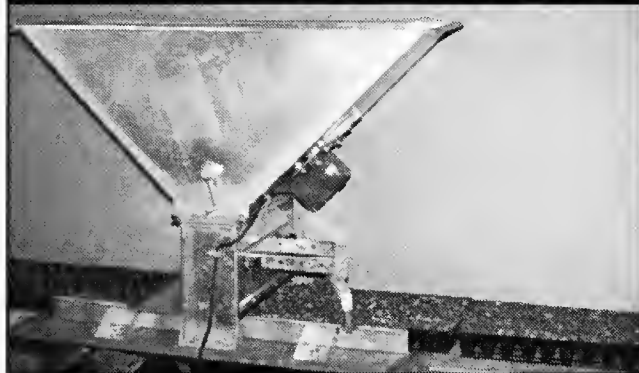
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Cornell Ecologists Study Invasives

Among 473 of the alien plant species that have invaded from Europe and become naturalized in the United States as noxious weeds, the “most successful” traveled light—carrying fewer plant diseases from their native habitats—and were more immune to New World plant diseases.

That is the conclusion of Cornell University ecologists after examining plant-health records on both sides of the Atlantic. The study, reported in the latest issue of the journal *Nature* (Feb. 6, 2003) by Charles E. Mitchell and Alison G. Power as “Release of invasive plants from fungal and viral pathogens,” is particularly significant in that it reconciles two theories, dating back to Charles Darwin in 1859, about successful naturalization of invading species.

Their findings, the ecologists say, should encourage biological-control strategists to look for weed-control pathogens both in the invading weeds’ native and adopted habitats. However, they warn that biological control can negatively impact native species and is no panacea. What most surprised Mitchell and Power was the finding that pathogens can help keep invasive plants in check.

“We’re coming to realize we should be grateful for our native plant pathogens,” adds Mitchell, a postdoctoral researcher in Cornell’s Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. “Invasive plants cost an estimated \$33 billion a year to the U.S. economy, but the damage would be worse were it not for our native fungi and viruses that control invasive plants to some degree.”

A parallel study of invasive animals, ranging from mollusks to mammals, reported in the same issue of *Nature* as “Introduced species

and their missing parasites” by ecologists at the University of California-Santa Barbara and Princeton University, reached similar conclusions about aliens’ success in new lands.

Both the plant study and the animal study sought data for two long-standing and much-debated theories, explains Power, a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology who also serves as dean of the Cornell University Graduate School. “The enemy-release hypothesis argues that invaders’ success results from reduced attacks by natural enemies from their native habitat, while the biotic-resistance hypothesis says invaders’ impacts are limited by interactions with native species, including natural enemies, in their new habitat,” she notes. “Our study found that both factors—enemy release and biotic resistance—are important in determining whether an invading plant species thrives to become a noxious weed or struggles to survive.”

The Cornell plant study began with 4,100 naturalized plant species, regarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as invaders surviving in wild populations in the United States without human intervention, and focused on 1,165 randomly chosen species. A further focus on plants from Europe, particularly the Mediterranean region, narrowed the study to 473 species, such as leafy spurge, sulphur knapweed and Russian thistle. The Cornell ecologists then compiled information on viral and fungal infections of the 473 species in their native and adoptive habitats. Mitchell credits Cornell undergraduates Jennifer Gardell and Brian Youn for assistance in what he calls a “mammoth data-mining task. For the first time, we were able to bring real numbers to the theories.”

The results: Invasive plants in the United States, on average, have 77 percent fewer diseases (84 percent fewer fungal diseases and 24 percent fewer viral diseases) compared with the same species in their native European habitats. (Viral diseases are harder for plants to escape because the viruses can travel, systemically, in the plants or in their seeds, the ecologists note.) And invading plants that had acquired the most pathogens in their naturalized ranges were less likely to become widespread, noxious weeds that are costly to agriculture. “These results suggest that invasive plants’ impacts are a function of both release from and accumulation of natural enemies, including pathogens,” the Cornell ecologists reported in *Nature*.

A second phase of the study—supported by the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Cornell University—is being planned to consider the role of herbivorous insects and soil-borne plant diseases in controlling invasive plant species. In the meantime, this confirmation of the enemy-release and biotic-resistance hypotheses should inform efforts to control invasive plants, Mitchell says.

“This is also an answer for those who wonder, what has Mother Nature done for us lately? We continue to receive free service from our natural ecosystem in the form of pest control,” Mitchell says. “The natural process of pathogen infection is helping to prevent invasive plants from becoming worse pests to humanity—without any subsidy from humans.”

Feb 2003 Cornell University News Service

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“Retail Recipes” A New Marketing Tool

The American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) and its retail division, the National Garden Center Organization, in conjunction with The Scotts Company, Marysville, Ohio, are proud to bring independent garden centers an innovative product showcasing the talented expertise of power merchandiser John Stanley with the launch of Retail Recipes. The recipes feature an extensive collection of easy to implement merchandising and promotional ideas designed to inspire customers to buy.

Retail Recipes, a two-year subscription-based program, offers independent garden centers 10 different card packs featuring dynamic and inspiring four-color photographs of sample displays, complete with step-by-step instructions. The packs arrive prior to each major selling season (spring, summer, fall, Christmas, winter). Each pack includes 15 assorted weather-resistant cards-giving retailers a total of 150 new merchandising ideas! Each card is filled edge-to-edge with information, tips and easy-to-follow instructions retailers can utilize to create exciting, seasonally appropriate merchandising displays all year long. This merchandising training tool will inspire and assist all levels of staff to create more compelling visual presentations.

“Retail Recipes grew out of a renewed commitment to create an innovative product that will help expand the marketplace excellence of the small and medium independent garden centers around the world,” says John Connel, vice president of independent business development for The Scotts Company. “The Scotts Company is pleased to partner with ANLA and NGCO on this visionary new product.”

Sample Retail Recipe packs are now available from ANLA. A website, www.retailrecipes.com, is coming soon! The website will also

feature an interactive area where garden centers can share their successful display ideas.

ANLA Press Release January 2003

Simply Beautiful™ & National Gardening Association Sprout Affiliation

With the intent of building brand awareness and driving sales to garden centers, Ball Horticultural has created a new partnership with the National Gardening Association, one of the leading sources of home gardening on the Internet.

Under the partnership, NGA will work with Ball to provide expert information and inspiration for Simply Beautiful™ customers. Additionally, the NGA site—www.garden.org—which attracts some 300,000 visitors a month, will help build a loyal customer following for the Ball brand of annuals and ultimately drive customers to garden centers.

“NGA will deliver strong editorial content on our products to users of their website,” notes Jeff Gibson, Ball marketing manager. “And this will, in turn, help make Simply Beautiful™ the annuals recommended by trusted NGA gardening experts and the brand asked for at garden centers.”

This new affiliation takes on several different formats. The NGA Regional Garden Reports, which are customized for the 14 different growing regions, will be featured on the Simply Beautiful™ website at www.simplybeautifulgardens.com.

Additionally, NGA experts will personally answer questions asked on the Simply Beautiful™ website and will provide a searchable database of some 1,000 frequently asked questions about annuals.

“NGA is committing to making every reasonable effort to answer those questions within 48 hours of their transmission,” explains Gibson. “Answers will be in the form of e-

mails sent back directly to our users. We want to make gardening as simple as possible.”

The national garden experts will also write “Learn and Grow” articles containing customized how-to features using Simply Beautiful™ flowers and product usage themes. These will be housed on the Simply Beautiful™ website and will be distributed as press releases to the general media.

“Research shows that consumers, particularly those that do not consider themselves ‘gardeners,’ are hungry for more and better growing information,” says Ball marketing manager Jeff Gibson. “Through its website and other services, NGA will deliver informational content customized to focus specifically on our products.” The site is now live.

Ball introduced The Simply Beautiful™ brand in Spring 2001. According to Gibson, the NGA partnership is just one of many new marketing tools Ball intends to introduce this year to support garden centers, the Simply Beautiful™ brand and, in the end, the consumer.

Ball Horticultural Company is an internationally renowned breeder, producer and wholesale distributor of ornamental plants. A family-owned business since it was founded in 1905, Ball has introduced many innovative, award-winning varieties, seed technologies, and services to the world of horticulture, including the ‘Madness™’ and ‘Wave™’ petunia series; ‘Dazzler™’ and ‘Super Elfin™’ impatiens; and ‘Bingo™’ pansies.

More information about the Simply Beautiful™ product line can be found at www.simplybeautifulgardens.com. Retailers can also register to be included on the Simply Beautiful™ product locator database. Contact Jeff Gibson (jgibson@ballhort.com) at Ball Horticultural for more information about Simply Beautiful.™

UNH Research—Cathy Neal

BY MELISSA MOORE

At the winter annual meeting Cathy Neal, UNH Extension Professor and Ornamentals Specialist, discussed her work investigating the merits of the pot-in-pot production system for NH growers. This production system, which first gained a foothold in the South in the early 1990's, has spread throughout the U.S. Here in the Granite State, Neal set out to answer if a tree's growth rate could be enhanced with the pot-in-pot system. A second research question focused on whether or not trees could be overwintered in this climate with the PIP system.

Pot-in-pot (PIP) has been promoted as a production method that moderates root zone temperatures and eliminates root mortality. During the summer months, it has been observed that roots in the western quadrant of the root ball have been killed by extreme high temperatures. The most critical days are not limited to the summer when ambient temperatures soar above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Even a beautiful fall day in October with a bright, clear blue sky can direct intense solar radiation on the pot and cause high temperatures that will kill roots. Neal added that root mortality will jeopardize tree top health since it leads to a loss of chlorophyll and protein and inhibits photosynthesis.

Neal indicated that a healthy root system is the cornerstone for producing a quality tree. She reminded growers that roots are the most fragile and vulnerable part of a tree to temperature damage therefore it's wise to pay close attention to root health.

The optimal zone for root development and maintenance is 60 -80 degrees Fahrenheit. At 86 degrees F., root growth will be retarded. The lethal range is 100 degrees F. and

above. Conversely, root growth is retarded at temperatures less than 60 degrees F. Winter hardiness is very dependent on species, but some roots die in the mid-to lower 20 degrees F., pachysandra will survive down to 15 degrees F., and yews and rhododendrons will stand temperatures down to 10 degrees F.

Neal began her research in June 2001, and continued to collect data through 2002. The on going project will yield additional research conclusions after the 2003 growing season. The tree species used in Neal's project included 'Donald Wyman' Crabapples and a lilac cultivar. Five different production systems were included in the project. A total of ten plants of each species were grown under each of the five different methods. The five different production methods were: field grown, standard container, The Above Ground System™ (an above ground container with an inverted pot over it, providing an air space between the pots), bag-in-pot and pot-in-pot.

Throughout the project, thousands of temperature readings were collected every 15 minutes and analyzed. The temperature readings proved beyond a doubt, that roots in containers were frequently exposed to high temperatures in the lethal range. Consequently strategies for root zone moderation are essential for producing quality trees. The readings for the winter months showed that the media in the pot-in-pot system closely followed soil temperatures. Consequently, Neal concluded that anything a NH grower would decide to overwinter in the field, could safely be overwintered with the pot-in-pot system.

In the first growing season, all containerized stock outgrew the field grown crabapples. However in year 2,

when looking at tree growth no significant difference could be determined between containerized stock and field grown. Neal said, "While some researchers have concluded that the PIP system has contributed to a growth enhancement, the current project underway at the UNH Horticultural Farm didn't follow this trend." Neal added, "At the end of year 2, the top growth and caliper size of the trees under all systems was amazingly consistent."

When the crabapple trees were harvested and removed from the liner pots in November 2002, another benefit of the PIP system surfaced. Neal and her research assistants weighed the dry weight of each root ball. The data showed the pot-in-pot trees had more root mass than trees grown under other systems. Field grown trees had the least harvested root mass. The impact of the heavier root ball, and how that impacts tree survival and growth after transplanting to the landscape, will be investigated in future growing seasons.

Neal pointed out in addition to the root zone moderation benefits, pot-in-pot has won over many growers because it allows in-place overwintering and could be viewed as a labor saving production method. The system lends itself to trickle irrigation, a watering method requiring much less water to maintain a crop compared to overhead watering. With trickle irrigation run-off is minimized and the water is supplied right where it is most needed for plant growth. Pot-in-Pot is favored over field grown trees because the entire tree in the liner pot can be lifted right out of the socket pot with an intact root system. The PIP system offers good year round access to a nursery crop.

PPA Names *Leucanthemum* 'Becky' 2003 Perennial Plant of the Year

The Perennial Plant Association (PPA) has named *Leucanthemum* 'Becky' the 2003 Perennial Plant of the Year. *Leucanthemum* 'Becky' is praised for its long bloom season and its ability to stand well in heat and humidity," said Dr. Steven Still, PPA Executive Director. 'Becky' can be used in borders, and containers, or in naturalized areas."

'Becky' is a single, white daisy with sturdy stems that do not require staking. The 2 to 3 foot tall plant begins flowering in late June and if deadheaded, flowers into late August and September. This perennial performs well in USDA Hardiness Zones 4 to 9. It grows in average garden loam and full sun.

The selection of *Leucanthemum* 'Becky' marks the 14th year for the Perennial Plant of the Year program. "The Perennial Plant of the Year program helps consumers select plants that perennial industry experts find to be outstanding and easily grown," Still said. "The

homeowner can have great confidence that the Perennial Plant of the Year will grow well in the garden." Gardeners can obtain this exciting perennial through their local garden centers.

The Perennial Plant of the Year program began in 1990 (see sidebar list) The membership of the Perennial Plant Association selects a perennial that is suitable for a wide range of climate types, low maintenance, easily propagated, and exhibits multi-seasonal interest. Each year, the PPA membership votes to select the Perennial Plant of the Year.

The PPA is an international professional association of 2,200 members incorporated in 1984. One of the goals of the Association is to disseminate information of benefit to the public regarding the use and care of perennials. Membership in the PPA includes growers, retailers, educators, garden writers, and members of landscape related industries.

Perennial Plant of the Year Index

- 2003 *Leucanthemum* 'Becky'
- 2002 *Phlox* "David"
- 2001 *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
- 2000 *Scabiosa columbaria* 'Butterfly Blue'
- 1999 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm'
- 1998 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus'
- 1997 *Salvia* 'Mainacht' (May night)
- 1996 *Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red'
- 1995 *Perovskia atriplicifolia*
- 1994 *Astilbe* 'Sprite'
- 1993 *Veronica* 'Sunny Border Blue'
- 1992 *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Moonbeam'
- 1991 *Hechera micrantha* 'Palace Purple'
- 1990 *Phlox stolonifera*

CATHY NEAL, CONTINUED

Field-grown trees, harvested and sold as B & B trees, require heavy equipment and skilled laborers to extract the tree from the site. In addition, the harvest season for most field-grown material is limited to early spring and/or late fall, when trees are dormant. Wet soils and poor weather conditions can severely limit the harvestability of field-grown trees.

Trees grown in traditional containers above ground are easily blown over in strong winds. Many hours of labor are required to put the tree upright. The blown down tree is also at risk for injury. These negatives are eliminated with the pot-in-pot system.

The downside to the pot-in-pot production method is the cost. The investment in two pots for every tree doubles the initial cash outlay, although the outer pot is reused for many years. In addition, the time required for creating a pot-in-pot installation is substantial. Neal emphasized that this production method was only suited for well drained soils. If heavy wet soils are prevalent, the roots will sit in the ground with permanently wet feet and tree growth will suffer.

Any root escape can be solved with a geo-textile fabric square placed between the pots, that kills the escaping

roots on contact. Also the pots are coated with a Spinout TM, a copper hydroxide product that helps prevents the rooting out problem.

The research project was sponsored by the NH Horticultural Endowment, New England Grows, UNH AG Experiment Station and UNH Cooperative Extension

For additional information contact Cathy Neal at 862-3208 or email cathy.neal@unh.edu



Rockingham Botanical Garden

2002–2003 Update

BY NANCY ADAMS

There has been exciting movement this past year in the development of the Rockingham County Botanical Garden (RCBG) and big plans ahead for the 2003 season. Here are some highlights.

We look upon the Rockingham County Botanical Garden as a community effort involving the New Hampshire horticultural businesses and allied trade associations, Master Gardener volunteers, garden clubs, and other interested citizens. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about The Garden, please contact: Nancy Adams, UNH Cooperative Extension, 679-5616.

2002 Accomplishments

- RCBG Bylaws completed
- Board of Directors selection process begun
- Charitable Trust designation received from the State of New Hampshire, Department of Justice
- Selected Bill Hoffman, Andover, NH, as landscape architect for the Master Plan development process. This followed a national search and interview of 7 landscape architect firms
- Held 2 educational events at garden attended by over 300 local residents
- Bank account opened for Trust
- 34 UNH Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners now volunteering with project

2003 Plan of Work

- Filed with IRS for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status
- Initiate membership campaign in Spring 2003. Watch for brochures to come in the mail to NHPGA members
- Begin Master Plan development process with Bill Hoffman and a broad-based design oversight team to include NHPGA, NHLA, UNH Cooperative Extension, etc.—Fall 2003
- Host 2 educational events on-site: June 22 & September 14, 10A.M.–1P.M.
- Develop a major signature fund-raising event for July 2004—Garden Fest Extravaganza
- Further Board of Directors development

Soil and Plant Tissue Testing: Important Tools for the Horticulture Industry

BY STUART BLANCHARD

Commercial crops are inherently high-value and must be delivered at the right time and in the best possible condition.

Soil and plant tissue tests are important tools for the management of crop nutrients. Soil tests provide the best measure of the soil's ability to supply nutrients, and plant tissue tests can help confirm adequate delivery of nutrients or help diagnose problems. Together, soil and plant tissue testing and can help you

- optimize production,
- prevent or diagnose plant problems,
- save money on nutrient applications,
- deliver your crop in the best possible condition.

Soil tests are available for both traditional field soils as well as media typically used in greenhouse crop production. The field soil test includes the pH, texture, buffer pH, nutrients Ca, Mg, K, P, and calculated base saturations and CEC. In addition, the organic matter content

can be determined as well as the micro-nutrients B, Cu, Fe, Mn, Mo, and Zn.

The greenhouse media test is more extensive and includes pH, Ca, Mg, K, P, B, Cu, Fe, Mn, Mo, Zn, S, Na, Al, NO₃-N, NH₄-N, and EC utilizing the saturated media extract.

In addition to the soil tests, it is also possible to monitor the alkalinity and nutrient status of irrigation water, a potential (and often overlooked) source of problems. A typical irrigation water test includes pH, EC, Alkalinity, Ca, Mg, K, P, Na, B, Cu, Fe, Mn, Mo, Zn, S, Na, Al, Cl, NO₃-N, and NH₄-N.

Once the nutrient status of the soil and quality of the irrigation water have been determined it is possible to recommend the optimum amounts of lime and fertilizer required to grow the desired crop.

The plant tissue test includes the nutrients N, P, K, Ca, Mg, B, Cu, Fe, Mn, Mo, Zn, Al, and S and is best used to confirm the nutrient

status of a growing crop or confirm suspected deficiencies or excesses.

Soil, irrigation water, and plant tissue tests provide the best way to monitor your crop. They are quick, easy, and very inexpensive compared to the total value of the crop.

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For more information on taking and submitting soil, water, and plant tissue samples point your browser to <http://ccinfo@unh.edu> and click on Agricultural Resources and Plants.

Stuart Blanchard is an employee at the UNH Soil Testing Lab

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Managing Uncertainty

Now that it's spring, with benches filling fast, and greenhouses are ready to explode with color, it's easy to get consumed with endless projects in preparation for the 2003 season.

All too often individuals focus solely on the micro side of their operation and forget to look at the big picture. In order to manage a successful business you cannot risk burying your head in the sand. The issues we face today - including the tension with Iraq, the threat of terrorism and overall economic uncertainty - need to be taken into consideration when making management decisions.

History tends to repeat itself, so those with years of experience should be looking back to prepare for the future. Understanding the impact similar events have had in the past will make a good manager stand out in the event of adversity. For the less seasoned manager, ask questions, know your market, and be prepared to adapt. The following are a few areas that should be focused on as you progress through what could be an eventful year.

- Understand what impact current events will have on your business and your customers. (ex: rising fuel cost not only impact your variable production costs, but also chips away at retail customers disposable income creating dollar conscious consumers)
- Examine your current debt structure. With interest rates at levels that many of us have never seen it is important to look at rate strategy and risk tolerance. (ex: Weighing fixed versus variable rates, can your current structure and cash flow stomach the transition from a declining rate market to one that is rising?)
- As always, carefully analyze capital expenditures, construction projects, and expansion. Taking on too much debt could potentially effect your ability to survive a down turn and prosper when we see a rebound.
- With variable expenses on the rise it is important to carefully monitor costs. At the same time look

at inventory control. Good inventory management leads to stronger profits in both up and down cycles.

- Record keeping is essential for success. The number of software options available today can simplify your life. Take advantage of technology. Accurate records will allow you to make informed decisions.

2003 is gearing up to be an exciting year, focus on what makes your business a success, and continue to educate yourself and your staff. Looking at the big picture will allow you to position your business for future growth and prosperity.

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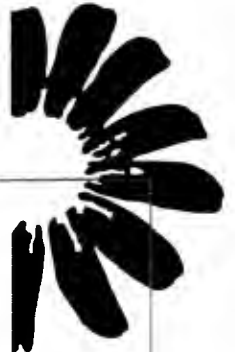
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Weed or Wonder Mullein Takes a Stand

MADELINE PERRON

Verbascum Thapsus or common mullein, known by most of us to be a roadside weed, can prove to be a valuable garden accent and useful herb. The word mullein is derived from the Latin word "mollis" meaning soft, referring to the soft leaves covered with tiny hairs. Mullein is a biennial with velvety leaves, sometimes a foot long, arranging themselves in a pretty rosette, low to the ground in its first year of growth. The second year, a long spear shaped flower stalk appears with pale yellow flowers opening sporadically throughout the summer months into fall. It can reach heights of 3 to 8 feet depending on the type of soil that it's grown in. This plant, which has naturalized here in the U.S., is very resilient to Mother Nature's wrath, including poor soil, hot dry weather and cold temperatures as low as 30 degrees below. It can be found in wastelands and along roadsides, and

will gladly reseed itself once established in your yard.

Mullein is a practical herb with many uses. The large wooly leaves were once used by Native Americans to diaper their little papooses. Some tribes even smoked the dried roots and leaves to treat asthma. The leaves were used as bandages to help soothe inflammation, relieve pain, and protect an injury. Mucilage within the leaves and flowers has the ability to soothe irritated membranes. Another component, saponin, can make coughs more productive. It was also proven to have anti-inflammatory properties.

During the Civil War, the soldiers made use of mullein for treating respiratory problems when they ran out of conventional medicines. Tea made from the leaves or flowers can be used to treat chest colds bronchitis and asthma.

The tall flower stalks were dried and dipped in tallow to use as torches as far back as Roman times. The

dried leaves and flower spikes are great for tinder. They are highly flammable and are usually readily available for starting a fall campfire. The leaves and smaller rosettes can be pressed for craft projects and the dried leaves and flowers are also useful as a filler for potpourri. Most gardeners are not impressed with the flowers of the common mullein, but there are now some 300 species of *verbascum* available in many colors and branching stalks that can be very impressive as garden accents. In my garden, I enjoy transplanting the tiny rosettes to places of honor to enjoy the soft gray leaves and pretty rosettes, pinching back the flower stalk to make a lush base plant. When pruned this way, the grandchildren can reach in and caress the leaves as they meander through my garden.

Maddy Perron is a Master Gardener with a special interest in herbs.



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ANLA Unveils Headliners for “Revolutionary” Convention, July 16–20

The American Nursery & Landscape Association announces its headliners for its Convention & Learning Retreat in Boston, July 16–20. Retired U.S. Navy Capt. D. Michael Abrashoff, best-selling author of *The Big Dig* Dan McNichol, and the “Ambassador of Fun” Tony Brigmon, will motivate, educate and energize attendees.

The “Revolutionary Learning Experience” kicks off Friday, July 18 with “Big Thoughts Speaker” Capt. (Ret.) D. Michael Abrashoff speaking about grassroots leadership, the process of replacing command and control with commitment and cohesion by engaging the hearts, minds and loyalties of workers. Grassroots leadership is a principal that empowers every individual to share the responsibility of achieving success. It was through this dedication and leadership style that Abrashoff was able to turn around exceptionally low morale and high turnover on the USS Benfold and make the Benfold the finest ship in

the Pacific Fleet and an example the entire U.S. Navy follows today. The Benfold was awarded the prestigious Spokane Trophy for having the highest degree of combat readiness.

On Saturday, July 19, attendees will be both entertained by the self-proclaimed “Ambassador of Fun” Tony Brigmon and awed by author Dan McNichol and his role in Boston’s Central/Artery Tunnel Project (“The Big Dig”).

Brigmon is a unique individual who has developed an unusual ability to bring business meetings to life. Brigmon gained notoriety after conceiving a unique way to generate PR for Southwest Airlines as a keynote speaker and creating a highly successful way to present stress management information to 2,000 Southwest employees. Because of his successful work in Southwest’s customer care and employee development areas, Brigmon earned Southwest Airlines President’s Award for exemplifying the spirit of enthusiasm, fun and

care, which is Southwest, and for sharing that spirit creatively through employee development programs. Brigmon will offer his ideas for motivating your team, adding pizzazz and personality to your business culture even in challenging times.

To cap the morning general session, Dan McNichol will inspire attendees to think “outside-the-box” when he shares his experiences on one of the nation’s largest interstate highway projects, The Big Dig. McNichol spent 10 years on becoming an expert on Boston’s Central/Artery Tunnel Project, when he started working on the project as the executive assistant to the project’s director. While in that role, he partook in the project management and overseeing the management consultant before becoming the Big Dig spokesman. His innovative work style has led him to be featured in many articles and programs.

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SUMMER TRADE SHOW. Our big event! An opportunity to meet directly with your suppliers, make new contacts, and enjoy a great barbecue.

THE PLANTSMAN. The best horticultural association publication in the Northeast. Free with every paid membership. Helps keep you up to date on our industry events, news, and legislation, along with timely articles for better business management.

CLOUT. The more members, the more clout we'll have on the political front in Concord. In 1999 we helped pass legislation that allows non-permanent structures (hoop houses) a tax-exempt status.

Membership Application

Please complete the information below.

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 Would you be willing to serve on a NHPGA Committee? Yes No

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- Companies with 11-20 full-time employees \$125
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- Associate Membership \$100
- Student Membership \$15
- Employee of Member Company (can be mailed to your home) for \$15
- Senior Rate (60 + years) \$50

I hereby apply for membership and agree to abide by the by-laws established by the New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please send application and check to: New Hampshire Plant Growers Association, 5 Birch Tree Lane, Bow, NH 03304



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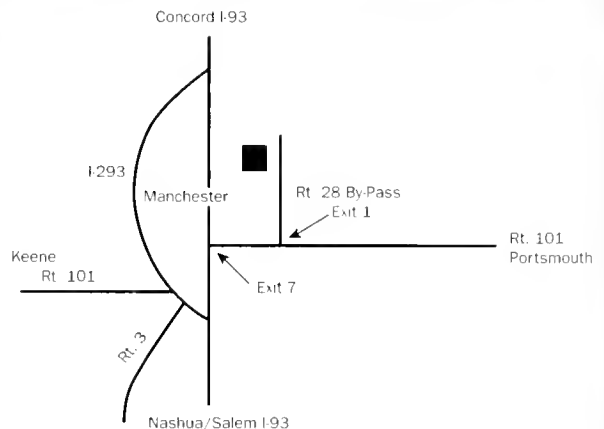
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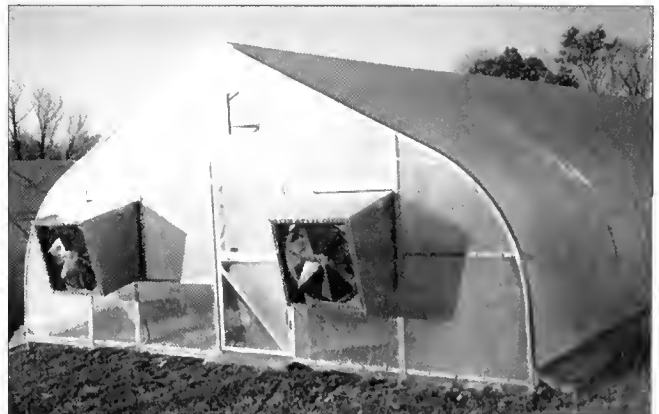
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NHPGA will be promoting this book throughout the growing season. Be sure to have copies for your customers when they come looking for it! Order today! The order form for this book appears on page 22 in this issue of *The Plantsman*. A more detailed description of the book can be found on page 11 of the Winter 2003 issue of *The Plantsman*.

Funding for this publication is thanks to the Agricultural Promotion Grant from the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Food, and Markets.

—Virginia Hast

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