

*The* **Plantsman**

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APRIL AND MAY 1998

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**April**

**15** Connecticut Greenhouse Growers' Association (CGGN) "Evening at the Greenhouse," Michael's Greenhouse, Cheshire, CT; 203-261-9067.

**20-26** New Hampshire Orchid Week

☞ **Wednesday, April 22,** 5-7pm: New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association Twilight Meeting, Kathan Gardens, Newport, NH; Dennis Kathan at 603-863-1089.

**24** Arbor Day

**24-26** Seventh Annual New Hampshire Orchid Society Show, Nashua National Guard Armory, Daniel Webster Highway, Nashua, NH; Joanna Eckstrom at 603-654-5070.

**May**

**8-9** (9:30-2) "Heritage Plant Sale," Strawberry Banke, Portsmouth, NH; 603-433-1108.

**8-18** Canadian Tulip Festival, Ottawa, Ontario, and Hull, Quebec; 613-567-5757.

**15-17** Greater Nashua Flower Show ("An Evening at the Opera"), Hunt Memorial Library, Nashua, NH; Kathy Sununu at 603-434-6870.

**June**

**17** CGGN "Evening at the Greenhouse," Van Wilgen Garden Center, North Branford, CT; 203-261-9067.

☞ **Thursday, June 18** New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association Twilight Meeting, Churchill's Garden Center, 12 Hampton Road, Exeter, NH; Jim Moser at 603-772-2685.

**19-20** (Friday, 5-9pm; Saturday 9am-2pm) Tenth Annual "Pocket Gardens of Portsmouth" Tour, sponsored by South Church, 292 State Street, Portsmouth, NH; 603-436-4762.

**July**

**15** Connecticut Nurserymen's Association Summer Meeting, Imperial Nursery, Granby, CT; 860-204-9162.

**18** Tour of the Gardens of Lake Sunapee, Newbury, NH; information: Friends of John Hay National Wildlife Refuge at 603-763-4789.

**22** "A Cruise into Lake Sunapee's Past" to benefit The Fells, Newbury, NH; 603-763-4789.

**25-26** Mount Washington Valley Garden Trail (awards ceremony: July 19); information and map locations: Joan Sherman at 603-367-4764.

**26** Ninth Annual State of Maine Open Farm Day; Jane Aiudi at 207-287-3891.

**August**

☞ **Wednesday, August 5** New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association Summer Meeting, UNH Research Greenhouses, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH; Paul Fisher at 603-862-4525.

**5** Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association Summer Meeting, Roger Williams Park, Providence, RI; 508-761-9260.

**7-9** 24 Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Summer Conference, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA; 978-355-2853.

**12** New England Nurserymen's Association Summer Meeting, Prides Corner Farm, Lebanon, CT; 508-653-3009.

**14** Benefit Auction, The Fells, Newbury, NH; 603-763-4789.

**15** Seventh Annual Plant Sale, The Fells, Newbury, NH; 603-763-4789.

**Looking ahead...**

**October 19-21** New England Greenhouse Conference, Worcester, MA; Henry Huntington at 603-435-8361.

**Departments**

**3** From the Board

Ann Hilton

**5** Forum

**7** New Hampshire News

**11** Elsewhere In the News

**27** How About Herbs

Tanya Jackson

**Features**

**17** Native to Northern New England and Proud of It. Cheryl Lowe

**19** Two Simple Words Nancy Adams

**21** MEMBER PROFILE: Chakarian Farm Greenhouses

**23** A Honeybee Overview David C. Sorensen

**Columns**

**8** Kiwi Corner Paul R. Fisher

**14** The Griffin Spu

**18** The Green Spot Mike Cherim

**20** Z Notes Jim Zablocki

**24** Pioneer Pointers

**Cover**

Late winter: Chakarian Farm Greenhouses; Photo: Rick Raymond

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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## A Customer's Point of View

Ann Hilton

Last spring, for the first time in thirteen years, due to the birth of my son, I found myself not working in greenhouses or a garden center. I thought it would be wonderful to have the time off, but as spring approached, I found I really missed the activity. You'd think that after all those long, tiring days growing or waiting on customers, I'd want to stay as far away from it all as possible, but I didn't. I realized I had a unique chance to visit places I'd heard about, packed orders for, or grew for at a time of year when they'd be at their best.

So once a week, my son and I hit the road and visited places throughout New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts. I found myself looking at things from a customer's point of view. What attracted me to a place and made me want to go

back? What made my shopping experience pleasant? Or frustrating? What made me want to buy something? Maybe some of the things I noticed can help you increase sales.

I found myself attracted to places that were nicely landscaped or that had attractive displays that were well-maintained or that showcased something new. I found it gave me confidence that the owners knew what they were doing and that I would find good-quality plants and knowledgeable staff. It upped the perceived value of the product. I also found cleanliness important: were there half-dead plants tucked into corners or under benches in the hope that someday someone would get around to resurrecting them? The bad plants made the good plants look not so good.

I know from experience that on a

nice Saturday in May, no matter how much staff you have, it's never enough. Your employees are bombarded with questions. How many sales are lost because a customer didn't wait for an answer? How many just went ahead and bought the plant, only to have a bad experience because it wasn't right for their needs? Having easy-to-read informative signs (with prices) will make your customers happier and free up your help somewhat. Good signs also meant that I didn't have to go digging through pots or packs looking for tags. I'll put the tag back, but other people may not. (So, what color is that delphinium without the tag?)

There are many options for good signs. Some can be purchased ready-made. Some can be generated on computers and printed on



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weather-resistant labels. Some businesses use laminators that can be purchased at office supply stores to protect signs they made themselves from watering and weather. Some companies had signs they use from year to year; they didn't have prices on them, but offered price lists as you walked in the door. One place gave me a catalog with cultural information and prices on the perennials they offered. This I thought would be handy to keep as a reference (and would remind me—the consumer—of where I could go to get what I needed). Another place I visited had a series of mailboxes mounted on a telephone pole. Each box contained xerox copies about different perennial topics—plants for wet areas, for shade, color, etc. The more that is done to help answer a customer's questions, the happier I, the customer, will be.

At several places I visited, I encountered one of my pet peeves: greenhouses offering new introductions or something special for the year, but without giving any indication of the fact. Experienced gardeners like myself get excited over new plants. I want to try them, but first you have to let me know you have them and then tell me how to grow them. Don't mix them in with everything else—showcase them. One place I visited had Supertunias in four-inch pots for about \$2.50 setting right next to regular old petunias in 6-pacs for \$1.95. Which would you buy? A couple places grew oddball annuals you can't buy tags for. So what is it? It was a busy day at one place and I couldn't get my question answered. I was disappointed and didn't buy the plant and this probably explained why it looked like no one else had either.

Another area of customer service that I found very important was having a way to carry the things I wanted to buy. Make sure you provide plenty of boxes or trays where customers can easily find them. Carts or wagons are also a must—especially at big places. I might not give in to that impulse to buy if I can't carry it.

I also like the idea of plastic trunk liners. In our business, water and soil make mud. Most folks don't want it in their car and usually aren't prepared for it (especially people like me who buy more than they can get in their trunks and have to put things on the back seat).

One area that many businesses don't address—and which I happened to have found important—is that of restrooms. If you've got to go and the business doesn't have a public one, you're going to go—



## Membership Drive!

We are looking for a few good new members.

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES (please check one)

- MEMBER: *Someone actively engaged in the horticulture industry or allied professional. Annual dues \$35.00.*
- STUDENT MEMBER: *Full-time student of horticulture-related studies. Annual dues \$15.00.*
- EMPLOYEE MEMBER: *Employee of member firm in good standing. Annual dues \$15.00*

Please send application and check to: New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association 56 Leavitt Rd. Hampton, NH 03842

elsewhere—without buying or getting to see everything you wanted to. The age group with the most disposable income is reaching the stage of their lives where this is becoming an important issue. I don't think the restroom has to be anything fancy—just clean. A well-maintained portable toilet suits me just fine and some places had them.

I know spring is a tough season and we all enter it with the best of intentions. I also know some of what I've written here you've heard before. However, after seeing things from a customer's perspective, I've come to realize how important the things I've mentioned really are to your sales and to your customers' satisfaction.

I hope your spring season is great and that all your weekends are sunny!

(Ann can be reached at 603-435-6425.)

### A Word of Thanks

In mid-winter, a quiet time for many people, major NHPGA events take place—the Winter Meeting and participation in the Farm and Forest Exposition. We also have a display at New England Grows.

This quiet time was a busy one for the NHPGA members who made these events a success. At Farm and Forest, we thank Bob Rimol, George Timm, and Bob Demers and the Demers Garden Center staff for handling our display there. Bob Rimol also brought the display to New England Grows. George is redesigning our display to reflect our more varied involvements and some of his ideas were visible.

Tim Wolfe worked with Michelle Fischer from the New Hampshire Landscape Association organizing the joint winter meeting. He and Michelle put together a lively pro-

gram of diverse speakers offering much useful information. Chris Robarge and Guy Hodgdon handled registration.

All these people—and probably others unlisted—deserve your thanks. Volunteer effort is what keeps the NHPGA going.

### Endowment Update

Our steady growth toward our goal continues. The New Hampshire Horticultural Endowment has now received pledges for \$80,000. This means we have attained 80% of our goal!!!! Major gifts from the Ball Seed Company and the Champions of New Hampshire Farms/New Hampshire Department of Agriculture (thanks, Steve Taylor, for your help on this one) have helped us to get this far. Generous gifts were also received from Edgewater Farm (West Lebanon), Johnson and Dix



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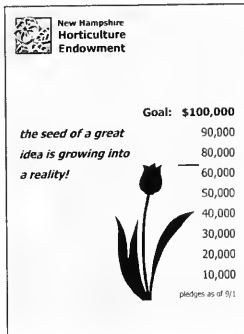
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Fuel Corporation (Concord), Ronald B. Laurence, P.E. Consultant (Portsmouth), and Wayside Farm (Sandwich). Many thanks to these organizations and to all those who have helped out already.

The grant proposal committee has met and made some initial drafts for grant proposal and application requirements. We hope to iron these out so that we can start circulating information this summer and fall and perhaps fund research by 1999!

For anyone who isn't familiar with our campaign, we are trying to raise \$100,000 to finance practical research on plant growth and production that is applicable to New Hampshire horticulture. We still have a way to go. Anyone feeling generous? Can you suggest organizations or individuals who might like to help our cause?



Please let us know.

*(For those wishing to contribute, checks made out to New Hampshire Horticultural Endowment can be sent to New Hampshire Horticultural Endowment, 7316 Pleasant Street, Loudon, NH 03301. For more information, contact Peter van Berkum at 603-463-7663 or Henry Huntington at 603-435-8361).*

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- \* Greenhouse taxation
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- \* Agricultural employee laws

**New Hampshire Farm Bureau....** has, over the years, led the way on legislative issues that affect New Hampshire's farms and agricultural businesses. We will continue to do so into the future and hope to involve more of you, our friends & colleagues involved in horticulture in N.H.

If you answered yes to the question above and would like more information on what benefits joining N.H.F.B. will bring to you, please contact:

Wendle Loomis at 224-1934

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**UPDATE**

**the Greenhouse Taxation Bill as of 3/6/98**

Bob Rimol

House Bill 170 passed in the House in January and is now in the Senate Ways and Means Committee, but we are now at a pivotal point in the legislative process. Although the consensus is that the bill is acceptable in its present form, there is content we would like to have amended so that the bill has more merit in the horticulture industry. These concerns were submitted to the House, but were not addressed because of time constraints.

Presently, through letters, phone calls, and personal visits, we're working with the seven members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee to educate them and

explain our concerns. We are also hoping to simplify some of the bill's content.

Along with the NHPGA, this bill is also being supported by the Farm Bureau and the New Hampshire Vegetable Growers' Association. HB 170 also has commissioner Steve Taylor's endorsement.

The bill in its present form does not reflect two specific changes we would like to see addressed, but it isn't prudent at this time to pursue these changes. The first issue is that the bill in its present form does not include the exemption of greenhouses used for retail sales. The second, although of minor importance to

the greenhouse industry, is that the bill does not include the exemption of greenhouse taxation for all agricultural products (i.e., calf barns). Our strategy is to get the bill passed in its present form or with the amendments and then, in a future legislative session, amend the bill again to include exemption for retail greenhouses.

Now that our industry is approaching its busiest time of the year, it will become increasingly difficult for us to spend time and energy on this bill. However, it's vital that you get involved when it comes down to "crunch time," that is, when the Senate Ways and Means Committee completes its review and the bill is ready for the final vote. At that point—which will be soon (unfortunately, we don't know exactly when), we

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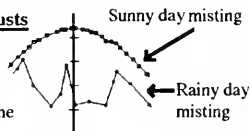


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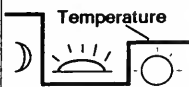
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Kiwi Corner

## Preparations Underway

**P**reparations are well underway for the 1998 New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association Summer Meeting to be hosted here at UNH. Keep August 5 open on your calendar, because this promises to be the biggest ornamental horticulture event ever staged here at the university.

Along with the chance to get together with friends and make new industry contacts, this year's meeting will offer a large number of educational displays. The central theme is "Working Together to keep New Hampshire Green(\$):" i.e., strengthening partnerships between industry and the university so that we can better serve your business needs. We have a great team from Cooperative Extension, the Thompson School, and the Department of Plant Biology that are involved in setting up the meeting.

We will provide you with more information closer to the date, but I would like to mention several displays that will be presented.

A group of Cooperative Extension personnel, facilitated by David Seavey, has developed a way to evaluate the marketing strengths and weaknesses of roadside stands and nursery retail outlets. Another display will show how new taxes and zoning laws are likely to affect the green industry. This kind of information can be critical to the financial success of your company.

Plant health management in the form of integrated pest management, plant disease diagnosis, and soil and tissue analysis are some of the most direct and beneficial services that UNH provides to growers. At the summer meeting, there will be displays to help you identify and manage common diseases and pests and you will also be able to bring along soil samples for analysis.

I hope that many of you have taken advantage of the computer workshops offered around the state by Cooperative Extension during March. These workshops targeted computer applications for the green industry and the use of the world wide web. In addition to the web's potential for advertising and sales, the web also contains a tremendous amount of technical information from land grant universities throughout the U.S. targeted to ornamental producers.

This is just a sample of the information that will be on display at the Summer Meeting. In the next issue, I will talk about some exciting new research information on the display there as well.

Paul Fisher, Department of Plant Biology, Spaulding Hall G-44, UNH, Durham, NH 03824 can be reached by phone at 603-862-4525, by fax at 603-862-4757, or by e-mail at [prf@hopper.unh.edu](mailto:prf@hopper.unh.edu).

will need you to make phone calls to your local senators or representatives. We have worked very hard to get to this point and we don't want to lose what we've gained because of lack of interest from our industry.

As soon as we need your help, we'll be faxing a strategy with talking points to be used in your discussion with legislators. Please take the time to make a few calls—probably less than five per association member. Typically, legislators see about 800 bills a year and are very uninformed about most. A phone call simply explaining the bill and its importance to our industry could be all that is needed to convince a senator or representative to vote in our favor. So keep your eyes and ears open for this next—and final—step, so that we can make HB 170 a reality.

For more information, you can contact Bob Rimol, Rimol Greenhouse Systems, at 603-629-9004.

## Homeowner Horticulture

UNH Cooperative Extension is offering two "Homeowner Horticultural Seminars." Each is held twice: a landscaping seminar will be held on April 18 at UNH Manchester and again on May 2 at the Howard Johnson Hotel in Portsmouth; a lawn care seminar will be held on April 25 at UNH Manchester and on May 16 at the Howard Johnson Hotel, Portsmouth.

Times are 8:30am—1pm. Cost is \$59 per person per seminar or \$99 for both. Preregistration is required. Contact UNH Plant Biology at 603-862-3200 or Paul Belhumeur at 603-225-5505, extension 21.

Meant for homeowners, you may want to tell your customers about these opportunities to learn home-landscaping skills.

## Job Fair

On February 19, more than thirty companies from the Northeast participated in the first-ever Green Industry Job Fair at the Thompson School. Businesses in attendance included arborists, garden centers, greenhouses, landscape contractors and architects, and nurseries. All New England states, along with New York and Pennsylvania, were represented.

Companies reps had the opportunity to talk with over 100 students from programs in horticulture technology, plant biology, forest technology, natural resources, and environmental conservation. Talk was animated and a few deals were sealed on the spot.

Next year, it's likely that the event will move to the Memorial

Union Building to allow access to greater numbers of students and space for more businesses to exhibit.

Meanwhile, owners and managers looking for help are encouraged to send announcements of Green Industry positions to the Hort Tech program, Putnam Hall, UNH, Durham, NH 03824 (fax 603-862-4752) or to the Department of Plant Biology, Rudman Hall.

## A Broader Category

The NH Plant Growers' Association has sponsored an award at the NH Orchid Society Show for the last several years. It has always been for "Best Cut Flower Arrangement," but for the last couple years, there have not been many potential recipients. The

NHPGA award will now be for "Best Artistic Design," a category which can include displays as well as arrangements and seems to offer much more possibility.

This is the 15th (Crystal) Anniversary of the New Hampshire Orchid Society (NHOS) and a sponsor of the show is Princess House Crystal. The awards reflect this: they will be certificates in 8"x10" crystal frames.

This year's show (April 24-26 at the Nashua Armory) will emphasize speakers and workshops. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Leon Glickenstein from Chicago, an authority on orchids of various North American regions, who will be speaking on "Native New England Orchids" on Saturday at 11 and 3.

There will be other speakers from the chapter itself and Gover-

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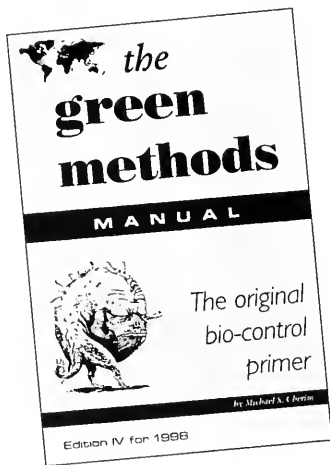
PHONE: 603-629-9004 FAX 603-629-9023

nor Shaheen will declare April 20-26 "New Hampshire Orchid Week." For more, contact Joanna Eckstrom at 603-654-5070.

**New Publication**

The fourth—1998—edition of *The Green Methods Manual, The Original Bio-control primer* has recently been published by The Green Spot, Ltd., the biological control distributor based in Nottingham, New Hampshire.

Written by Mike Cherim, what was originally a catalog has evolved into a hybrid 244-page catalog/technical manual illustrated with 134 photographs (many taken by Mike himself). It's described as "filled with useful and forthright information" and "written with knowledge obtained



from real growers."

For \$9.95 (this includes shipping and handling), you get your money's worth. It's lively and con-

versational—and very hands-on—and after reading about something, you can order it—the information's right here.

But biological control's still evolving, with positives, yes, but with some negatives and plenty of unresolved questions. *The Green Methods Manual* gives lots of facts, but these need to be tied together by a more objective and broader picture.

This is not to deny the manual's value, but to say you should learn as much as possible. Bio-control requires a somewhat different way of doing things and it's wise to have begun to acquire the right mindset before ordering your first batch of "Crypts."

For more, contact Mike Cherim (93 Priest Road, Nottingham, NH 03290-6204) at 603-942-8925.



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## Market Opening

(*Growing ME Green*, January, 1998)

Opening this spring, the Portland Public Market will reestablish the tradition of indoor public markets in Portland, Maine. Permanent tenants will be 30-35 independent, locally owned businesses selling produce, meat, poultry, seafood, baked goods, flowers, and a variety of specialty foods. The idea is to maximize the number of products that come from Maine, while offering customers year-round availability of high-quality fresh foods.

The market is in downtown Portland near Monument Square, where the Portland Farmers' Market will continue to meet on Wednesdays.

Day tables inside the new Portland Public Market will provide an opportunity for local producers to

sell food or horticultural products on a short-term basis.

For information, call 207-772-8140.

## Conferences

The 24th annual summer conference of the Northeast Organic Farming Association will be held on August 7-9 at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. It seems as fun and informative as ever: the keynote speaker will be Wendell Berry, well-known farmer and writer; other aspects include exhibits, workshops (over 140 on topics ranging from Organic Fruit and Vegetable Production to Families and Health), a children's conference, a teen conference, a contradance, an old-time country fair...

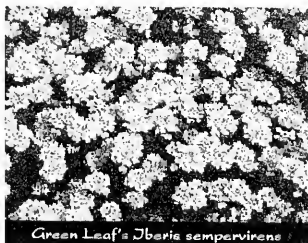
For information on advertising, exhibiting, or sponsorship, contact

Beth Ingram, PO Box 71, Winchendon Springs, MA 01477. Her phone/fax is 978-297-1148; for general information, write to NOFA Summer Conference, 411 Sheldon Road, Barre, MA 01005; the phone number there is 987-355-2853.

## Publications

The very useful *New England Integrated Pest Management Scouting Guide for Poinsettias, a Manual for Growers and Scouts* is now available. This 30-page manual shows key insects, diseases, and disorders in 23 color photos and 11 line drawings and contains 15 tables and two summary charts on the biology of key pests and scouting techniques.

For a copy, send a check for \$10.00 made payable to the University of Connecticut to University of



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Connecticut, Office of Communications and Information Technology, U-35, 1376 Storrs Road, Storrs, CT 06269-4035.

*Weed Management in Horticultural Crops*, "a practical guide to hands-on weed management techniques and procedures, will help horticulturalists, extension agents, farmers, nursery operators, landscapers, and gardeners fight back against widespread weed problems."

Published by the ASHS Press (a subsidiary of the American Society for Horticultural Science) and edited by Milton McGiffen, Jr. (University of California, Riverside) from the proceedings of a joint ASHS and the Weed Science Society of America workshop held in February, 1997, the book discusses management methods in horticultural crops—vegetable, tree fruit, landscape, nursery, turf, as well

as management techniques ranging from organic to chemical. To ensure breadth, most chapters are authored by scientists from several regions of the country.

To order (for \$29.95 plus shipping), write the ASHA Press at 600 Cameron Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2562. the phone number is 703-836-2418; the fax, 703-836-6838.

### Preferred Stock

(*Greenhouse Grower*, February, 1998)

Kieft Seeds' new series of greenhouse cut flowers offers a wide range of color. The *Matthiola incana* (stock) QIS series is made up of 100% selectable types with a high percentage of double flowers, green leaves, and strong stems.

Consisting of ten colors (white, cream, light rose, dark rose, carmine,

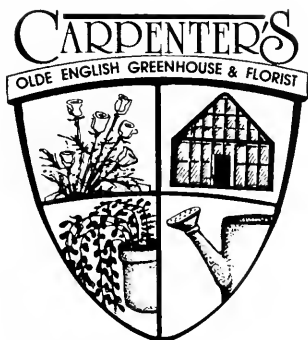
red, dark red, light blue, dark blue, and blue-purple), this series is uniform in color and has a flowering period from March to May in Western Europe. It is also suitable for fall flowering.

For information, contact Jeff McGrew, Kieft Seeds, 2209-B Bulson Road, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273; phone and fax: 306-445-2031.

### Winners

(*Green Profit*, March/April, 1998)

New variety awards during the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (TPIE) in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, this January went to ficus "Midnight Princess," from Miami Agra-Starts Homestead, FL, which received the Best New Foliage Plant award. *Globba winitii* Ruby Queen won the Best New Flowering Plant and Best



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The Griffin Guru

### Cost vs Yield— Are You Saving?

Plant Specimen awards.

Midnight Princess is the latest in Miami Agra-Start's dark-leaf ficus series. It has extremely dark, blue-black leaves that are elongated and have a ruffly appearance. Ruby Queen is one in a series of unique tropicals from Hawaii. It's a perennial that flowers from July through November with 6-12 flowering stems per 6-inch pot. It prefers medium light and is pest-resistant.

### The Year of the Mint

The International Herb Association has chosen mint as its 1998 Herb of the Year. Easy to grow and available in many varieties, for ornamental use, try corn mint (*Mentha arvensis*), Corsican mint (*M. requienii*), or pennyroyal (*M. pulegium*). National Herb Week is May 4-10.

Informational packets are available from the International Herb Society (phone number: 847-949-4372).

**A**s a supplier, we don't like to lose an order. It's doubly painful when the order is lost because our price included the freight and the competing price did not.

By the same token, you are not pleased when you realize you didn't get the deal you were led to expect. I have always used the example of the bag of fertilizer that costs 25% less, but you need twice the amount to achieve the same results.

It's very important to compare coverage, count, yield, and even the weight when comparing the costs of products before placing your order. It's also a good idea to ask if it will arrive at your place of business when you expect it.

*The Griffin Guru is leaving the pages of The Plantsman and heading for the open road. Retiring to an RV, the guru (Kim Miller) and his wife will be visiting the many places they've always wanted to see.*

*Perhaps a new guru will arise, but this column marks an ending. We thank Kim for his steady, informative contribution and wish him well on his journeys.*

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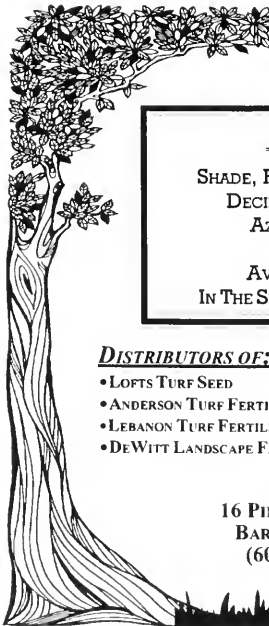
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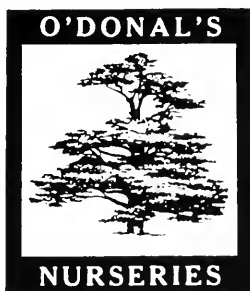
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# Native to Northern New England and Proud of It

CHERYL LOWE

New England, relatively small in size compared to other regions of the United States, nevertheless holds a number of incredibly diverse and fascinating natural habitats and plant communities. These special natural landscapes are part of our regional identity—the alpine areas of our highest peaks, the coastal plain, rocky outcrops and hilltop balds of exposed granite, bogs and swamps, and, of course, the boreal forest and eastern deciduous woodlands that dominate much of our region. How sad that some of our local urban and suburban landscapes look like Anywhere USA. Bringing New England's native plants into the landscapes of our homes and businesses can help us define a regional character and remind us of local places we treasure.

At Garden in the Woods, the New England Wild Flower Society (NEWFS)'s headquarters and botanical garden, our horticultural displays incorporate natives from all over temperate North America, even though our conservation and education programs emphasize New England. But we, too, are beginning to think more regionally as we create displays like the New England Garden of Rare and Endangered Plants. We are also beginning to work with regional educational institutions such as the Cape Cod National Seashore and the Appalachian Mountain Club to develop other demonstration landscapes which reflect the character of local plant communities.

Our new joint venture with the Appalachian Mountain Club is to redesign part of AMC's Pinkham Notch Visitor Center landscape in Gorham, New Hampshire. This site offers a wonderful opportunity to display native plants of New Hampshire and educate thousands of visitors about the wonders of the region's native flora (and how to care for it when using the region's trails.)

The landscape design process is just beginning. The Pinkham Notch staff has identified the sites most in need of attention. These include the existing display garden, foundation plantings around several buildings, and the open field over the new septic leach field. Planning and implementation will be done in phases—our estimated completion date depends on successful fund-raising and the efforts of volunteers working with NEWFS' New Hampshire Chapter as well as staff and volunteers from AMC.

We are using only plant species native to New Hampshire, so we developed a working list of plants suitable for this northern New Hampshire site. Whether or not we plant all of these at Pinkham Notch, the fol-

lowing may be of interest to other northern New England landscapers looking to bring a little of their regional landscape closer to home. Although some of these may be available in the nursery trade already, others are uncommon, but worth the search.

## HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS AND GROUNDCOVERS

Gorham, New Hampshire, is in USDA Hardiness Zone 3, but herbaceous perennials sheltered under a layer of snow (in most winters) are actually experiencing a winter typical of Zone 4 or 5. This may not apply for exposed sites, but microclimates are a fact of nature and of landscape design.

For moist, shady sites where soils tend to be on the acid side, native woodland wildflowers like *Actaea alba* and *Actaea rubra* (white and red baneberry), *Arisaema triphyllum* (Jack-in-the-pulpit), *Clintonia borealis* (bluebead lily) and *Cornus canadensis* (bunchberry) extend the seasonal interest with colorful fruits in summer and fall. In moist, more well-drained sites, *Hepatica americana* (round-lobed hepatica) heralds spring, a welcome sign for all New Englanders.

Although their spring flowers are fleeting, the dark, shiny texture of *Coptis trifolia* var. *groenlandica* (boldthread) or the interesting leaf shapes of *Sanguinaria canadensis* (bloodroot), *Polygonatum pubescens* (Solomon's seal), or a smaller, more compact *Smilacina stellata* (starry false Solomon's seal) add variety to any woodland garden. These have great potential as an eye-catching groundcover when planted *en masse*.

For moist, sunnier sites, *Aster macrophyllus* (large-leaved aster) can give you that big bold-leaf look, while *Lilium canadense* (Canada lily) lends an air of vertical grace. *Chelone glabra* (white turtlehead) is another perennial for sunny areas. Better suited to more well-drained, sunny sites are *Solidago puberula* (downy goldenrod) with its compact habit and bright yellow summer flowers, *Baptisia tinctoria* (wild indigo), or the low-growing *Potentilla tridentata* (three-toothed cinquefoil) with its bright red fall color.

Most people are familiar with *Adiantum pedatum* (northern maidenhair fern). We can never stock enough of this fern favorite to supply our visitor/customer demands. Other less familiar ferns suitable for northern New Hampshire include *Deparia acrostichoides* (silvery spleenwort) with its narrow, light green fronds, the evergreen vase-shaped *Dryopteris marginalis* (marginal wood fern) and the tall, beautiful semi-evergreen fronds of *Dryopteris clintoniana* (Clinton's wood fern).

## SHRUBS AND TREES

*Acer pensylvanicum* and *Acer spicatum* (moosewood and mountain maple) are dominant understory species in much of the northern forests and deserve more use in our planted landscapes. The soft green leaves and early catkins of *Corylus americana* (American filbert) make it another worthwhile addition to upland forest edges or fencerows. Plus, we can enjoy the edible fruits in late summer.

Typical of dry open woods, old fields, and oak or pine barrens and hardy to Zone 3b, *Ceanothus americanus* (New Jersey tea) is a small dense shrub (3 ft) with small, slightly fragrant white blossoms in late June which are particularly attractive to butterflies. Other choice native wildlife plants include the Viburnums. *Viburnum acerifolium* (mapleleaf viburnum) and *Viburnum nudum* var. *cassinoides* (withered viburnum) are

tolerant of a wide range of shady conditions from moist to dry. Highly desirable in the nursery trade, but not common because it is best grown from seed rather than rooted cuttings, *Viburnum alnifolium* (hobblebush) is one of the most common understory shrubs in northern New Hampshire, and well-adapted to cool, moist woodlands throughout the northeast.

This is just a small sampling of the possibilities. Try some and make a statement about where you live.

Contact Cheryl Lowe at 508-877-7630 ext. 3401 or [lowe@newfs.org](mailto:lowe@newfs.org) if you are interested in donating plants or helping with the AMC Pinkham Notch project. If you are a commercial nursery and interested in NEWFS's experiences propagating any of these plants, please contact the Nursery Manager at 508-877-7630 ext. 3402 or email at [cullina@newfs.org](mailto:cullina@newfs.org).



THE GREEN SPOT

## The Power of the Pinch

**NEWS FLASH:** an informal real-life techniques trial performed by The Green Spot, Ltd., during the summer of 1997 revealed that hand-picking can be an effective means of insect control. The details follow...

An 8'x6' plot of nasturtiums was planted from flats in an on-site garden. Roughly two weeks after the planting and after growth had begun, a scouting regimen was employed. The plot was thoroughly scouted once a week, utilizing 0.05 man-hours (three minutes) per visit. Plant problems, diseases, and pests were monitored.

By scouting session number four, a smattering of black bean aphids was noted. Instead of employing biological controls, as had been done in past trials, or spraying, as might have been done otherwise, we kind of took matters into our own hands—literally: the pests were pinched to death. (This required the expenditure of an additional 0.09 man-hours.)

Granted, this action did leave some black "residue" (which washed off with the next rain) on some of the leaves, but was entirely effective against the pests at hand.

The scouting resumed and on two additional occasions—the next two weeks, more bean aphids were introduced to the bright, white light. Thereafter, however, no more aphids were found. The

ones which were crushed were the pilgrims from which new families would have sprung forth.

Normally, without the scouting and pinching, the aphids would have reproduced and developed into a full-blown bean aphid infestation which could have caused considerable damage to the plants. But all that was changed by our actions. The crop turned out to be the best we've ever had: no pests, no damage, lots of flowers and beautiful foliage.

To us, this seemed the answer to a specific pest control problem. Good timing and a tiny amount of labor proved to be a solution of epic proportions. But is this set of techniques applicable to the grower in a large operation? From the perspective of labor, the answer will probably be an emphatic NO. But isn't it all relative?

For us, the entire process—including eradication and continued scouting—cost less than two man-hours (or just over two minutes per square foot) for season-long control and a perfect crop. No matter how it is sliced, it seems good scouting and immediate and manual response works.

Mike Cherim is president of The Green Spot, Ltd., Department of Bio-Ingenuity, 93 Priest Road, Nottingham, NH 03290-6204. The phone number is 603-942-8925.

# Two Very Simple Words

Nancy E. Adams

## HYBRID LILIES



## CLEAR ORANGE

### HYBRID LILIES

#### Care in the House

1. Pick a plant for maximum natural light (lilies prefer cool (60° to 70°)
2. Avoid drafts, heaters or heating vents
3. Water lightly, test soil for dryness. Soil should be uniformly moist, but not wet
4. Remove older flowers as they fade
5. Apply balanced liquid fertilizer at 50% strength one week after flowering, repeat two to three weeks later
6. May be planted outdoors as soon as weather conditions are favorable

#### Care in the Garden

1. Soil should be thoroughly moist before planting outdoors
2. Remove from pot with entire ball of soil
3. Plant in well drained soil and cultivate thoroughly beforehand. Choose a site that receives shade part of the day. Top of ball should be covered with one to two inches of soil or organic mulch
4. Water thoroughly around the ball
5. Water right away but lightly thereafter in the year. Flowers in following summer
6. Remove tops after plant withers later in the year. Flowers in following summer

#### 4. PLANT HEIGHT AT MATURITY.

As a customer, I would hate to buy a plant for my front flower border, only to find that it grows five feet tall and completely obscures the rest of my landscape. Are the plant heights listed on your labels accurate for your local growing conditions?

#### 5. COMMON NAME OF PLANT.

It's interesting that this item falls so low on the list. With the impact of Martha Stewart and the cable-TV gardening channel, we are bombarded with requests for specific plant material; however, the general public is often more interested in the other features. This becomes particularly apparent when new plants are introduced to market. Customers may not remember the name of bacopa, but they will remember that it performed well in their container garden last year as a low-growing, white-flowered, constantly blooming plant which loved full sun. You will have to help supply the name!

Are you surprised that price hasn't yet been mentioned? Of course, it is important to consumers but they must first be inspired to buy the plant. Only then will they look to consider the price. Prices should be easy to find (preferably located on each pot or pack), easy to read, and, if necessary, barcoded.

Interested in increasing add-on sales? Consider the use of promotional labels which will guide customers concerning products that will enhance their plant purchases. Market it as preventative health care for plants . . . their very own HMO. Fertilizers, trellises, decorative containers, growing media, drip irrigation, etc., can all be effectively highlighted on promotional labels. The plant owner will be happy with your concern for their new "baby" and you'll be happy with the increased sales. A word of caution: a rule of thumb is no more than two labels per plant or pot. Too many labels create a cluttered look confusing to customers.

Growers are always experimenting with new plant material or varieties which fall outside the range of commonly available plant labels. Where will you find

**P** **PLANT LABELS:** two very simple words which by themselves may seem dull and ordinary but, if developed correctly, can become crucial selling tools on the front line of plant sales. Whatever their shapes or sizes, labels are vital in providing information to customers and creating an excitement and desire to purchase the plant item. Are you using plant labels to your best advantage?

Marketing research, conducted in 1992 at Michigan State University, shows that the public wants certain information on plant labels. The information most consumers felt was most important is presented first, followed by the second most important, etc.

#### 1. WHERE TO PLANT IT.

Should it be placed in full sun or shade? We commonly see labels which provide this information with the use of a sun icon or some other similar symbol.

#### 2. ANNUAL OR PERENNIAL.

While we often expect customers to understand the difference between annuals and perennials, it's surprising the number of home gardeners who could use some guidance in this area. Take this opportunity to teach them.

#### 3. GENERAL CARE INFORMATION.

Most plant labels devote a considerable amount of space to providing this type of information. This includes water requirements, fertilizer needs, flowering habits, planting instructions, and pruning suggestions, if necessary.

labels which meet your needs? Think computers. Technology is progressing so quickly that it is very easy now to produce labels in full color on inexpensive dot matrix printers. Start with a word processing program such as Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect, import a scanned or digital photo of the plant in flower, add pertinent plant information text, and print the result in color. For longevity, laminate the page.

Digital imagery is a rapidly changing and exciting industry. Companies such as Kodak will digitize any slide or negative you provide them. They will return your originals plus provide you with a CD (compact disk) which contains the digitized images. It is also possible to visit places such as Kinko's (a 24-hour, multi-service copy center) and use their scanner equipment attached to a computer. Bring along any color photo, place it on the scanner, and let the computer work away. The image becomes digitized and

you save it on a computer disk for later use.

Digital cameras are another alternative for supplying digital images. Sharp price decreases are making them affordable for the average business user. These cameras do not use film. Instead, the image is digitized and once saved on your computer hard drive, can be brought into other software programs.

Is it time to reassess your plant labels? Are you providing all the necessary information your customer needs? Are your prices clearly marked? Are you taking full advantage of add-on sales through promotional labels? Are you making your own labels to highlight plants, which otherwise, would suffer from lack of key information? I hope the answers are yes.

*Nancy Adams, Extension Educator, Agriculture Resources, UNH Cooperative Extension, Rockingham County, can be reached at 603-679-5616.*



## Not by Lime Alone

**T**he pH of your soil is not determined by lime alone. As a matter of fact, the lime charge in your soilless mix has very little impact on what the final pH of your soil will be. You can have anywhere from two to seven pounds of lime per yard incorporated into your mix. Peat and bark mixes tend to have a "natural" pH of 4-5 without lime. To adjust for this low pH, growers and soil mix manufacturers will incorporate lime.

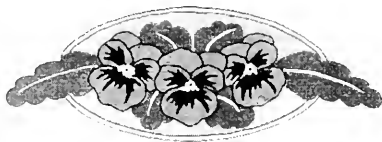
Unfortunately for what we learned in Agronomy 101, lime does not work in soilless mixes the same way it does in field soils. A study a few years back showed that 60% of the lime incorporated into a soilless mix will leach out in less than six weeks—quite different that the two-to-five-year time span that exists with conventional soils. Field soils are significantly more finely textured and able to hold elements more effectively than our horticultural mixes. This concept is referred to as Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC).

We could use coarser lime in our mixes, but unfortunately, most of the lime would not be available to the plant while it is in your production facility. Increasing the lime rate per yard means that at one point early in the production

cycle, too much lime will be available, causing your early pH's to be over 7—not a good thing for most plant growth. Before the lime charge in your mix becomes fully available (usually after three or four waterings), your pH will appear low. In fact, an error many growers make is to check the pH of their mix right out of the bag, bale, or pile, before the lime becomes fully available.

Knowing this, how does a grower manage his pH? With something I've mentioned many times in the past concerning your water and fertilizer. Your water pH will impact your media pH more than anything else. Every time you water, your media is coming closer to matching your water pH. What if your water pH is not acceptable? Too high? Too low? Only fertilizer can adjust this problem. Choosing the proper fertilizer based on your water quality is key. Remember—for growers with high alkalinity in their water, adjusting their pH is more difficult; for growers with low alkalinity, adjusting your pH can occur very quickly.

*Jim Zablocki, technical manager of the Northern Horticultural Group, Scotts Company, can be reached at 603-224-5583.*



## CHAKARIAN FARM GREENHOUSES

### Home-grown Quality

Like growing flowers," Bill Chakarian says. And the emphasis at Chakarian Farm Greenhouses is on just that.

Both Bill and Deb grew up in a Salem more rural than it is today. Neither had an agricultural background, but Bill always wanted to grow plants and, soon after their marriage, they bought 50 wooded acres in Derry in 1977.

They cleared five acres and built the 40'x96' gambrel-roofed barn—the first floor for sales and storage; the second, an apartment ("We'd always thought this would be temporary—but we're still here"); Bill's office is still basically the kitchen table.

They wholesaled, specializing in herbs and less ordinary vegetables—bok choy, napa...but when a major broker, finding he wasn't their only customer, canceled his account, they needed to sell material at the farm. They found that not only were there people out there willing to buy, but that they enjoyed dealing with individual customers. "Good feedback is one of the things that keeps you going—the retail side of things can give you this."

The retail world also seems less volatile. In wholesaling, there would be abrupt changes as trends were anticipated—or created. In the retail side, these trends appear, but not everyone is interested. "The numbers of people and the variety of tastes create stability. You can plan more comfortably." Today, 80% of their business is retail.

When they were farming, there was a greenhouse in back of the barn—a 20'x100' single poly—a two-by-four frame on telephone pole supports—used to get a jump on the season with early lettuce, mint, and tomatoes.

This is gone, but today there are nine others. Directly behind the barn is a row of six—a 63'x96' three-bay gutter-connected XS Smith (houses 1, 2, and 3) and three 30'x96' double-poly hoop houses (4, 5, and 6). To the right of the barn is the most recent addition, a 63'x144' three-bay gutter-connected (houses A, B, and C) put up in 1996.

THE BUILDINGS ARE AWAY FROM THE ROAD. The driveway, lined with young sugar maples, leads past two irrigation ponds toward the unadorned barn and greenhouses around it. To the right are fields; beyond these is woods. Other than the maples, there's no landscaping to speak of. The outdoor crop displays will fill any bare ground.

The season begins in January, but much work has been done beforehand. They close at the end of October and in November, the entire range is disinfected. "We disinfect pots, benches, everything inside the houses...we're very cleanliness-conscious—we take off our shoes if we need to stand on the benches...but we rarely use fungicides." In December, pots are filled and set in the appropriate houses. "We reuse pots—we encourage customers to return them—but we try to keep things uniform."

Much of their material is grown from seed. They use a Bouldin and Lawson computerized precision needle seeder. This recently replaced a small vacuum seeder and they're happy with the new speed and precision. They use pelletized seed whenever possible. Thirteen-year-old son Josh is the expert operator ("he knows more about it than we do").

The seeder is set up in House 5. The newly seeded 288 plug trays are set on benches without bottom heat and misted whenever needed. There's an 85-90% germination rate.

Bill sees himself primarily as a grower and his deepest interest is in perfecting techniques. Records are carefully kept and notes are taken. After several years, patterns emerge and become the basis for production.

"We grow something of everything—30 varieties of pansies; 25 of tomato; 15 of hot pepper (these rated for hotness).

He grows a variety of material in hangers—about 5000 total—and sees each variety as having its own requirements. He buys three growing media and mixes them in various proportions to accommodate the requirements of each. Hangers are set on benches and are not only hand-watered—but spot-watered, until

well-rooted and growing. This careful process continues through the low-light days of mid-winter.

This and the preference to grow in slightly cooler temperatures adds to production time (he grows cool to keep the plants stocky and is careful to harden off gradually to prevent stems and leaves from being burnt), but Bill feels that the improved quality is worth it. He also uses growth regulators if needed.

Mini-environments are utilized. Ivies, for example, are grown near the furnace within the air movement from the fans. This promotes growth and prevents oedema. Bougainvillea is started in twelve-inch hangers in August, overwintered at 40 degrees, then pinched in spring to help fill it out.

But he also uses technology where speed and uniformity are required. Three houses are equipped with trough benches. These work well with geraniums, the leaves of which can shed overhead watering and prevent nutrients from reaching the soil.

Annuals are major—they fill Houses A, B, and C. Cooling here is by cross-ventilation. There are three sliding doors across both ends and several along the sides. As warm air rises through automatic ridge vents, cool air comes through the doors: "With no fans or noise-making machinery, the place is quiet and very people-friendly." There's also a roll-up sidewall, so that in mid-spring, with doors open and the wall up and customers with carts in the wide center aisle and material being brought from the hoop houses to keep benches stocked, the place has the feel of an open-air market.

"If anyone asks for anything, we grow it; we're always finding out about new plants:" dipladenia is a heat-tolerant "California type" that requires minimal care. Mexican heather is grown in pots; amaranth, in four-pacs.

Fall means mums. Asters in 6 1/2-inch pots and cabbage, and kale are grown as well, but Bill sees mums as Chakarian Farm's signature crop. He grows 16,000 (2000 of them Belgian) ten-inch pots, each with its own drip tube. The process begins in May, when unrooted cuttings arrive. Pinching is key—the first pinch is done while the cuttings are still in the trays—which are kept inside the greenhouse (cuttings shouldn't be cool too early). Plants are pinched back four times during their growth cycle—the last may require over a hundred individual pinches. Done by hand, this is time-consuming, but the results—and the customers' reactions—are worth it.

"WE DON'T ADVERTISE—word of mouth still works best," but they market in other ways.

**Cooling here**  
**is by cross-ventilation.**  
**With no fans**  
**or noise-making machinery,**  
**the place is quiet**  
**and very people-friendly.**

The Chakarians work to make the place attractive and accessible. Again, cleanliness—inside and out—is important: there are no weeds. A canvas awning on the side of the barn facing the road creates focus ("it makes it look less like the end of a barn") and protects waiting customers from the weather. Even with three cash registers, there are lines on spring weekends. Some smaller products (seed packets, for example) are displayed here as well.

Between the barn and the greenhouses behind it, bricks are laid in a herringbone pattern and with enough space between them to allow drainage. It's attractive—and people don't have to walk in mud or dust.

Displays are important. Benches of material fill the areas between the houses and barn and facing the parking lot. A fence is put up alongside House C and window boxes filled with annuals in idea-provoking combinations are hung from it.

Signage—made by Deb on the computer—is large and easy-to-read.

Pricing is simplified. All standard hangers are one price. This is also true for 6-pacs and four-inch and 6 1/2-inch material. "It's less confusing for customers and easier at the register." One very successful program is the VIP Card. Each customer's purchases are recorded on a frequent buyer card. When the total amount reaches \$100, the customer receives a numbered laminated VIP card. This entitles its carrier to ten-percent off every purchase for the rest of the season. Last year, 900 of these cards were issued.

Bill and Deb stress the fact that the material is home-grown. "This is important. People like this—they like going to a place that actually produces what they buy."

THE CHAKARIAN CHILDREN—Rebecca, Sarah, Emily, Joshua, and Jonathan, ranging in age from 17 to five—all have important roles here. Although outside help is required (certainly in spring), Bill and Deb see Chakarian Farm Greenhouses as a family operation and view its present size as "about right." But change still happens. This year, the 40'x30' retail space in the barn will be re-designed (pots, tools, and more bagged mixes will be offered) and a door put in the side of the building to allow customers easier access from the greenhouses. After all these years, there may even be an office.

But the main areas of change will continue to be in improved production and new crops. After all, Bill Chakarian is primarily a grower. (BP)

*Chakarian Farm Greenhouses is located at 114 Island Pond Road, Derry, NH 03038. The phone number is 603-432-9103.*



# A HONEYBEE OVERVIEW

David C. Sorensen

In the last few years the media has given a lot of attention and publicity to the honeybee *Apis mellifera*. Not native to the United States, the honeybee was brought from Europe in the 1600s. To many people, the honeybee is just another bee that stings, causes pain, and, to a few who are allergic to the venom, is a cause of death. To farmers and more educated consumers the honeybee is a very important insect that is primarily used to pollinate crops. Honeybee pollination activities add an estimated \$15 billion to the value of United States food crops each year. The loss of the honeybee in the United States would create a dramatic impact before even considering the value of other bee products (such as honey) with sales of 150 million a year.

In the mid-80s, honeybee colonies were disappearing in alarming numbers. A little eight-legged microscopic bug (tracheal mite) living in the tracheal tubes of the bee was causing the bee to suffocate. Then in the late 80s, another (this time an external) eight-legged bug (varroa mite) was found sucking the blood and deforming the undeveloped bee in the cell.

At about the same time (1988), the term "killer" bee was invented by the news media to attract attention of the public to an aggressive, but not inherently hostile, bee. The sting of the African bee is no more venomous than that of the honeybee, which has lived in North America for 300 years.

Over the past 30 years, people in South America have learned to live with African Honeybee (AHB). People there stay away from honeybee swarms and colonies and leave the handling of bees to the properly trained beekeeper. The African bees have not advanced throughout the United States as fast as authorities once thought. The prognosis of their future in New Hampshire is still out, but we do know they can survive our cold temperatures.

One of the latest methods to identify AHB is the temper tester (or stingometer), which records the number of times disturbed bees hit a target. A geneticist is also mapping the genes of European honeybees. This may allow the genetic engineering of a superior bee that could outbreed the African bee.

Several United States chemical companies have developed materials for control of the troublesome mites, but in most cases there are limiting conditions

for their use. Some of these materials may build mite resistance, can't be used during a honey flow, may carry over in the wax, or are only effective above certain temperatures. And this is not mentioning the extra cost in supplies and labor to install.

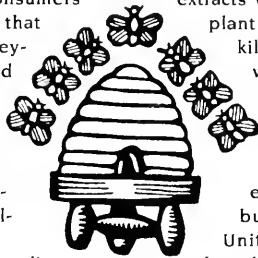
In 1995, a USDA entomologist tested natural plant extracts which killed both of the mites. A blend of plant oils, primarily thymol and eucalyptus oil, kills fungi, bacteria, and other organisms, as well as mites. The major advantage of these plant oils is that they have low mammalian toxicity.

About the same time, another USDA researcher tested smoke from 40 different plants. A desert shrub called creosote bush, native to Mexico and southwestern United States, when used in smoke, was found to knock off mites and kill them. Dried grapefruit leaves were also found to be effective. Researchers are still trying to identify and isolate chemicals that act as miticides.

In February, 1998, a Minnesota Extension specialist found a way to breed honeybees which can detect the presence of the mites on immature bees (brood) and remove the parasitized brood from the colony. These hygienic bee colonies can remove up to 70 percent of infested brood, which interrupts the mite's reproductive cycle.

In New Hampshire, it is estimated that about 10 percent of the bee colonies do not make it through the winter, and this is mostly due to mites. The less knowledgeable beekeepers continue to lose better than 50 percent of their colonies. Here in New Hampshire, we now have honeybees that are more tolerant to the tracheal mite, but the varroa, unless treated, can still cause large losses. Sooner or later, a honeybee which can live with both mites will be found, perhaps simply through survival of the fittest. Meanwhile, the wild honeybee population is at its lowest level in several years. Farmers who grow crops requiring pollination need to be concerned about having enough bees available, either through having a high population of bumblebees or renting honeybee colonies as insurance.

A great deal of interest in identifying and raising pollen bees commercially has taken place in recent years. Bumblebees are now being raised and sold 40-in-a-box for greenhouse pollination. They tend to work longer hours and don't mind toiling in the rain



or cooler weather. Other native pollen bees (*Osmia ribifloris* and *Osmia cornifrons*) that work three times as fast as the worker honeybee are being considered.

African bees and mites have certainly made their presence felt. Those growers who rent pollinators have only a slight worry, but those who depend on the availability of wild bee pollination have much more to think about.

David Sorensen, UNH Extension Educator, Carroll County, can be reached at PO Box 367, Conway, NH 03818; the phone number is 603-447-5922.



### Pioneer Pointers

**F**or the last few months, you and your employees have been laboring in the greenhouses, filling pots in order to build up your plant inventory in anticipation of converting all this material into revenue/sales in the spring. After you've successfully (so you think) completed this task, you might ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have enough material in inventory to meet all my orders?
- Do I have additional inventory on hand to handle the increased orders that my sales staff or I marketed through last fall and early winter?
- As orders are filled, how can I be sure that the availability of plants remaining in inventory is tracked so that I don't fall short of any particular variety later in the season?

Tracking inventory is a form of record-keeping that is vital to your business. As a grower, you're already good at growing quality plant material, but how good are you at tracking what you grow? Methods which track inventory range from basic to sophisticated—depending on the size and needs of your business. Inventory can be monitored manually or with specific software designed for tracking on computer. So stay on track with your inventory—it provides needed efficiencies (i.e., less labor, better marketing) that will ultimately improve bottom-line profits.

If you'd like more insight regarding the importance of tracking inventory—or other record-keeping tips—First Pioneer Farm Credit, ACA, has staff knowledgeable in this area. AgCHEK, a farm accounting software package supported by First Pioneer, contains a module for tracking inventory. Give us a call at 1-800-825-3252—it may be just what your business needs. (SW)

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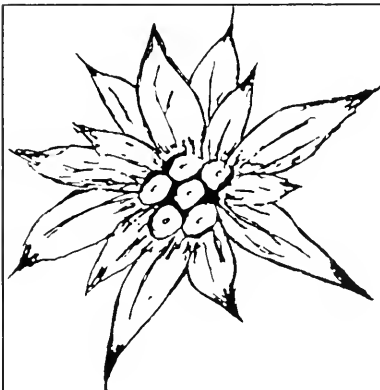


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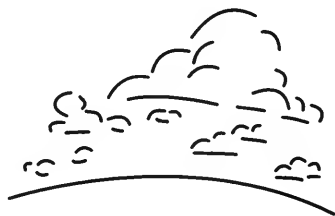
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## Feverfew

Tanya Jackson

**T**here are nearly 30 million migraine sufferers in the United States. Drug stores and media advertisements are full of remedies for headaches of all kinds. But perhaps the biggest hope for the future lies in a pretty little plant that's been around for eons and is known in old herbals as "the housewife's herb."

This is feverfew, known scientifically as *Chrysanthemum parthenium* (more recently as *Tanacetum parthenium*) and present in nearly every traditional herb garden. It makes a medical claim with its name, from the Latin *febrifugia* ("fever reducer"). The early Romans discovered its powers; then it fell out of favor in Elizabethan times. In recent years, it has been rediscovered—not as a fever cure, but as a powerful anti-inflammatory and migraine head-

**The early Romans**  
**discovered its powers;**  
**then it fell out of favor**  
**in Elizabethan times.**

**In recent years,**  
**it has been rediscovered . . .**

ache remedy. Open any health magazine and you'll find feverfew right there along with St. John's wort and echinacea.

Historically, use of the plant was almost always connected to women and their health needs. In the 1700s, astrological herbalists dedicated feverfew to the planet Venus and used wine steeped with feverfew and ground nutmeg to treat women for tension-induced head-

aches. It was considered useful for problems encountered during childbirth, for menstrual discomforts, melancholia, and vertigo, and for a variety of other problems that included infant colic, constipation, and insect bites.

The British have long used it for self-medication: the English herbalist John Gerard recommended it as a headache remedy in 1633. Recent scientific findings support its claims for effectiveness. In 1978, scientists wrote of feverfew in *Lancet*, a British medical journal, and later confirmed that a study they'd conducted had found it was similar to aspirin. In 1985, the *British Medical Journal* reported another study which showed feverfew's usefulness in relieving migraine. Researchers speculate that substances in the plant make smooth

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## HOW ABOUT HERBS

muscle cells less responsive to body chemicals that trigger migraine muscle spasms (*Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs*, 1987).

Varro Tyler, Ph.D., well-known professor of pharmacognosy, Purdue University School of Pharmacy, suggests that "if you take feverfew by eating the leaves, it should be in very small doses—from 50-60 milligrams, which is three or four little feverfew leaves each day." In his book, *The Honest Herbal*, updated in 1993, he writes that long-term toxicity tests are urgently needed to establish the herb's safety. Old-time herbals suggest putting the herb leaves in food or tucking them into tiny bread-and-butter sandwiches, as contact between the mouth and the herb can cause small sores, should a person be sensitive to it. Today, a number of capsules and tablets that contain feverfew are available.

The plant is about two feet tall,

is hardy to zone 5, and has deeply cut leaves and clusters of small daisy-like flowers. It will grow anywhere and readily reseeds.

Ordinary well-drained soil and full sunshine are its basic requirements, although I am certain that it can take some shade. Propagation is easiest by seed, but several varieties (including a double-flowered that is popular for perennial borders) should be grown by divisions or cuttings. I believe the plant is pollinated by wind or is self-pollinating, for there is mention in *Rodale's* that bees hate the smell of feverfew and that it shouldn't be planted near plants needing such pollination.

Feverfew is an excellent, easy-to-maintain ornamental that flowers again and again throughout the summer. Cut it back as the blossoms go by and you encourage more flower clusters. Lovely in fresh bouquets, it also works well in dried wreaths and arrangements.

Mordanted with chrome, the fresh leaves and stems produce a greenish dye for wool. An ingredient thought to be present in feverfew is pyrethrin—which would explain its old-time use as an insect repellent (a tea of feverfew flowers applied to the skin). Judith Benn Hurley, author of *The Good Herb*, suggests planting feverfew around basil to keep insects away—which would be fine as you really don't want your basil to be pollinated and to set seed while you are eager for a harvest of leaves.

As interest in alternative medicine continues to grow, there will undoubtedly be many more scientific studies of feverfew. But even if you're not among the millions of migraine sufferers waiting for a cure, introduce your customers to feverfew for its simple, natural beauty.

*Tanya Jackson, a well-known local herbalist, can be reached at 603-431-8011.*

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FAX 804-233-8855



## NHPGA TWILIGHT MEETING

Wednesday, April 22, 5-7pm  
Kathan Gardens, Newport, New Hampshire

**K**athan Gardens is a 25,000-square foot wholesale/retail greenhouse operation—a family operation in business for 42 years. They grow 85% of what they sell: annuals, perennials, hangers, holiday plants... Recently they've begun offering gardening supplies in order to give their customers more complete service.

The meeting will include a tour of the facilities (trough benching, etc.) and a demonstration of a new—and very useful—sign maker. Dennis has also worked with David Seavey, Cooperative Extension, Merrimack County, in doing a customer survey, the results of which were used to develop a new marketing plan. Dave will be there to talk about the survey—the questions, the results, and the changes that took place because of it.

So join us to see how one of our members uses years of experience to grow excellent material and what they are doing to continue to improve the operation, especially in the areas of marketing and signage. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact Dennis Kathan at 603-863-1089.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow Route 89 North to Exit 9, then Rte 11/103 to Newport. Bear left around traffic circle onto South Maine Street. At lights by Irving station and Rite Aid, go right, then over a bridge and far right up hill. Kathan's is at the top.

Coming on 89 South, take the Grantham/Newport exit and take Route 10 into Newport to the lights at the Irving Station, etc.

### Association Officers

#### *President*

**ROBERT C. RIMOL**  
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**CHRISTOPHER ROBARGE**  
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#### *Directors*

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#### **ANN HILTON**

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**HENRY HUNTINGTON** / Pleasant View Gardens  
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435-8361

**GEORGE TIMM** / Davis Brook Farm  
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#### *Extension Liaison*

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