

# *The Plantsman*

NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PLANT GROWERS  
ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY  
& MARCH  
1997

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## February

FEBRUARY 20-23 *The Rhode Island Spring Flower & Garden Show*, Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI; Nancy Syme at 1-800-766-1670.

FEBRUARY 20-23 *The Sixteenth Annual Connecticut Flower and Garden Show*, Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, CT; 860-529-2123.

FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 12 1997 *Advanced Green School*, Royal Plaza, Marlboro, MA; Kathleen Carroll at 413-545-0895.

FEBRUARY 28-March 2 *Vermont Flower Show*, Burlington Sheraton, Burlington, VT; Tina Nyce at 802-899-4620.

## March

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5 *Seminar: "Cultivating your Best Assets—Personnel Management Issues for Ornamentals Firms,"* Fish & Game Building, Concord, NH; Mike Sciabarrasi at 603-862-1700.

MARCH 5 *Perennial Plant Conference*, Bishop Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT; Tim Abbey at 860-345-4511.

MARCH 5 *Massachusetts Certified Horticulturalist Exam*, Eastern Agricultural Center, Waltham, MA; Rena Sumner at 413-369-4731.

MARCH 8 *Maine Landscape and Nursery Association (MeLNA) Educational Workshop*, 9am-noon, Pine Tree Arboretum, Augusta, ME; Edith Ellis at 207-225-3998.

MARCH 8-16 *New England Flower Show*, Bayside Exposition Center, Boston, MA; 617-536-9280.

MARCH 9 *FTDA Master Florist Design Certification Testing*, Bay State Floral Supply, Bedford, NH; Betty Covey at 603-893-4578

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 *New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association Twilight Meeting*, 5:30 pm, Newton Greenhouse, 32 Amesbury Road, Newton, NH; Tom McElroy at 603-382-5289

MARCH 13-16 *Portland Flower Show* Narrow Gauge Train Museum, Fore Street, Portland, ME; 207-225-3998 or 207-775-4403.

MARCH 18 *New Hampshire Landscape Association Spring Conference*, Barton/ Cole Hall, UNH, Durham, NH; Guy Hodgdon at 1-800-639-5601.

MARCH 22-24 *"Breath of Spring" Flower & Garden Show*, Cheshire Arena, Keene, NH; 603-352-2253.

MARCH 24 *Field-grown Cut Flower Seminar*, 1-4:30pm, Goffstown Cooperative Extension Office, Rte 114, Goffstown, NH; Margaret Hagen at 603-673-2510.

## April

APRIL 4-5 *27th Annual University of New Hampshire Greenhouse Open House*, Plant Biology & Thompson School Greenhouses, Mast Road Extension, Durham, NH; Bill Lord at 603-862-3203.

APRIL 4-6 *Sixth Annual New Hampshire Orchid Society Show*, Nashua Army, Daniel Webster Highway, Nashua, NH; Ulla Jurriksen at 207-439-0922.

APRIL 4-6 *Bangor Garden Show*, Bangor Auditorium, Bangor, ME; 207-990-1201.

APRIL 10-12 *Granite State FFA State Convention*, Waterville Valley Convention Center, Waterville Valley, NH; Dave Howell at 603-862-1760.

APRIL 13 *Seminar—"European Design"* —with Jacqueline Headecker, AIFD, sponsored by FTDA Vermont District 1-D and FTDA New Hampshire District 1-C, Radisson Hotel, West Lebanon NH; Betty Covey at 603-893-4578.

APRIL 28 *Arbor Day*

## May

MAY 4 *Volunteer Pruning & Cleanup at State House Rose Garden*, 10am, Concord, NH; David Jordan at 603-437-0306.

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Photograph by Mary Torsello

*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.

## UNH Cooperative Extension Greenhouse Advisory Committee Meeting Report

Nancy Adams

A group of New Hampshire greenhouse producers met on December 11 with UNH Cooperative Extension staff and UNH Plant Biology and Thompson School representatives to discuss Extension's future programming and outreach efforts in ornamental horticulture. Past educational efforts and current staffing patterns were presented to provide a basis for discussion.

Three educational needs surfaced: computers, regulations, and marketing.

**COMPUTERS:** Interest was high to learn about the Internet and its search capabilities, computer programs such as EXCEL, and business management software. A regional teaching approach should be used to allow greater grower participation.

**REGULATIONS:** To better understand new rules and regulations, concise summary guides should be prepared.

**MARKETING:** While there is a great deal of information available about crop culture and care, marketing and merchandising information geared toward our local situation would be of benefit.

Other discussion topics included soil/water analysis, *Ornamentals Update* newsletter, and meeting choices.

**SOIL/WATER ANALYSIS:** Questions about the testing of greenhouse media and water samples were raised. Concern was expressed about potential biases of commercial labs as well as UNH's capability in testing and interpreting test results.

**NEWSLETTER:** It was generally agreed that *Ornamentals Update* in its new format was an improvement over previous issues. Original articles and photos highlighting areas of concern or interest to New Hampshire growers should be included.

**MEETING CHOICES:** October and November are good months for educational meetings. Seminar-type events in which growers break up into discussion groups based on subject matter or areas of interest should be considered. Twilight meetings should be scattered throughout the state and, whenever possible, combined with an educational component eligible for pesticide credits.

There are no future meetings scheduled at this time. However, we are always looking for insights on how to better serve the ornamentals community. If you have any thoughts or ideas, contact your local Cooperative Extension Agricultural Educator.

Nancy Adams, Rockingham County Cooperative Extension Agricultural Educator, can be reached at 603-679-5616.

## Cut Flower Seminar

On March 24, from 1-4:30pm, a seminar on field-grown cut flower production will be held in the Goffstown Cooperative Extension office, Route 114, Goffstown, NH. The featured speaker will be Lois Berg Stack discussing cultural practices and marketing. Dr. Cheryl Smith will speak on disease control and Margaret Hagen, on weed control. Some pesticide applicator recertification credit will be given.

You may have already received a flier by now, but for more information, contact Margaret Hagen at 603-673-2510.

## Association Officers

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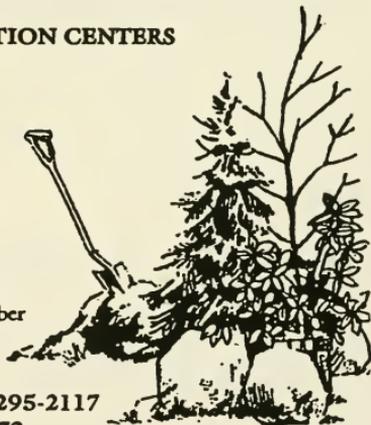
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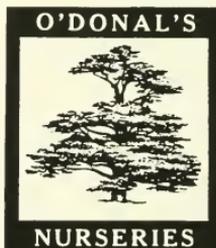
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## Growing Perennials from Seed

Peter van Berkum

Several years ago, we decided to get more involved in growing plants from seed at our perennial nursery. It may seem odd that we waited this long, but when we first began, we were specifically interested in vegetatively propagated cultivars. As we got more involved with native and species plants, we decided to work with seed.

We produce from seed any plant that doesn't need to be asexually propagated to remain true to type. However, if a variety is available commercially in small plugs, we will buy them in instead of germinating them ourselves (By small, I mean 350-to-400-count plug trays.

The seeds are either bought in or collected ourselves. We collect seeds ourselves if they need to be fresh for successful germination. For example, some seeds have a caruncle, a fleshy-like substance going from end to end—like the threads on a football. (Trillium and blood-root seeds have this feature.) The caruncle's function is to attract insects. Once it dries out, the seed may go dormant for two-to-six years. So these seeds must be collected and sown immediately. We collect other seeds simply because it's so easy. We have the stock plants; the seeds set; we collect them.

Next, you have to figure out what sort of conditioning (if any) is required for germination. Most perennials are not like annuals that can simply be sown and will germinate in one-to-three weeks. Perennials have internal mechanisms that prevent them from germinating when they cannot grow. Do the seeds need light to germinate? (Most wetland plants do.) Do they need a cold period? (Many seeds that ripen in late summer have an inhibitor

**P**  
**erennials**

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**Or do the seeds need**  
**a warm period followed**  
**by a cold?**

**And some seeds**  
**need no conditioning at all—**  
**sow them in spring**  
**and up**  
**they come.**

~o~



that won't let them germinate until they've sat through a winter. This prevents them from germinating in the fall and being killed by the cold.) Or do the seeds need a warm period followed by a cold? (This can be the case with some plants whose seeds ripen in early-to-mid-season—again, a mechanism to postpone germination until after the winter.) And some seeds need no conditioning at all—sow them in spring and up they come.

We try to get all the seeds with a particular type of conditioning started together so we can put them through their requirements as a group. Norm Deno of the University of Pennsylvania has written an excellent book called *Seed Germination: Theory and Practice* that specifies the requirements for many plants. It's available through Penn State University.

How do we give the seeds the conditions needed to break dormancy? With many seeds requiring cold or warm/cold, we collect them, sow them immediately into flats, and put them outside. This way they get whatever conditions they require and usually germinate after the first winter. You can play around a little more by putting the seeds in tight baggies with barely moistened potting mix. The baggies can be easily brought from the refrigerator to room temperature and back, giving whatever combination of warm and cold you may want. A technique we plan to try is putting the seeds on moist paper towels in flat dishes with tight lids. We can move these from warm to cold as required and be able to continually check the seeds. When any germinate, they can be picked out and planted.

Growing herbaceous perennials from seed is both an art and a science. We find it to be both a challenge and an economical way to produce a lot of plants in a small area. Each year we learn a few new tricks for old varieties and get stumped by a few new ones. This helps keep the nursery business interesting.

*Van Berkum Nursery is at 4 James Road in Deerfield. Peter and Leslie can be reached at 603-463-7663.*

## 1996 Scholarship Awarded

This year the New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association offered one \$1,000 scholarship. There were six applicants, all of high quality, and the Board's decision was difficult.

After much deliberation, Jennifer Barton, a student in Adult and Occupational Education planning to seek a position in vocational agriculture, was chosen.

"Despite the growing belief that 'farming' is a disappearing occupation," Jennifer wrote, "agriculture is a part of everyone's lives and many agricultural industries are growing. Other areas may be evolving with changes in technology and consumer demands. This necessitates a need in the vocational classroom to teach not only specific job skills and knowledge, but critical thinking and problem-solving as well."

"There are many possibilities for me in this field...regardless of the role I contribute, I'm excited about my future working in agriculture education."

Jennifer was presented her check at the Winter Meeting.

Also, the Winter Meeting was attended by a new NHPGA board member, Tim Wolfe of Lake Street Garden Center (LSGC), 37 Lake Street, Salem. The garden center was begun in 1973 by his parents, Frank and Mary Wolfe. Although Tim has often been at LSGC, his place there has recently become more official as manager of the nursery.

Being at LSGC, as it changes and grows amid all the changes around it, should give Tim a useful perspective.

## Winter Turf

Research sponsored by the New En-

gland Sod Producers Association is looking at the light required to bring fall cut turf grass out of dormancy.

Implemented by co-participants, Gold Star Sod Farm & Nursery, Canterbury, and John Roberts, Turf Specialist, UNH Cooperative Extension, three plots—each containing two types of washed turf—bentgrass and Kentucky blue—have been laid out on weed mat in one of the research greenhouses at UNH in Durham. Each plot is under a separate light regime—artificial, natural, or shaded. The plots are automatically watered twice a day and mowed when needed.

The first plots have been harvested and Tom Ryan, grower at Gold Star and Malcolm McPhail, sales and customer services, have set up a second. February's light is very different than December's, but a third repetition may be set up as well.

The information gained will be

# An April Shower of Orchids

presented by  
New Hampshire  
Orchid Society

Friday, April 4 -- 10 - 7:30  
Saturday, April 5 -- 10 - 7:30  
Sunday, April 6 -- 10 - 5

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useful in greening up turf grass for winter trade shows and other public events (flower shows, weddings). More dramatic applications might be in the area of commercial sports, in which operators of enclosed domes are beginning to grow turf year-round, removing and replacing turf as needed after each game. In northern areas, this would imply greening—perhaps even growing—turf in enclosed, artificially lit areas. Although this may be the future, the direction seems clear.

For more, contact Malcolm McPhail at 603-783-4716 or John Roberts at 603-862-3202.

### Showtime New Hampshire

Two of New Hampshire's longer running flower shows are being held on the first weekend in April.

The sixth annual show of the New

Hampshire Orchid Society is being held April 4-6 at the Nashua Armory on Daniel Webster Highway in Nashua. The theme is "An April Shower of Orchids;" the mix is now traditional—a preview party the evening before the opening, displays of both cut flowers and living plants, vendors (eight confirmed as of mid-January) and sales, and workshops (video presentations and demonstrations—cultural techniques, repotting, mounting). Prizes are to be awarded and, once again, the NHPGA is sponsoring an award—a Pepi Hermann cut glass vase—for the best cut flower arrangement.

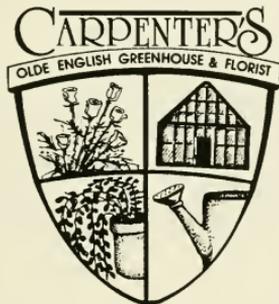
The people in charge this year are Ulla Jurrissen, Charles Wingate, Jr., and Wayne Wiegand. For information, contact Ulla Jurrissen at 207-439-0922.



The second show that weekend is the 27th Annual University of New

Hampshire Greenhouse Open House held at the Plant Biology and Thompson School greenhouses on Mast Road in Durham on April 4-5 (Friday and Saturday only). A joint venture of the Thompson School Horticulture Curriculum and various members of the Plant Biology Department and Cooperative Extension, the mix here is also traditional—garden displays and plant sales, exhibits and lectures, food and a raffle. There may be some emphasis on the work of Elwyn Meader. Meader, who died last year, was a member of the Plant Science Department and, from 1948 until the 70s, one of America's leading plant breeders. As usual, one of the strongest aspects of the open house is the number of people available who can answer your garden/turf/insect questions.

For more, contact Bill Lord at 603-862-3203.



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## Perennial Plant Conference

The University of Connecticut is sponsoring a Perennial Plant Conference on March 5, 1997. This will be held at the Bishop Center at the University of Connecticut in Storrs.

The all-day conference will address a wide range of topics relating to herbaceous perennial production and use. Topics were chosen to appeal to both greenhouse and outdoor container producers as well as to landscapers and retail distributors.

Two concurrent sessions will be offered. Pesticide recertification credits will also be offered pending state approval. A registration fee of \$50 (check payable to the University of Connecticut) is due by February 27.

For information, please contact Tim Abbey, the conference program coordinator, at 860-345-4511.

## Showtime Everywhere

### Portland, Maine

Several last-minute changes—basically, name, date, and place—were made and now it's official—the Portland Flower Show ("Garden Artistry by the Sea") will be held on March 13-16 at the Narrow Gauge Train Museum on Fore Street in Portland. Keith Citrine is the director, Portland Yacht Services, the producer. The date was changed to accommodate the Maine Florist & Growers Association, members of which will be giving demonstrations and auctioning arrangements (They were unable to do this over Easter weekend); the new location—over 5,000 square feet of space—is handicapped accessible. Tickets are \$8.50 (for senior citizens, they're \$5). There was some concern about parking, but there will be shuttle buses from major parking facilities—or people "can ride the train from Commercial Street down to the shore."

Train rides, shopping, museums—all are near-by. And there's

the Gala Opening—formal attire, music, hors-d'oeuvres—on the night before. It sounds like a great mix. For information, contact Edith Ellis at 207-225-3998 or call the show number: 207-775-4403.

### Burlington, Vermont

"Coast to Coast" is the theme of the Vermont Association of Professional Horticulturalists (VAPH)-sponsored Fourth Annual Vermont Flower Show at the Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center in Burlington on February 28-March 2.

In the main hall, booths (32 exhibitors) will ring the central landscape display; on the second floor, a "Floral and Craft" area (19 craftspeople will be displaying their work) is set up for table exhibiting. The second ballroom is being used for the first time this year ("space-wise, we're maxed-out") for lectures, demonstrations, and floral competitions.

The emphasis has always been on education. This year, 52 seminars are being presented—40 for adults and—interestingly—twelve for children. Non-profit organizations are also part of this education effort, with 24 groups planning displays. A lot of information will be available in a very beautiful setting.

The coordinator is Tina Nyce, RR2 Box 175, Underhill, VT 05489. She can be reached at 802-899-4620.

## New Product

Louisville, KY, January 6—"EnviroDerm Pharmaceuticals, Inc., announced today that it is introducing IvyBlock skin protectant to members of the landscape industry. Available without a prescription, IvyBlock lotion is the first and only poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac skin protectant to receive clearance from the US Food & Drug Administration."

A topical lotion that dries quickly, IvyBlock "lays down an active barrier on the skin with a special formula that helps block skin contact with

urushiol (yoo-ROO-shee-ol), thereby serving to help protect against poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac rash." The lotion should be applied 15 minutes before possible contact with the plants and reapplied every four hours. The coating can be removed with soap and water. It's available in a four-ounce bottle; suggested retail price is \$9.95.

The manufacturer's representative for this area is Seidman Associates, PO Box 85, Centerbrook, CT 06409 (1-800-821-5702). For more information, contact Beth Kramli at Poppe Tyson Public Relations, 201 Littleton Road, Morris Plains, NJ 07950 (201-539-0300, ext. 226).

## And Also New

(*Greenhouse Grower*, December, 1996) The world's first red delphinium, "The Red Princess," made its premiere at the International Flower Trade Show in Aalsmeer last month (November) in The Netherlands. This new variety from the nursery Bartels Stek exhibits other breakthrough features such as a two-week vase life and a high resistance to mildew.

## The All-America Selections

There were six 1997 All-America Selections—three vegetables and three flowers.

*Celosia 'Prestige Scarlet' (Celosia cristata)* is described as a "multiflora" that grows vigorously in hot humid weather and most soil types, but without staking or pruning. The flowers are three-inch scarlet cockscombs; the foliage is bronze-green; plant height is 12-17 inches; width, 12-20 inches—"a good plant for gardeners who want all-season color with little work."

*Gypsophila 'Gypsy' (Gypsophila muralis)* is an unusual plant with light airy texture—the narrow green leaves are produced from the base of the plant without a main upright stem. Only 10-14 inches high and

10-12 inches wide, this delicate plant with its light pink quarter-inch double and semi-double blooms is especially appropriate for smaller, more intimate urban or container gardens.

*Zinnia angustifolia* 'Crystal White' is a heat-and-drought-resistant zinnia with a long blooming season. Although it may need nutrients and watering in periods of less than one inch of rain a week, it was also bred for gardeners who want flowers all season without much work. Highly tolerant of powdery mildew, it prefers full sun and will do well in either a garden or container. The plant is 8-10 inches high and wide; its 1-to-1 1/4-inch blossoms are white, single, and have golden yellow centers.

Cabbage F<sub>1</sub> 'Dynamo' (*Brassica oleracea* subsp. *capitata*) is a "scaled-

down 2-to-2 1/4-pound head just right for a family meal." The plant tolerates many growing conditions without the head having a tendency to split—which allows a longer harvesting period. The period from transplant to harvest is about 70 days.

Okra F<sub>1</sub> 'Cajun Delight' (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) "charmed the judges with its attractive plant (deeply lobed foliage and creamy yellow hibiscus-like flowers) and early yield." 'Cajun Delight' also pushes the frontiers of okra production a long way north—as far north as Bowden, Alberta, Canada. It can be grown from seed, but the key to growing okra is to wait until both the soil and air temperature have warmed to above 68F. So in the north, it's best to start your seed indoors and transplant into a full-sun garden after the weather warms up. The ma-

ture semi-dwarf plant is 4-to 4 1/2-foot tall; harvest should begin 60 days after sowing.

Thai Basil 'Siam Queen' (*Ocimum basilicum* L.) is an improved, intensely aromatic tropical basil. It required numerous generations of seed plants, selected for improved qualities, to produce this stable, uniform Thai basil. The seeds are quick to germinate (3-7 days), so even the inexperienced gardener can consider growing these from seed. The mature plant is 2-to-3 feet high and two feet wide and requires no staking; harvest should be 75-100 days from sowing.

For information, contact Nona Wolfram-Koivula at All-America Selections, 1311 Butterfield Road, Suite 310, Downers Grove, IL 60515. The phone number is 630-963-0770.

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# A New Hampshire Original Triples in Size

Stephen Curtin

**T**he Monadnock Region's *Breath of Spring* Flower Show, attended by 12,000 people in 1995 and 1996, will take a giant step forward in late March, moving to the Keene area's Cheshire Arena and tripling in size to 25,000 square feet of landscaped gardens, floral designs, vendor display booths, and workshop areas.

Relying on the efforts of hundreds of landscapers, garden club members, nursery people, and other volunteers, *Breath of Spring* is organized by Home Healthcare, Hospice, and Community Services to raise funds for Hospice care for the terminally ill in 40 New Hampshire communities. The show will open on Saturday, March 22nd and run through Tuesday, March 25. Times are Saturday, 9-9; Sunday, 10-5; and Monday, 9-5. General admission is five dollars.

This year's central display theme, "When East Meets West," promises an imaginative blending of traditional western motifs with Asian and Japanese designs and plants. The central display will cover more than 10,000 square feet, and includes water features, a bonsai tea house and other structures, a sand garden, 7,000 flowers, cherry trees, azaleas, and other blossoming trees and shrubs.

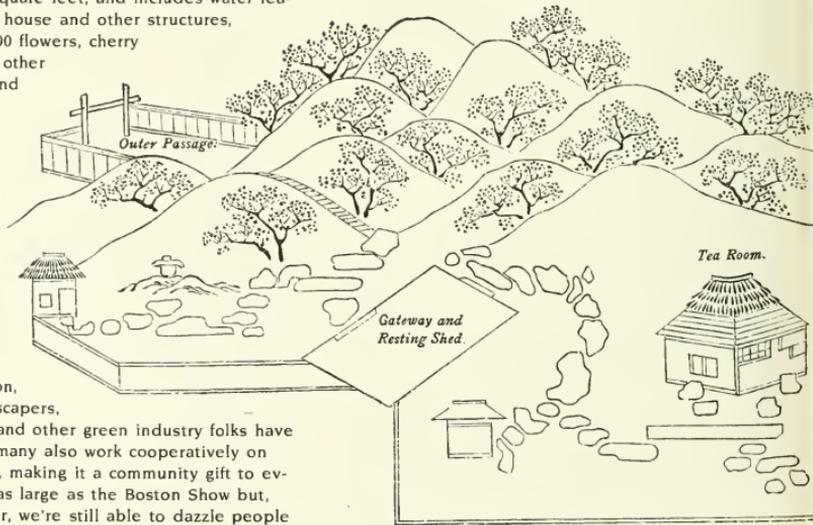
*Breath of Spring's* lead designer, landscaper Chuck Simpson of Dublin, also designed the show in 1995 and 1996, when "Backyard Beauty" and "Your Secret Garden" were themes. "What's unique about this show," says Simpson, "is that while landscapers, nurseries, florists, and other green industry folks have their own booths, many also work cooperatively on the central display, making it a community gift to everyone. We aren't as large as the Boston Show but, by working together, we're still able to dazzle people

and deliver Spring a little early to everyone—in a slightly smaller, cozier environment that many people have said they prefer over Boston."

Peter and Susan Kelleher of Kelleher Greenhouses in Chesterfield have been key contributors from the beginning, working with florist Eric Anderson to force thousands of bulbs each year, as well as to grow hundreds of square feet of grass in shallow plastic trays to add a vibrant green touch to selected areas of the display.

Five Monadnock area garden clubs contribute dozens of table top floral designs each year. This year's *Breath of Spring* design categories will focus on oriental traditions; categories include "Water Reflections", "Tea Time", and "Meditation".

*Below: An example of a landscape garden "representing a Tea Garden designed by a priest called Saito Dosan, and intended to suggest the pictorial style of a Chinese painter famous for his paintings of hills of wild Cherry trees. Source: Landscape Gardening in Japan by Joseph Conder.*



Headlining the flower show's educational program, guest speaker Wayne Mezitt of Weston Nurseries will give a special presentation on rhododendrons and azaleas (\$5. admission). Bruce Clement of the UNH Cooperative Extension Service has also organized many free workshops by a variety of local experts on subjects ranging from traditional gardening interests to growing bonsais.

Tripling the size of the show has meant some new challenges and expenses, but the event's planning committee is confident that the growth will pay off. WMUR-TV, Channel Nine, will be a major supporter this year, helping to guarantee that people throughout the state are aware that we have a flower show of our own and a local opportunity for enjoying an early glimpse of spring.

Anyone interested in more information about *Breath of Spring* should contact Home Healthcare, Hospice, and Community Services in Keene at 603-352-2253.

*Stephen Curtin is the Director of Development at Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services and serves as administrative manager for the Breath of Spring Flower Show.*

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# Some Remarks on Sibling Rivalry

Thomas D. Davidow and Richard L. Narva

**S**ibling rivalry can rear its head with disruptive consequences in a variety of places in the family-owned business. It is a natural phenomenon and one that never really goes away. An external event can occur which may precipitate an individual's historical feelings and the relationship between siblings can quickly regress. Nonetheless, families can learn to manage the issue and avoid a significant threat to business stability and family harmony.

In fact, families have been trying to determine the most effective way to deal with the issue of sibling rivalry since ancient times. The biblical narrative of Cain and Abel and the story of Joseph, his brothers, and the coat of many colors both deal with issues rooted in sibling rivalry. In many families and cultures and under the common law of England, one solution was primogeniture, passing wealth and power in a family to the oldest son. This doctrine created a structure to deal with sibling rivalry and was intended to avoid war and bloodshed every time a ruler died.

But America in 1997 does not lend itself to primogeniture as the vehicle to determine the next chief executive of a family business (much as many first-born sons might wish). Our culture will not tolerate any such an arbitrary solution because doctrines of merit and equality dominate our social, economic, and political systems. Furthermore, the survival of the family-owned business is too important and too risky to rely on any such straight-jacketed convention.

However, the elimination of the rule of primogeniture does not eliminate the drive for dominance. Therefore, how does one deal with the issue in an American family-owned business? We have found that

previous generations often developed implicit agreements under which the older sibling would prevail if more than one sibling participated in the business. One famous example of this style is the Bingham newspaper family of Louisville, whose demise has been widely reported in the press and the media.

This is a short-term solution, if a solution at all. This may work when the siblings are young, because rivalries are resolved under the doctrine of "might makes right." The older sibling is generally larger physically and more developed intellectually and therefore often prevails.

However, the transfer of this doctrine into the family business arena is fraught with danger. The siblings in a family business may collude to continue the system out of

habit and a "wish" to keep the family together. But it does not work. Sooner or later, the siblings grow up and the younger siblings are generally not able to play along with the masquerade after they experience themselves as adults. We have found that an older generation family member may often seek consultation for fear that his or her children will experience the same heartache, loss, and pain that he or she experienced with his or her own siblings.

By contrast, when siblings learn to manage their relationships, they can learn to manage the regressions referenced above. In fact, when the siblings learn to manage their rivalry issues, the closeness of sibling relationships can be an important business and personal asset. Furthermore, such close relationships can generate a high level of trust, which is both comfortable and functional in the family environment. As a result, the family and the business can benefit from a shared value system and efficient decision-making.

In the family setting, sibling

## The Center for Family Business

**T**he Center for Family Business at the University of New Hampshire was created to provide a matrix of services for the family firm. The business climate for the entrepreneurial family has never been more difficult nor offered more opportunity for growth. Getting the formula right is especially complicated in the family firm because of financial issues, sibling rivalries, tax implications of decisions, family misunderstandings, and management concerns.

The Center offers two forums specifically geared toward the needs of families in business. These offer accurate, understandable advice, knowledge of sound business practice, the benefit of hearing about the experiences of other firms, and creative problem-solving ideas.

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- Consultation on business and family challenges
- An exchange with people who share your concerns.

On Thursday, May 1, 1997, the Center will present a program entitled, "Creative Solutions to Intergenerational Conflict and Sibling Rivalry." Topics to be discussed include: Learning to Appreciate the Benefits of Conflict, Using Creative Solutions to Increase Closeness and Foster a Productive Family Business Team, Balancing Business and Family, and How and When to Deal with Delicate Issues.

For information about the forums or the May program, call the Center for Family Business at 603-862-1107.

rivalry can be neutralized by agreement on a central value of family systems: equality. The family system pulls together the relationship when matters get tough by sending the message of equality to all family members. Therefore, there are no "winners" declared in the family system.

But in the business world, what is the antidote to sibling rivalry? The business world is fundamentally different from the family setting because it demands winners and losers. Inherent in the business world is inequality of responsibility, uneven competency, and hierarchical authority. The identification of winners and losers, when superimposed on siblings' views of their roles in the business, can fuel rivalries, leaving family relations out of control.

The absence of a business-driven structure to control rivalry issues can force an artificial and aberrant adjustment by the siblings. Siblings, for example, may battle daily, with devastating effects on business and the family. Alternatively, the siblings may avoid talking about subjects that are emotionally loaded and a conspiracy of silence occurs. The absence of communicating about these issues can also have a devastating effect on the business and deep resentment may develop.

Furthermore, this dysfunction can have a very negative effect on the entire family. If one sibling fails to support another who asks for allegiance, the sibling seeking support is alienated. But choosing sides in such a rivalry ensures that the rival sibling will be alienated.

IN THE FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS, the principal underlying issue is selection of the person or persons who will be

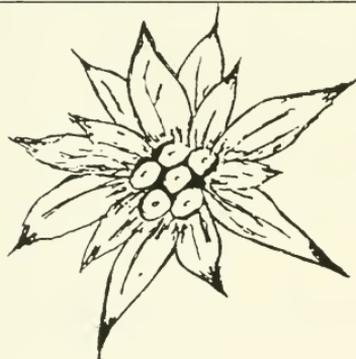
in charge after the parent or founder is gone. Too often this is a matter which is never discussed, seems impossible to resolve, or—at minimum—requires difficult and painful decisions.

Another sensitive issue is compensation. Conflicts can arise between siblings, all of whom work for the firm, e.g., disputes about equal pay for equal work. Similarly, disputes can arise between those who own stock and manage the firm, and those who own stock and have no role in management.

The key to solving the problem of sibling rivalry is to defuse these two most important issues. The most effective way to defuse them is for each member of the family to agree upon and participate in a sustained family dialogue. During this dialogue, the very process of communication is important and it may be necessary to utilize experts to facilitate the dialogue in the beginning or at points along the way.

At this same important time, family business issues can be discussed. If the family can examine and deal with the issues of future leadership and compensation, it will also go a long way toward resolving the sibling rivalry issues affecting the family firm.

*Thomas D. Davidow, a psychologist, and Richard L. Narva, an attorney, are principals of Genus Resources, Inc., a Boston consulting firm made up of professionals in the fields of psychology and family dynamics, business law, and accounting that specializes in solving the problems that face family-owned businesses.*



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## A.J. Cameron Sod Farms, Inc. A FAMILY OF ENTERPRISES

**D**on Cameron's office seems at the center of things: out back is the sawmill; to the right of the mill yard are storage sheds for the equipment used in landscaping and hydroseeding; the hallway going by Don's door leads into Cameron's Home & Garden Center at the front of the building; beyond the garden center is Route 11 leading south toward fields of sod and nursery stock.

The Camerons have been here for five generations. Don's grandfather moved to New Durham from Long Island in 1917, apparently for health reasons—country air was thought to cure a lot of ailments. A.J. Cameron, his son and founder of the company, was eleven at the time.

Like most everyone in the area, the Camerons farmed, but in 1924, they began digging trees and selling them as landscape material; they also planted a small nursery.

In 1938, they moved to Spring Street in Farmington. Here, they set up a saw mill to give them some income during the winter.

In 1945, another move brought them to High Street. A new mill was built. (This burned in 1960 and was rebuilt on a smaller scale.) Today, the sawmill, a hardware store and offices, a 75' x 175' lumber warehouse, and buildings for equipment storage and repairs are spread over the 40-acre site. Buildings are numbered to make reference easier.

Over the years, structures have been torn down and built as needed. Most of the original buildings—including the farmhouse in which Don and his brothers grew

up—have gone; only Building No. 5, a small one-room structure used for making grade stakes, was there when the Camerons bought the site.

THE SAW MILL begins operation in late fall, after landscaping and nursery sales slow down. It gives work to about 25 employees.

*R*ather than  
specializing  
in a single niche,  
Camerons  
has found several,  
all logically interlocking,  
each in its own  
season.

Cameron buys logs delivered in—the mill doesn't do any of its own cutting. The logs—pine, oak, hemlock—are scaled (measured for footage) as they're unloaded, then cut into a range of dimensions and widths. The variety serves a variety of customers building anything from a bookcase to a house. Other building material is bought in, so people can find most of what they need right here.

The Camerons mill 300-400,000 board feet in a season. This is considered a fairly small mill and is one of the few full retail mills in the state (most mills sell their product to a broker).

There is no waste. In Building No. 5, grade stakes are made from

edgings and center-cut lumber ("I can sell all we can make"). The bark ground off the logs becomes the bark mulch used in their landscaping jobs; slabs and edgings go through a chipper and the chips sold to paper mills and the sawdust to farmers who spread it on their fields.

LANDSCAPING expanded rapidly in the 1970s and continued to do well even during the real estate slump. Don credits this to the company's very conservative fiscal policies—"Whatever we buy has to have pay-back."

Today, there are three crews—more if there's work; Farmington is the starting-off point; most jobs are day trips to sites in New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts, although ("we'll go where they want us") they've done work as far north as Lubec, Maine.

Cameron can follow prepared designs or draw up plans in-house. Some work is subcontracted—for example, they do stonework—walks, walls, but not irrigation or ponds.

Much of the work is large-scale. Steeplegate Mall (Concord, NH) and the Franconia Notch Parkway, Franconia, NH, are examples. The size isn't a concern: "You just need to plan far enough ahead to deal with large amounts of material. When we started out, we would landscape anything—from a factory to a cemetery plot. We still can do that, but some of the smaller jobs might not longer be cost-effective."

In late December, 1996, the 1997 season was "looking good. We don't advertise—we've been around so

long that people know who we are."

COMMERCIAL SOD production began in the 1950s. (Before that, Cameron bought field sod from local farmers.) Today's production—mostly bluegrass—is on land along the Salmon Falls River in Somersworth, New Hampshire, and Lebanon, Maine. The production fields are small and separated from each other by woodland, but are close enough together to be treated as a single unit. Total acreage is probably 80 acres.

Sod production is not as large a component as it once was: "In 1972, it accounted for 95% of our total business; right now, it accounts for 5%. Currently, we're our own best customer—we buy most of it ourselves."

**BUT HYDROSEEDING**—spraying a liquid mix of seed, fertilizer, and lime onto prepared land—is in demand: two crews (in two trucks—one holding 2500 gallons and one, 1500—capable of seeding 2-4 acres per load) work throughout the summer. The technique is often used in seeding landfill closures (Turnkey, Rochester, NH) and school playgrounds.

**EVERGREEN TREES AND SHRUBS**—and some hardwoods—are grown on 20 acres in Sanford, Maine, and another three acres in Somersworth that will be expanded to six this year. It's grown in fertile soil without irrigation and dug as needed. Material is sold wholesale and used in their own jobs. About 5% of the material sold at the garden center is Cameron-grown.

**THE GARDEN CENTER** is a pragmatic place, centered around a Pro Hardware Store. This ties in well with the mill: builders stopping in for lumber can also buy tools and supplies.

But in late April, the space (and three hoop houses) in front of the garden center—actually, the entire frontage along Route 11—is filled with plant material ranging from bedding plants to large-caliper trees ("We have good selections of a lot of different things—for example, we carry 15 types of rhododendrons; one year we had 26 of lilacs, but that got too confusing—we had to keep explaining the different types. We have less now—but still a good selection").

Advertising—radio, newspaper—announces the grand opening on the Saturday before Mother's Day. "There's a party atmosphere, with lots of specials."

This will be the first year that the Walmart down the road will be open and offering its products. "We feel we can compete. We've adjusted our price structure. We have quality and expertise; people can come back to us if their plants aren't doing well in mid-summer."

**THESE ENTERPRISES** dovetail nicely. The sawmill and building supplies maintain a connection with the construction trades that is useful in getting landscaping and hydroseeding work. The sod and tree farms supply material for these as well as for the garden center. Material bought in for the garden center can be used in their own jobs. When one component is slow, others compensate. Rather than specializing in a single niche, Cameron has found several, all logically interlocking, each in its own season. Together, they cover a variety of needs for the communities around them.

Is this old-fashioned or is it shrewd marketing? The sense of community does seem genuine and can be seen as a sense of family grown beyond the boundaries of bloodline.

And it's definitely a family busi-

ness. Five siblings are involved—Don (president), Fred (in charge of landscaping), Bill (hydroseeding), John (nursery), and Sue (the office). Sue's husband, Bob Schulte, is general manager. And the next generation is beginning to work its way up the ladder: Cathy and Karen, two of Don's daughters, and Lynn, Sue's daughter, work in the office and garden center; Bill Jr. works with his father; Fred's son, Scott, is at the University of Massachusetts studying landscape design; Don's son-in-law, Bob, is in charge of harvesting sod and nursery stock. And now another generation—the grandchildren—are beginning to work part-time.

Why have they stayed together? A lot of people ask, Don says, but he doesn't see it as remarkable: "We enjoy the work." When questioned further: "Sure, we have our squabbles, but we work things out. We usually meet to make big decisions in winter. The rest of the time, we're too busy." Later, he adds, "We all had to start at the bottom. No one began at the top."

The number of family members involved in the business doesn't seem to have affected the ability to retain other key employees. Although it seems unlikely that anyone outside the family will assume a major policy-making position, employees (in summer, there can be as many as 50) are seen as part of an extended family. "We know their names and those of their children; if there are problems, they know they can come to us." And their hard work is rewarded: Don says, without elaboration, "We take good care of them."

And without elaboration, Cameron moves into another season. (B.P.)

*Cameron's Home & Garden Center is on Route 11 in Farmington. The phone number is 603-755-2124.*



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# 1996 Nursery Inspection Summary

Tom Durkis

The 1996 winter was a typical one, but after that, the growing season was anything but normal. Cold temperatures early in the season resulted in plant damage ranging from discolored leaves on unprotected pansies to whole truckloads of frozen annuals. Several department stores were discouraged enough not to even bother with replacement orders. Local growers less dependant on shipped merchandise fared much better. Rainfall was plentiful all season and was consistent enough to make growing conditions ideal. The survival rate of nursery liner stock and Christmas tree transplants was never better. The perfect spring planting conditions were common over most of the state and nurserymen and gardeners alike could not have asked for anything better, except for a little more fungicide. Botrytis was commonly found throughout the state due to these wet spring conditions and thick algal growth in liners caused an increase in fungus gnats (Mycetophilidae and Sciaridae) and shore flies (*Scatella stagnalis*). Scattered problems with *Septoria* blight (leafspot) on tomatoes caused severe crop loss for one grower. *Cercospora* leafspot was detected in one of our greenhouses this year. Shipments were sent out of state where problems arose. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture contacted us and the matter is still being investigated. The cause of the disease was most likely due to a bad seed source. Most growers were able to contain their aphid problems provided they were vigilant from the beginning of the season. A few complacent growers had extreme aphid populations and consequently were forced to dispose of a large amount of plant material. Western flower thrips (*Frankliniella occidentalis*) and greenhouse thrips (*Heliethrips haemorrhoidalis*) again were the biggest greenhouse pests for growers and dealers alike.

A common mistake still being made is the failure to check and isolate incoming stock for pests. The extended cold weather conditions in the spring forced plant dealers to cram their stock together in whatever space was available. This facilitated the buildup of thrips, which quickly spread to uninfested stock. Do not assume that the stock you are receiving is clean and free from pests. Dealers must be alert to the possibilities of receiving infested shipments from anyone.

One of the more interesting finds was a serpentine leaf miner on the leaves of mini-chrysanthemums in the houseplant section of several grocery stores. The

plants had originated from a foreign country and the pest presumably came in on the host. Adult flies are being sent for positive identification. Leaf miners are members of the family Agromyzidae, species of which affect a large number of plants. One of the most common leaf miners is the columbine leaf miner (*Phytomyza* sp.). Three species of rose slug (sawfly) continued to be prevalent throughout the season. These sawflies have overlapping cycles and feeding patterns which can make them difficult to monitor. Tarnished plant bug (*Lygus lineolaris*) and fourlined plant bug (*Poecilocapsus lineatus*) caused significant damage to containerized stock, especially viburnums and weigela, along with vegetables and flowers in flats and pots. These insects are good flyers and hide well, so the plants must be inspected for damaged leaves as well as the presence of the insect. Gypsy moth populations were down throughout New Hampshire, but Massachusetts had several problem areas. Nursery stock from infested areas had a large number of larvae hitching a ride to New Hampshire. The larvae frequently hide under the cardboard wrapping, going unnoticed to the unsuspecting buyer. Later in the season, adult females and egg masses were also found under protective bark wrapping. Another notable problem found in grocery stores and containerized nursery stock was French weed or hairy *Galinsoga*. A member of the aster family, the seed of this weed usually finds its way into gardens and perennial beds through manure.

Evergreens had a noticeable decrease in the yellowing of older needles which was prevalent late in the season the year before. Many insect and disease problems however increased. On fir, high balsam twig aphid (*Mindarus abietinus*) populations resulted in needle curling ranging from mild to severe. Balsam gall midge (*Paradiplosis tumifex*) showed up in scattered areas, but caused only minimal damage. Gall midge populations have increased and this coming season, growers could experience major problems with this pest. Large numbers of strawberry root weevils (*Otiorynchus ovatus*) were found last fall invading a nurseryman's house. It is not uncommon for these insects to seek out homes as overwintering sites. The larvae of this weevil feed on the roots of almost all evergreen nursery stock, causing substantial damage. Two nurseries experienced serious fir seedling losses from *Phytophthora* root rot.

Hemlocks, always predisposed to drought, were helped this season by a sufficient amount of rainfall throughout the growing season. The lack of any significant insect problems also favored hemlock growth. By mid-season, some nurseries began experiencing what appeared to be drought injury, but was instead hemlock rust. The disease (*Melampsora* sp.), which requires no alternate host, caused the new shoot growth to become limp and die, mimicking the appearance of drought injury. The rust has become more common over the past season, particularly in nurseries where whole blocks of hemlocks are grown.

A heavy population of pine tortoise scale (*Toumeyella parvicornis*) was discovered on Austrian and Scotch pine nursery stock. Also bark beetles (Scolytidae) on white pine, which are good indicators of stressed trees, were very active in several nurseries. Pine needle scale (*Phenacaspis pinifoliae*) and pine bark adelgid (*Pineus strobi*) occurrences were down while the incidence of white pine weevil (*Pissodes strobi*) damage was up.

Fletcher scale (*Lecanium fletcheri*) infested yews continued to show up in nursery stock. However, most of the stock had been chemically treated. Insect cadavers and black sooty-molded interior stems were very common.

A full report can be obtained by contacting Siegfried Thewke, Tom Durkis, or Jonathan Janis at the Division of Plant Industry, State Lab Building, Lab D, 6 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301; the phone number there is 603-271-2561.



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### The Green Spot

#### Mantids as Bio-controls?

**Y**ou've probably seen praying mantis egg cases for sale in a gardening catalog once or twice. In the description you might have seen the cataloger describe the mantid as a voracious general predator useful in cleaning up a large number of pests. It's not true. Don't believe it.

You might have read that mantids don't eat ladybugs. IT'S not true either. Don't believe it.

You might have been swayed by claims of this insect being an effective and economic bio-control agent. Again, NOT true.

Truth in advertising—has it fallen to the wayside? In the cases described above, yes.

Mantids ARE predators. They are not picky about what they eat, so, in essence, they ARE "general" predators; why, they'll even chow down ladybugs. They're NOT voracious, though. They'll spend hours, even days, stalking and waiting for one meal. And when they catch it, they'll savor it; they're not fast eaters.

They ARE economical, but certainly not effective as bio-control agents. They're too territorial. They're too cannibalistic. They should not be purchased to cure what ails you.

So, you may ask, what good are they? The first response is that they're neat. They are awesome to watch—really incredible creatures. Another reason is their size and easily recognizable look. With this in mind, they can be symbolic of bio-control and integrated pest management. Their presence can initiate consumer awareness of IPM and thus spark curiosity. This is the perfect opportunity to teach and gain support from your customers if you're a bio-control practitioner. This is especially true in garden centers where contact with end-users (the largest, but least aware, segment of the plant distribution chain) is highest.

Another reason to have mantises in the garden center, quasi-jokingly, is that they fascinate kids as much as adults and, thus, can capture their attention while their parents shop undistracted. They can sort of serve as biological kid controls!

Mike Cherim, president of The Green Spot, Ltd.,  
Department of Bio-Ingenuity, 93 Priest Road, Nottingham,  
NH 03290-6204, can be reached at 603-942-8925.



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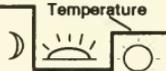
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# When Trees Become Dangerous

Mary Torsello and Florence Peterson

All trees eventually fail. Fallen trees and branches may block pathways, damage property and homes, destroy habitat for wildlife, and hurt people. High winds, snow, and ice can contribute to tree failure, but sometimes serious defects can lead to failure without the aid of these factors. Trees that fail often have structural defects that, if detected and treated, can prevent an impending failure.

A tree is hazardous when a tree part or an entire tree has the potential to fail and strike a target. If there is no target, a tree in any condition is not considered hazardous. A target can be a person, structure, vehicle, or anything of value that is within striking distance of a potential hazardous tree. It can also be a place where people tend to congregate or stop, such as a picnic table or walkway. Hazard trees are not only a safety issue, but also a liability issue. A person shows reasonable care when trees on their property are evaluated for hazard potential and corrections are made if needed.

Evaluating trees for hazards starts with determining the probability of failure. Understanding the interaction of many factors that influence the tree will help predict the probability of failure. Factors that influence a tree's relative hazard potential include: tree species, age, location and condition of the tree, and the presence and type of structural defects.

Some species are more prone to specific types of defects. For example, silver maple tends to form weak branch unions when it grows a codominant stem. Since trees have limited life-spans, older trees often require more attention because they have had more time to accumulate injuries and defects. Site history, climate, and soil type play an important role in hazard tree development. For example, construction can damage and kill tree roots and trees growing in continually wet soils can have shallow root systems. Evaluating overall tree condition helps because deteriorating trees have high probabilities of branch failures.

Identifying structural defects is key to evaluating trees for hazard potential. Defects are visible signs that trees are failing. A tree with a defect is not an auto-

matic reason to remove all or part of that tree. There is a range of probabilities for failure from low to high. It is the degree of the probability of failure and the probability of striking a target that a professional arborist uses to evaluate a tree for hazard potential. The seven main categories of defects are dead wood, cracks, weak branch unions, decay, cankers, root problems, and poor tree architecture.

*P*revention can be  
a matter  
of planting the right tree  
in the right place,  
early and proper pruning,  
and regular tree maintenance  
throughout the tree's life.  
Making corrections  
does not mean automatic  
removal of a tree.



**DEAD WOOD.** Dead trees and branches can fail at any time. Hanging material is especially dangerous and should be removed immediately.

**CRACKS.** Cracks are a physical separation of the wood. They are very serious because they show that the structure of the tree or tree part is already failing.

**WEAK UNIONS.** Sometimes branches or codominant stems are not strongly attached. The union has too much bark between the branch and stem or between the two stems. This is known as "included bark" and it looks as if the bark is inrolled at the union. Although a weak branch union is only of moderate concern, if the

union occurs in conjunction with other defects, the result can increase the likelihood of failure.

**DECAY.** Decay is the degradation of wood that is the structural frame of the tree. Bacteria and decay fungi invade a tree when it is wounded. Mushrooms or conks are evidence of decay fungi and advanced decay. They can be found growing on root flares, stem, or branches. Advanced decay may lead to a cavity which does not necessarily mean a tree is dangerous. A tree can have decay or a cavity and remain sound or have a low potential to fail. The wood surrounding the decay or cavity may have enough strength to support the tree even when weather is severe. Structural soundness depends on the amount of solid wood compared to decayed wood. Also, since the live part of a tree which carries water and nutrients is a thin layer just below the bark, trees and branches can contain decay, yet still retain lush green leaves. Determining the amount of decay that is dangerous can be a difficult task.

**CANKER.** A canker is a defined area on the stem or branch of a tree where the bark is sunken or missing. Cankers are usually caused by fungi or other biological organisms and indicate disease in the tree. Stem or branch breakage is a concern when the canker size encompasses more than half the circumference of the tree.

**ROOT PROBLEMS.** An uprooted tree is often the result of failure of the anchoring root system. There are many conditions that cause root problems. Root severing, paving over, adding fill or lowering grade, parking or driving over roots, and extensive root decay can lead to root failure. Sometimes there is evidence above ground that reflects root system problems. Dead wood in the tree crown, off-colored or stunted leaves, and twig die-back can indicate root problems. Soil mounding or movement around the tree is a good indicator of potential root failure.

**POOR TREE ARCHITECTURE.** Growth patterns that are abnormal can indicate a weakness or structural imbalance. Understanding typical growth patterns of a tree species is helpful in recognizing poor tree architecture. Abnormal architecture can be the result of repeated long-term injury from improper pruning, storm damage, or unusual growth conditions. Leaning trees may or may not be dangerous.

Recognizing these defects early is crucial when evaluating the hazard potential of a tree. Single defects on a tree may not be a problem unless the defect is severe. Multiple defects, however, can be serious. If more than one defect is touching or is close to another, the potential for failure can increase tremendously. Also, it is important to check trees regularly. A careful, systematic approach of scanning the entire tree and all sides of it is crucial. Extra inspections are recommended after recent storms—what may have been reasonably sound before a storm may not be afterwards.

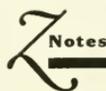
Prevention can be a matter of planting the right tree in the right place, early and proper pruning, and regular tree maintenance throughout the tree's life. Making corrections does not mean automatic removal of a tree. You may wish to consider wildlife before deciding which corrective action to take, since it is often dead or deteriorating trees, or trees with cavities that wildlife depends on for habitat. However, wildlife considerations should never compromise safety.

There are three basic corrective actions which can be taken to alleviate a hazardous situation. First, decide if it is reasonable to move the target. If not, then consider blocking off the area until another corrective action is taken. A second course of action can be partial removal or pruning if a branch is the problem. "Natural target pruning" is a procedure that promotes the tree's natural ability to seal its wounds and is less likely to cause future hazards. The practice of "flush" cuts (leaving behind a stub after the cut) is not recommended and will ultimately lead to decay, poor architecture and weak unions between the sprouts and the stem. If nei-

ther moving the target or pruning eliminates the problem, then consider tree removal. Tree removal should be considered the final option and should be done by a professional arborist.

Trees are an integral part of the New England landscape, and healthy trees add beauty and value as well as cooling summer shade to property. They are worth the investment of keeping them in good, and safe, condition. Evaluating trees for their hazard potential requires knowledge, expertise and experience. If you question the hazard potential of a tree, it is best to seek professional help from a certified arborist.

*Mary Torsello is a forest pathologist and Florence Peterson is a forest health specialist, both with the forest health protection staff of the USDA Forest Service in Durham, NH. For more information contact the USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 640, Durham, NH 03824 or call 603-868-7709.*



**S**pring crops bring an entire "to-do" list. Don't forget to put taking a water sample on that list. A good rule of thumb is to take a water sample once a year—especially if you are on town or city water. Communities often have a number of water sources they pull from and at times adjust the water differently.

Ideally, you should send your sample to a horticultural lab. The information towns send is usually incomplete and vague. A sample should be analyzed in parts per million, not as "high," "medium," or "low." The test should cover all the major and minor components that affect plant nutrition. It should also check for pH and alkalinity.

The water you use will have an impact on your finished crop. In most cases, there is no "good" or "bad" water. But each water may need to be amended with the proper fertilizer or fertilizer combinations.

In some instances in which there's a very high soil pH (alkalinity), acid may need to be added to your water. Remember—pH is simply the degree of acidity or alkalinity measured on a 14-point scale (0-7: acidity; 7-14: alkalinity). And the amount of these two things dictate how well plants will root, whether or not certain nutrients are made available, and whether, in some circumstances, the plant is prone to certain types of disease.

If you're using a new water source and putting together a new feed program, it may be beneficial to do a media and tissue sample after two or three waterings with your new fertilizer solution. This will insure that your solution is working properly with your water and media.

*Jim Zablocki, Territory Manager, The Scotts Company, Northeast, can be reached at 603-224-5583.*



**H**APPY NEW YEAR! I hope the holidays were happy, relaxing (ha!), and trouble-free for everyone. Things have been very quiet since the New Year. The PDL has been quiet (that's good for all of you, as well as for me), and once again, it's raining. This certainly has been a strange winter weather-wise. The weather also puts some unique pressure on greenhouse crop production as well as our own psyches.

The extensive cloudy weather, as well as the warmer-than-normal temperatures during much of December caused some plants to be leggy and more susceptible to problems with botrytis and powdery mildew. When dealing with this type of weather, there are a few precautions. One, remember the plants will not require as much water because the rate of photosynthesis is less. Excessive wetness favors the development of pythium and phytophthora root rot and botrytis blight. The need for nutrients will also be somewhat reduced (although potassium requirements may actually increase under low light conditions). If you are trying to control leggy plant growth by lowering growing temperatures, be cautious about soil temperatures. Some nutrients, such as phosphorus and iron, may be unavailable to plants at lower soil temperatures.

For woody ornamentals, the primary concern at this time is the extensive damage caused by the storm in early December. The broken branches and other injury should be pruned and trimmed to provide a better surface for healing when growth resumes in the spring.

Problems on greenhouse crops were relatively few during November and December. OMEGA was already beginning to show up on ivy geraniums in early November. There were a couple of cases of POWDERY MILDEW on poinsettias. There was an interesting exchange of comments from plant pathologists in an Internet listserv group regarding

fungicide control of POWDERY MILDEW on poinsettias. There were two reports of bract injury from Phyton applications, one on the cultivar Freedom Red. Strike also caused some bract injury, particularly when applied with a spreader/sticker. I guess the general message from this is to run a test application on a few plants whenever practical to avoid injury to the entire crop. There wasn't much else for disease pressure and let's hope it remains that way.

For those of you concerned with turf: it's important to remember that PINK SNOW MOLD can be active without snow cover. The fungus simply requires cool temperatures (below 50F) and wet conditions. We certainly have no shortage of moisture! Although fungicide applications are most effective if applied while the turf is still growing, contact fungicides can be applied as a protectant.

I will be attending a virus identification workshop in Florida at the end of January. The workshop provides training for techniques to identify viruses as members of groups or 'families' as well as for the identification of a few specific viruses. Hopefully, this will allow some in-house identification/confirmation of suspected virus problems in the future. Once again, don't forget the importance of sanitation.

*If you wish to submit plant material to the UNH-PDL for diagnosis, send samples (with a check for \$12.00) to: The UNH Plant Diagnostic Lab, C/O Dr. Cheryl Smith, Plant Biology Department, 241 Spaulding Hall, UNH, Durham, NH 03824. Samples should be accompanied by an identification form (available from your county Cooperative Extension office). Cheryl Smith is the UNH Cooperative Extension Specialist in Plant Health, and can be reached at Ph: (603) 862-3841, FAX: (603) 862-2717, e-Mail: cheryl.smith@unh.edu.*

### Pioneer Pointers

#### The Value of IRA's

**D**on't overlook the benefit of an IRA deduction. This is a great opportunity to delay paying taxes on a portion of your income. Many growers qualify for the maximum deduction for married couples. This is \$2,250 annually (given if only one spouse has earned income in excess of \$2,000).

Before you decide NOT to take advantage of this important deduction, consider the financial benefits of contributing to an IRA each year. The immediate benefit is a tax savings of at least \$337.50 (15% of \$2,250). It's better that the savings stay in your pocket rather than Uncle Sam's. These savings will increase if you live in a state with a state income tax and your state allows the federal IRA deduction. Long-term savings are even more impressive. A \$2,250 annual investment with an average 10.2% return (average historical return from the stock market) over a 30-year period will grow into \$409,372.71. Fortunately, you are allowed until April 15, 1997, to contribute. So it's not too late—this is one tax-planning maneuver that can be done after year's end.

Please note that the deductibility of contributing to an IRA may be limited by your overall income. For more information about IRAs and farm tax law, First Pioneer's tax staff can help. Our staff can assist in meeting your tax needs regardless of how your business is organized or the types of returns required. For more information, call the Bedford office at 1-800-825-3252. (S.W.)

**R**ight now is a good time to snuggle in with the new garden catalogs and herb books and plan our herb gardens. Keeping control is most difficult, knowing we cannot plant everything in one small garden plot. Even when putting it on paper, enthusiasm can carry us away. But unforeseen obstacles become reality when the balmy days of spring draw eager gardeners out-of-doors. Often the plan must be revised, but basic planning proves worthwhile and you might want to advise your customers to start that plan today.

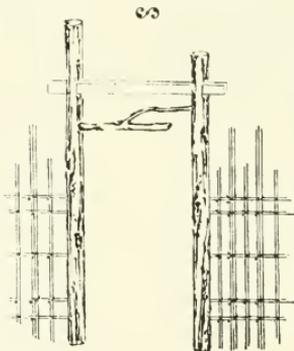
Factors to consider are: type, size and shape, formal versus informal. Location, location, location. Take a mental walk around your property before you chose a spot. Consider that most herbs prefer full sun in a well-drained area. Some filtered shade in the afternoon is good, but the dense shade from a building or lots of trees is not a good place for an herb garden. A background or enclosure—stone wall, weathered wooden fence, hedge, or the side of the house—gives the garden a more intimate feeling. If you locate it next to a building, the south side is best.

The edges of the beds and the pathways make the skeleton of the design. Good bones, we say. Garden paths should be wide enough to allow a wheelbarrow through and, for many people, raised beds simplify weeding and watering.

A stone or brick edging is lovely with cascades of thyme, lavender, and savory draping over it. A formal design usually has a focal point such as a piece of statuary.

Many herb gardens are very formal, set out in squares, rectangles, and diamonds separated by pathways of grass, gravel, or brick—or even crushed clam shells, as in early colonial gardens. "Knot gardens" usually employ only a few varieties of herbs, the design itself

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being the element emphasized. But a "yarb patch" can be just as appealing, although more difficult to care for.

Traditionally, herb gardens have been designed, providing opportunity for creative expression similar to that of an artist on canvas. For the plant material is "painted." Color and texture and size of each plant is taken into consideration. Taller plants would be used at the back or to accent the center; me-

dium-sized plants flesh out the garden design and pull it together; small plants form edges and borders.

There are hundreds of plants to design with and many things to consider. Is the plant invasive? Does it need frequent division, deadheading, or staking? Choose plants that are easily available, but enjoy the challenge of searching out the new and unusual as well. Many herb businesses have excellent herb garden displays. Pickety Place in Mason, New Hampshire, and Heritage Herbs in Canterbury are two that come to mind. Wild Iris Herb Gardens in York, Maine, is another. Strawberry Banke and the Urban Forestry Center, both in Portsmouth, have lovely herb gardens. Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts has a huge herb garden with everything well-labelled, as well as smaller gardens in colonial style throughout the village. Shaker Village in Canterbury and Lower Shaker Village in Enfield are both good places to get to know the plants. Many nurseries have display gardens and seeing these will help in the design process too.

And books! Books and magazines featuring herb gardens abound today. I suggest a simple book called *Success with Herbs*, by Gertrude Foster and Rosemary Loudon, for beginners. *Landscaping with Herbs* by James Adams covers everything from the knot garden to incorporating herbs into your entire landscape. And the "coffee table" herb books by Tolley and Mead delight the senses with colorful pictures in which we can study individual plants, learn what we might do with our harvest, and enjoy the artistry of herbal culinary concoctions.

Before we know it, spring will be here and we will all be bringing our garden designs to life.

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

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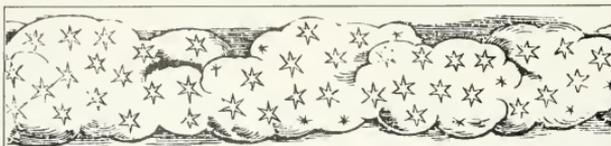


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## **T W I L I G H T   M E E T I N G**

**Wednesday, March 12, 1997**

**5:30 p.m.**

**NEWTON GREENHOUSE**

**32 Amesbury Road**

**Newton, New Hampshire 03858**

The first NHPGA Twilight Meeting of 1997 takes place on Wednesday, March 12, at Newton Greenhouse in Newton, New Hampshire. Tom McElroy, owner and operator, will be your host.

This wholesale/retail facility has continued to expand and is now approximately 43,000 square feet—nearly an acre—in size. The tour will include a close look at Tom's cut snap and cut tulip production. We'll also look at some ebb-and-flow benches of his own design and his Easter/Mother's Day/Spring crops. These include lilies, hydrangeas, and a variety of hanging baskets.

The meeting—a chance to get together before the spring rush as well as to take back some information useful for your own crop production—begins around 5:30. Refreshments will be served.

For more, call Tom at 603-382-5289.

*Directions: Take 108 South; 100 yards after Rowe's Corner Market, go straight through blinking yellow light (108 veers to the right). Go past police station and Catholic church (both on your left); after the church, take a sharp left: Newton Greenhouse is 300 yards on your left.*



## **Welcome New Members**

**BALL SEED COMPANY**  
(David Glurleo)  
324 Howart Street  
Northboro, MA 01532

**JENNIFER BIRD**  
Thimbleberry Corner  
RR 2, Box 809  
Center Harbor, NH 03226

**NANCY CAVALIERI**  
Box 1392  
Conway, NH 03818

**EARTHGRO**  
Box 143  
Lebanon, CT 06249

**GIIIIYFLOWER GLEN**  
223 MacDowell Road  
Peterborough, NH 03458

**MARY-JAYNE LATTIG**  
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Bramford, CT 06405

**LEDGEVIEW GREENHOUSES**  
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