

The Plantsman

NEW HAMPSHIRE PLANT GROWERS ASSOCIATION / AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 1995



Christmas Trees

The Christmas Farms Story



It all begins with the seed. This is why over the past 33 years we have selected the best fir on our plantations and put them into our seed orchard and the seed from here have been our mainstay for the past 15 years. The results speak for themselves.

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for more information
or even better
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7. 200 acres are in production, 16,000 are harvested annually.
8. Finally we are New England and Vermont Grand Champions and take pride in sustaining our standards.



August

AUGUST 16 *First Annual Field Day*, sponsored by the UMO Horticulture Department and the Maine Landscape & Nursery Association, UMO Campus, Orono, ME; information: Paul Cappiello at 207-581-2918.

AUGUST 19 *Fourth Annual Plant Sale & Rare Plant Auction*, Hay Estate, Newbury, NH; information: Ann Loeffler at 603-526-4153 or Mary Williams at 603-526-4719.

AUGUST 23 *Vermont Association of Professional Horticulturists (VAPH) Summer Meeting*, Northern Nurseries, White River Junction; information: 802-253-2350.

AUGUST 24 *Griffin Greenhouse & Nursery Supplies 8th Biennial Open House*, 1619 Main Street, Tewksbury, MA; information: 508-851-4346.

AUGUST 31 *Turf Scouting and IPM Workshop*, Eastern Massachusetts Extension Center, Waltham, MA; for information: Mary Owen at 508-892-0382.

September

SEPTEMBER 12 *Maine Landscape & Nursery Association (MeLNA) Charity Work Project*; for information: Edith Ellis at 207-225-3998.

SEPTEMBER 13 *van Berkum Nursery Open House*; 3-7pm, 4 James Road, Deerfield, NH; information: 603-463-7663.

SEPTEMBER 15-16 *New England Plastic Culture Seminar*, Portsmouth/Durham, NH; Otho Wells at 603-862-3208

SEPTEMBER 16 *Floral Workshop*, Konjoian's Greenhouses, Andover, MA; for information: Peter Konjoian at 508-683-0692.

♥♥♥ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 *NHPGA Twilight Meeting*, Rolling Green Nursery, Greenland, NH;

information: Rick & Beth Simpson at 603-436-2732.

SEPTEMBER 30-
OCTOBER 5 *PPGA International Bedding Plant Conference*, San Jose, CA; 1-800-647-PPGA.

October

OCTOBER 12-13 *Basic Tree Science Seminar with Dr. Alex Shigo*, Yoken's Conference Center, Portsmouth, NH; for information: John Kirkland at 503-254-0482

OCTOBER 12-13 *Connecticut Greenhouse*

Growers Association Short Course, Waterbury Sheraton, Waterbury, CN; 203-261-9067.

♥♥♥ WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18 *NHPGA Pesticide Applicator Recertification Meeting*, UNH at Manchester, 400 Commercial Street, Manchester, NH; information: Bob Demers, Jr., at 603-625-8298.

OCTOBER 19 *MeLNA Bus Trip to Arnold Arboretum*; details: 207-225-3998.

OCTOBER 20 *New Hampshire Campground Owner/Managers Conference*, Margate Resort, Laconia, NH; for information: Mike Sciabarrasi at 603-862-1700.

OCTOBER 25 *Association of Cut Flower Growers, Inc., Growers School* (in conjunction with the ASCFG National Conference), Baltimore, MD; 216-774-2887.

OCTOBER 25-26 *New England Biotechnology Conference*, Portsmouth NH; information: Otho Wells at 603-862-3208.

November

NOVEMBER 7-8 *Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association Business Short Course*, Westboro Marriott, Westboro, MA; 508-534-1775.

December

DECEMBER 12-14 *New England Vegetable & Berry Conference*, Sturbridge, MA; information: Otho Wells at 603-862-3208.

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

AD SIZE	6x	1x
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7" w x 9 1/2" h	\$400	\$100

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.

Cover and above: From a drawing by Isaac Sprague for William Oakes' *Scenery of the White Mountains*, Crosby, Nichols, and Company (Boston 1848).

One Day, One Place, Six Credits—for Free

The NHPGA Pesticide Applicator Recertification Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 18, in the auditorium of UNH at Manchester, 400 Commercial Street, Manchester.

There will be two sessions—a morning session from 9-12 and an afternoon session from 1-4. Lunch is on your own. Each session will have three speakers and give the participants three credits. You cannot attend individual talks, but you can attend just one of the sessions or, of course, both.

Speakers include Arden Bull (FMC Turf & Ornamentals), Mary Anne Hartman (Whitmir Research Labs, Inc.), Cliff Plourde (Hazmat Protection Co.), John Wendorf (Sandoz Agro, Inc.), and Jim Zablocki (Scotts Company).

This six-credit day is free to all current NHPGA members. For non-members, the cost is twenty dollars per session. (The money will defray the cost of renting the room). Or, you can join—that's \$35.—and save \$5.

Make sure you're there at the beginning of each session (it's important to sign on time); you'll receive a certificate of attendance on the way out.

Metered parking can be a nuisance. There's a parking garage at the corner of Canal and Spring—four blocks from the auditorium. The cost is \$2.00 a day. (Directions to the garage: Take Exit 5 off 293 North; take a right; at the second light, go right onto Canal. Spring Street is a half-mile on your right.)

One day, one place, six credits—for free. See you there.

(For more information, contact Bob Demers, Jr., at 603-625-8298.)

A Reminder...

You need to become a certified pesticide applicator in order to:

- Purchase and use restricted-use pesticides;
- Train farm workers under the Worker Protection Standards.

To become a certified pesticide applicator you need to:

- Contact the Division of Pesticide Control at 603-271-3550. They will send you an application. You must return the application with the \$25.00 fee before you may take the exam.

Contact your local UNHCE county educator. He or she will discuss with you the appropriate commodity for you to be tested in. Or, if you prefer, you may take the test at the Division of Pesticide Control Office in Concord. If you choose to take the test in the county office, the county educator will send you a form to be completed and sent to UNHCE Entomology in order to obtain educational materials. The prices for the materials are listed on the form—this will save you a phone call. Your

county educator will also rent to you a set of videos to be used in conjunction with your study materials. The tapes cost \$5.00—which will be refunded when they're returned.

Once you receive your materials, you should allow yourself two weeks to prepare for the exam. Your county educator will contact the state and ask that a copy of the exam be sent to him/her. After you've taken the exam, it will be sent to the Division of Pesticide Control and you will be informed by letter whether you have passed or failed. If you take the test in Concord, they'll assign a date and time for the exam to be administered. Generally, testing is done on Tuesday mornings if you fail one or more sections of the exam, you may retake the necessary sections after a two-week waiting period. You'll be charged an additional \$5.00 per section. Remember—there's a lot of material to cover. Give yourself enough time to adequately prepare for the exam.

Once you've become certified:

- You have a five-year period in which to collect 15 private appli-

cator recertification credits. This can be done by attending meetings that receive credit from the Division of Pesticide Control. You're not restricted to attending meetings in the same commodity as your exam, but the meetings must be approved for private applicator credit. To find out about upcoming meetings and the number of credits awarded, you can contact either your county educator or the Division of Pesticide Control or look in the *Weekly Market Bulletin*.

Be sure to sign in at the beginning of the meeting and receive your certificate of attendance at the end. At the end of the recertification year, send your certificates, along with your pesticide use form and your recertification summary sheet, to the Division of Pesticide Control. Please be sure to take your time and fill out the forms accurately. If you have questions, contact your county educator. Inaccurately filled-out forms will be sent back to you. This will delay the arrival of your new license and slow down the process for others.

Stanley R. Swier
Extension Specialist, Entomology
Pesticide Education Coordinator

"It is with regret..."

...that the Seacoast Garden Trail will not be held this year due to lack of resources. Despite the successes of 1994's Trail, we have not been able to muster the support needed for this year. It really is a program that needs to be owned by a media, or a group of chambers of commerce, or a corporation that can afford to use it as advertising. It was a sad decision made by the committee because of all the hard work that had already gone into 1995."

Sincerely,
Beth Simpson
& the SGT Committee

This is a pause, not an ending—a Seacoast Garden Trail is being planned for 1996; for information: Beth Simpson at 603-436-2737.

What do you want for Christmas?

YOU WANT SOMEONE WHO IS RESPONSIVE TO YOUR NEEDS

At Sibgo Tree Company we offer a wide variety of high quality Christmas Trees. Other tree companies can say that too. But, since we *also* have a retail Christmas Tree business, we know what retailers want. What sets us apart is our understanding of *your* needs. We know what *you* want from a supplier.

YOU WANT TO KEEP IT SIMPLE.

You are looking for trees that are ready to go. Our trees arrive individually wrapped. All you have to do is remove the wrappers and set the trees out. No broken branches. And since our trees are basal pruned, you and your customers will not have to hassle with any additional trimming to fit the tree to the stand.

YOU WANT QUALITY.

We offer heavily needled trees that have been pruned to achieve a traditional, yet natural form. The sturdy branches and carefully shaped profile offer room and support for your customers' valued Christmas ornaments.

YOU WANT FRESHNESS.

The later a tree is cut, the better



it is able to retain water. (Did you know that if a tree loses 40% of its moisture it will never recover?) Since our trees are grown in New Hampshire and Vermont, they are not shipped long distances. This means that the trees can be cut later in the season. In addition, after cutting, we do everything we can to minimize loss of moisture. For example, we interlock the tops of the trees after cutting to prevent drying.

YOU WANT VARIETY.

We grow blue balsam, known for its lovely color, fragrance, and good needle retention. Fraser, another favorite at our plantation, also has good needle retention.

And this year we will be offering something new: fralsam, a fraser-balsam cross. White, scotch, and red pine, and white spruce are also available.

YOU WANT ON-TIME DELIVERY.

We guarantee on time delivery—on the day *you* have scheduled to receive your order, not the day before or the day after.

YOU WANT THE NUMBER OF TREES THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU.

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The NHPGA Twilight Meeting...

...at Demers Nursery & Garden Center in Manchester on June 14 was filled—with information and people and a lot of festivity. Fifty people—from all over, some from long distances—toured the facility, asking lots of questions, then stayed on for the barbecue—hamburgers, hot dogs, salads, desserts. The party ended around 10:30.

The NHPGA thanks Bob for the tour, Gene, Ned, and Mike for manning the barbecue grills, Diane, Suzanne, and Jackie for creating all the desserts, and Mr. and Mrs. Demers, Sr., for the fine hospitality. The evening was much appreciated.

In 1993, the greenhouse/nursery industry in New Hampshire accounted for 21.8% of the total cash receipts. Only the dairy industry (milk) ranked higher with 26.7%. By the year 2000, the greenhouse/nursery industry will be the leading agricultural sector in total cash sales.

Fall Courses at the Thompson School

This is a partial listing of horticultural courses offered this fall at the UNH Thompson School. Some courses may have prerequisites (courses or experience). Additional courses are offered at UNH in Plant Biology, Entomology, and other departments. The fall semester runs from August 29 to December 8, 1995.

You may enroll in these courses by phoning the Division of Continuing Education at 603-862-2015. Make sure you get on their catalog mailing list too. For more information on course content, the part-time Associates Degree Program, or on the Diploma in Landscape Horticulture, call 603-862-1035.

HT 247 Intro to Woody Plants
2 cr. Lecture F 11-12
Lab M 1-3 or F 1-3

HT 265 Woody Landscape Plants
2 cr. Th 9-12

HT 248 Applied Soil Technology
3 cr. Lecture MW 11-12
Lab Th 10-12 or Th 2-4

HT 251 Plant Structure
and Function
4 cr. Lecture MWF 10-11
Lab T 10-12 or T 2-4

HT 254 Landscape Construction
and Maintenance
4 cr. Lecture W 10-12
Lab W 1-5

HT 261 Interior Plants
2 cr. M 6-9 pm

HT 255 Fruit Science
4 cr. Lecture MF 11-12
Lab M 1-4

HT 263 Floricultural Crop Production
3 cr. T Th 8-10 am

HT 259C Pest Management: Weeds
1 cr. F 1-4
(First 7 weeks only)

HT 259D Pest Management:
Control Applications
1 cr. F 1-4
(Second 7 weeks only)

AM 261 Small Engines
3 cr. Lecture F 9-10
Lab arranged

HT 258 Bedding Plant Production
2 cr. Th 6-9 pm

If you weren't proud of the trees on your lot last year, maybe it's time to come to Conley Farm

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Call Marty at 603/332-9942, for more information or to schedule a visit.

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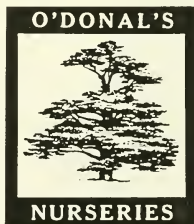
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You Can't Sell from Empty Benches

Bob Demers, Jr.

I know it's August, but I hope everyone is enjoying a great Summer Season. It's too bad that a lot of retailers think of summer as their slow time and treat it as such. A lot of you gear down, but are you gearing down too much? How many people did you turn away this summer because you didn't have the product they were looking for? Put a dollar sign in a notebook for every customer you turned away; then, at the end of summer add up the dollar signs and multiply the total by the price of a jumbo annual. That's the money you lost. And remember—only a third of your customers will actually ask for something; the other two-thirds turn around and leave. Where are they going? Someplace else.

Don't train your customers into thinking that the only time they can get plant material from you is May—because that will become the only time you'll see them. A lot of customers work around their yards the entire summer. As they sit by the pool or on their deck, they're constantly thinking, "How can I make this place more enjoyable?" Hopefully, they will ride out to their local garden center and find the answer: jumbo annuals, one-, two-, and three-gallon perennials, 12-inch (and up) color bowls....

Welcome New Members

CAMERON'S HOME & GARDEN
CENTER
PO Box 536
Farmington, NH 03835

LEO J. ENOS LANDSCAPING
Jason Ave
Jefferson, NH 03588

VAN BLOEM GARDENS
1295 Bluegrass Lakes Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30201

At Demers Garden Center, we start with jumbo material as early as Mother's Day, Father's Day, when it's all jumbo annuals and all the cell packs are gone, is when we start our summer season. We clean everything up—everything that's been hanging around and not looking too good goes into the compost pile. If it doesn't look good now, it won't look any better later. Plus, it's taking up valuable bench space.

We've been doing this for many years. Jumbo sizes are a lot easier to keep watered and customers like the large size and instant color. We grow what we can and buy in the rest. People will know that if they come here, they'll find what they're looking for. Sometimes hanging plants are lost while a customer's on vacation, so I even grow 8-inch hangers especially for July and August so there will be fresh plants to choose from.

Keep your benches full. In customers' eyes, empty benches mean you're running out, you're done, that's it for the season. We live and breathe an impulse business—so fill up your benches—give people something to be impulsive about. Impress them with quality. Create an environment they enjoy being in—shade your houses; widen your aisles; give them carts so they can fill them with purchases.

Price your material reasonably—you don't have to pay for the heat. A lot of people are looking for the biggest bang for their buck, so don't scare them away with the prices you have to get in May. We make (we use the odds and ends that haven't sold yet—you can get great combinations you never would have thought of) or buy in 12-inch color pots that we sell for as low as \$14.95. They're the perfect size for people to get into their cars to transport easily. They can be used for pools, decks, patios, even as a gift for a friend putting on a barbecue.

Selling big sizes is one way to keep things going. Another is to create spe-

cial events, such as Customer Appreciation Day. Or maybe invite all your neighbors over and have a giant yard sale. We do—customers go nuts for this and it draws a lot of business.

There are lots of things you can do. I hope this article inspires you to do some. Now, while this year's Summer Season is still here and before you get started with mums, is the time to start planning. Jot down ideas for next year.

Don't be foolish and turn away customers because you think you've made enough in the spring. When you turn people away, they go someplace else. They may even find a place they like better. An empty bench doesn't sell plants.

Bob Demers, Jr., is at Demers Nursery & Garden Center, 656 South Mammoth Road, Manchester, NH 03103. He can be reached, when he's not with a customer, at 603-625-8298.

Classified

FOR SALE: 150-gallon sprayer, excellent trailer—pump and motor haven't been used in two years. Asking \$200.00. For details: H.W. Parker, Parker's Tree Farm, Greenland, NH; phone 603-436-0478.

SITUATION WANTED: I am currently a senior at Ohio State University majoring in floriculture with a minor in Agricultural Business & Applied Economics. I received an Associate of Arts degree from UNH and will be graduating with a BS degree from OSU in June, 1995. I plan to move back to NH and am currently seeking employment in southern NH in either greenhouse production or in an assistant management position in a garden center. If interested, please call Glenn Carey at 614-294-8347 or e-mail me at carey.72@osu.edu.

PLANT MATERIAL REQUEST: Nurseryman in Oregon looking for *Acer pensylvanicum* 'Erythrocladum' specimen tree. If you can assist, call collect Bill Moss at 503-233-9233.

New Crop Mix

Pleasant View Gardens will continue to grow finished 4 1/2-inch Fischer geraniums, but will discontinue growing rooted cuttings of Fischers and, because of demand, concentrate instead on rooted cuttings of Proven Winners and Kientzler New Guineas. For information: Henry Huntington at 1-800-343-4784.

Transition

"Incredible," is the word used by Rob Carpenter, General Manager, to describe the results of biological pest control at Carpenter's Olde English Greenhouse, 220 South Main Street in Newmarket.

Done partly in reaction to the new EPA reentry regulations, partly out of Rob's personal preference not to be spraying and his concern for the safety of his children playing in the greenhouses, the transition to biological controls began in January in the 900-square foot retail area, then moved into a 4500-square foot production house (bedding plants and hanging fuchsia). Since then, he has begun using biological controls "actively" in about half of the 60,000 square foot facility and "some" throughout the entire range.

Working with Mike Cherim (The Green Spot, Ltd., Barrington), a program was devised to cover a wide range of pests, the transition has gone smoothly ("The most difficult thing was to learn not to expect instant results"). The only failure was aphid control in his Easter lily crop—in the cooler weather, pests multiplied while the predators went dormant and Rob had to spray. And there are trade-offs—it was initially expensive and there's not really much time saved—time once spent spraying is now spent scouting—but "this year we grew the nicest fuchsia ever... spectacular ivies with no sign of thrips damage...incredible annuals..."

Carpenter's is not the first commercial grower in the state to work with biological controls, but may be an indication of growers' willingness to ex-

periment with techniques that would have been seen as impractical a few years ago. He hasn't yet utilized the fact in his marketing (although he's talked about what he's doing to tours of grade school children)—right now he's simply "enjoying the pleasure of seeing a hungry ladybug bite into the back of a fleeing aphid."

For more, Rob Carpenter at 603-659-3391.

Changes...

You may already be aware that the Analytical Services Lab at Nesmith Hall in Durham was nearly eliminated during the recent round of budget cuts at UNH. However, it will remain open—as long as it is "self-sufficient"—which means it must make up through increased fees the \$36,000 in Agricultural Experiment Station Funds which were cut. In addition, it was recently learned that UNH will not pay benefits to Lab employees from the "central pool" and that it will need to add an additional \$15,000 to its budget to accommodate benefits.

To do this, there are some fee increases. The basic test—pH, buffer pH (for commercial crops only), texture, Ca, Mg, K, and P) will be \$10. This basic test plus NO₃-N NH₄-N, and soluble salts will be \$18; a basic compost test is \$36; tests for individual components will range from two to six dollars.

But the Lab also needs to increase volume. And to do this, two new services are being announced. The first is a soil testing kit specifically targeted toward home owners. This new kit, which includes a business reply envelope, smaller sample bag, and streamlined form, is designed to make submission of a home owner test as simple and convenient as possible. This test will cost \$12.00 and will be the focal point of spring and fall advertising.

The Lab is also announcing the availability of a "Plant Tissue Test." It has done plant tissue tests for years, but has never advertised the service and it is hoped that awareness will increase volume. There will be bro-

chures describing this test.

It is hoped that these changes will result in a financially stable lab that will continue to serve New Hampshire agriculture. For information, contact Stuart Blanchard at 603-862-3121.

Seminars...

On October 12-13 at Yoken's Conference Center in Portsmouth, Dr. Alex Shigo, one of the better-known names in tree biology, will present a two-day seminar on the basic science of trees and tree maintenance. The seminar "will explain the basic biology and chemistry of the living tree system; how the system is affected by pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; wood anatomy; how roots work; how trees are affected by placement and pruning. He will use this information to explain practical solutions to the most common problems in growing and maintaining trees."

The cost is \$98 for one day or \$176 for both. For information, contact John Kirkland, Tree Care Educators, 605 SE 7570th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97215. The phone number is 503-254-0482.



Another—more specialized—seminar is a Campground Owner/Business Managers Conference on October 20 at the Margate in Laconia. The focus in the morning will be on "industry trends/issues, increasing visitors and site marketing;" in the afternoon, it's on "campground environment, managing natural resources and services."

As the state's farms and nurseries market their products more and more with petting zoos and hands-on tours, some of the topics offered—developing nature trails and walks, basic grounds maintenance, use of low-maintenance grasses and plantings—may give new ideas about ways to utilize and maintain unfarmed land without destroying the character of the land itself.

For information and a brochure, contact Mike Sciabarrasi at 603-862-1700. Steve Turaj (603-788-4961) and Dave Sorensen (603-447-5922) were also involved in the planning.



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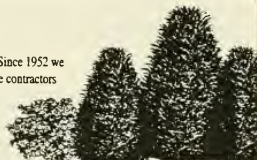
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Around New England...

The Rhode Island Nurserymen's Association (RINA) recently pledged \$80,000 to the University of Rhode Island's capital campaign. The gift includes \$30,000 in products and labor to be used to complete the sustainable landscape gardens behind URI's Cooperative Extension Center in Kingston. The remaining \$50,000 will establish an endowment, the interest on which will be used to maintain the gardens.

For information about the gardens and about RINA's "Bark Mulch Program," a fund-raiser which generates much of the money used by RINA for research, scholarships, and publicity, call Ken Lagerquist at 508-761-9260.

The Maine Landscape & Nursery Association and the Horticulture Department at the University of Maine at Orono is presenting a joint "First Annual Field Day" on the Orono campus on August 16. Included are "tours of the trial gardens and the new research plots, vendors, workshops, equipment demonstrations, and resource information. Some fun and crazy competitions will lighten the day."

Pre-registration fee of \$9.00 gets you a box lunch. For information (if no longer about this year, perhaps about next), contact Paul Cappiello, UMO, 5722 Deering Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5722; phone: 207-581-2918.

Of the more than 700 bills filed in the Massachusetts Legislature this year, one particular bill caught the eye of the MNLA Legislative Committee. It was a simple bill that read, "Section 96 of Chapter 143 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 1992 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding at the end thereof the following: The provisions of the state building code shall apply to greenhouses covered exclusively with plastic film."

On April 10th, after considerable lobbying by the MNLA, the Local Affairs Committee reported the bill to the full legislature as "ought not to

pass." This action effectively killed the bill for this year and, should the sponsor refile the bill next, the process will start with a previously established precedent working against its success.

(from the *Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association Nursery News*, April, 1995).

Canada Origin Labeling Rule Officially Proposed

(from American Association of Nurserymen *Update*, May 1, 1995).

Canada's Department of Finance proposed new country-of-origin rules on April 15. When finalized, these would require that nursery stock and other items imported into Canada bear country-of-origin (such as "Product of USA") marking. This could be in the form of tags, labels, stickers, etc., that meet NAFTA guidelines.

The rules are expected to become finalized by mid-August. For information, call Craig Regelbrugge at AAN; the phone number is 202-789-2900.

Plants For America Defeated

Garden Council Chief Executive Officer Gary Mariani has announced the results of the Plants for America promotion order survey that was conducted by Ernst & Young during March, 1995: 35,888 growers were surveyed by fax or mail, 8,796 ballots were returned. However, 833 were invalid for various reasons (some were photocopied; others were from segments of the industry not allowed to vote), 237 arrived after the March 24 deadline, and 585 were returned for invalid address. Of the 7,141 correct responses (around 20 percent of the ballots sent out), 85 percent were against the proposed national promotion campaign.

The Garden Council will discontinue all Plants for America promotion efforts. It will review its charter and mission concerning national advertising and comply with the directive of its supporters and members.

For information, contact the Garden Council, 10210 Bald Hill Road,

Mitchellville, MD 20721. The phone number is 301-577-4073.

1996 AARS Winners

"There's a rose for every gardener in this year's group of winners," says Larry Burks, President of All-America Rose Selections, Inc.

'Carefree Delight' is a landscape shrub rose blooming profusely on upright arching canes of dense dark green foliage spreading up to five feet. Clusters of up to ten buds open into five-petaled two-inch blossoms of carmine pink with creamy white centers. It's highly resistant to mildew, rust, and blackspot. House of Meiland is the hybridizer; Conard-Pyle, the introducer.

'Livin' Easy' is a floribunda producing ruffled apricot-orange blooms with approximately two dozen petals per flower. It has medium-long stems suitable for cutting, glossy bright green foliage with excellent black spot resistance, and a mild fruity scent. Hybridized by Jack Harkness, Weeks Rose is the introducer.

The five-inch flowers of 'St. Patrick' are distinguished by unusual color: chartreuse buds unfurl slowly (unusual among yellow roses) to reveal a yellow-gold flower with shades of green. This vigorous hybrid tea has long, upright stems and unique grey-green foliage. Introduced by Weeks roses, 'St. Patrick' was hybridized by Frank Strickland, one of the few amateurs ever to win the AARS award.

'Mt. Hood' is a grandiflora growing upright to about five feet, with clustered three-inch ivory-white flowers releasing a medium old rose scent. Deep glossy green foliage and a full branching habit add to the attractiveness. Hybridized by Sam McGredy IV, it is being introduced by Certified Roses, Inc..

These winners will be available to gardeners in spring, 1996, but nurseries, garden centers, and mail order suppliers should order early. Contact All-America Rose Selections, Inc., Selz, Seabolt & Associates, Inc., 221 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60601; telephone: 312-372-7090.



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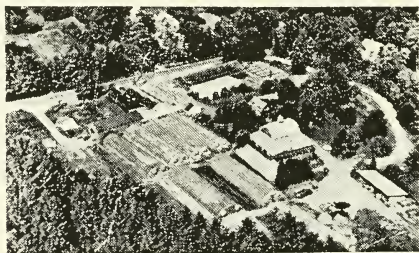
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Laurie Bryan

New Hampshire has become more suburban than many people in the green industry realize and a surprisingly large number of children have little contact with the fields and woods and greenhouses in which the state's agricultural production is based. New Hampshire Agriculture in the Classroom (NHAITC) is an organization dedicated to showing school children just what New Hampshire agriculture is all about.

NHAITC is part of a national effort to develop an understanding and appreciation of agriculture by elementary school students. We provide classroom materials, a quarterly newsletter, and training workshops to help teachers find new ways to explore the production of food and fiber with their students. The curriculum materials are designed to show the students the diversity and changes in New Hampshire's agricultural community and how this community affects their daily lives.

Although NHAITC is part of a national program, we receive no funding from the national organization. We're an independent non-profit organization funded by donations from our Supporting Members—farmers, agricultural organizations, commodity groups.

Our materials are on loan to any teacher in New Hampshire at no charge. Teachers who attend workshops or borrow materials become Educator Members.

Past workshop topics have included "Growing Seeds and Plants in the Classroom" and "Bees and Pollination." Workshops are often held at farms so teachers can see what actually goes on there rather than hear about it second-hand in a classroom setting. Teachers attending receive technical information, hands-on experience, and resource material they can take back to the classroom.

NHAITC has a variety of resource materials related to plant production. These include a set of posters put out by the National Gardening Association (showing seed growth and development, how different plant parts work, and how to plant a salad garden), books describing numerous plant-related activities suitable for the classroom, a packet which explores bees and pollination, and a video illustrating gardening projects and experiments.

Last year, 175 teachers participated in our workshops and our materials went to over 10,000 elementary school students. This year we plan to conduct ten workshops around the state on such topics as maple sugaring, fruit and dairy production, sheep and wool, Christmas trees, soils and plants, and bees and pollination. We will also be reviewing and reorganizing our units on these topics. We have yet to develop a unit on greenhouse/nursery

production, but we're constantly working on expanding our topics and resources and now, with a member of the NHPGA Board on our Board, this may be the year to develop materials that would introduce students to one of the fastest growing segments of New Hampshire's diverse agricultural scene.

(If you have ideas you want to share with NHAITC or would like to become a Supporting Member or receive a Resource Guide, please contact Laurie Bryan, NHAITC Coordinator, 295 Sheep Davis Road, Concord, NH 03301. Her phone number is 603-224-1934.)



THIS QUESTION IS POSED TO ME REGULARLY: "WHAT IS CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE LOSS IN THE GROWING OF A CROP?" Now, this will obviously vary, depending on the plant in question and the culture in which it is raised. A 3% shrink is considered acceptable in a pot crop like poinsettias and a 15% shrink's the norm for overwintering certain perennials like crocosmia or some heathers.

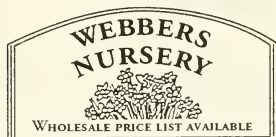
When it appears that your losses are above normal (3-5%), it's time to reevaluate the culture in which the plant is cared for. Air movement, through fans or plant spacing, is the most commonly overlooked factor.

In perennials and nursery stock, if shrinkage is occurring primarily in winter, your overwintering practices need a second look. Garden phlox is notorious for having desiccation at its center because of the lack of air movement during the winter months. Microfoam, a common winter protection, is not kind to plants that cannot tolerate high levels of moisture. Microfoam will trap excess moisture on the foliage, causing all sorts of problems.

Many growers have decided that losses of 10-20% are too high and have built hoop houses in which to overwinter sensitive material. These houses give both better insulation and more air movement.

Poorly drained soil mixes also come to mind as a major cause of shrinkage. This is especially true during winter months when lower temperatures and less light drastically slow down plant transpiration and evaporation. The consistency of your soil mix is critical to plant survival in winter.

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



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Fall Crops Offer Exciting Possibilities

DR. PETER KONJOIAN

IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT THE GARDEN MUM is King in the fall. But that does not mean that it has to be the only plant that we offer our customers. September and October can be excellent growing months if we select the right annuals and perennials to offer the consumer. I am sure that you, like me, are finding the post-Labor Day season to be both exciting and profitable.

Garden asters can be grown to compliment mums, as colors in the blue range are available. There are several lines and sources and breeding programs are actively selecting for better performance in both the production phase and the garden. If you are used to pinching your garden mums, get ready for even more of this activity with asters. They grow like grass and require several pinches to control their size and height. I am about half-way into a research project with Florel on asters and so far the results look promising. Early applications will stimulate branching and replace pinching, but for tall cultivars, it looks like a last shearing may be required to contain the plant's height. More work is needed and has been planned.

Ornamental cabbage and kale have become my favorite fall crop for one reason. In my opinion, this crop gives the consumer the most value. I have planted large display buckets of cabbage and kale for September and come Thanksgiving, when I set up the retail area for Christmas, these buckets still look terrific. They even hold up under an early snowstorm or two. The snow contrasts nicely with the bright colors. And with some dusty miller and vinca vine in the bucket, both of which withstand the cold and snow as well, I shake my head at the value the consumer receives. And do not forget another important point: fall plants require very little care—an occasional watering, no fertilizer, and no insect or disease pressures to contend with. National gardening surveys are clearly saying that consumers want more gardens, but do not want to spend more time gardening. Fall crops are a perfect fit.

Growing annuals for fall sales has been catching on around the country for about five years now. Pansies were the first plant to be offered. Even though they can be considered perennials in some areas, most of us grow and sell them as annuals. Fall production shifts into potted sizes instead of packs. As the growing season winds down, consumers do not want something that they have to wait to see develop in the landscape. They are interested in larger, mature plants that fit right into their plantings and look like they have been growing there all summer long. Four-and-one-half-inch and six-inch pots, color bowls, and even hanging baskets are being offered successfully.

Let's return to the dusty miller and vinca vine for a mo-

ment. I refer to these plants as accent plants that no garden or landscape should be without. Most of my dusty miller is the cultivar 'silverdust'. I schedule it from Easter through October in a variety of container sizes. Seed germination has been improved in recent years, resulting in much more dependable plug production. During the spring, I try to display packs of it in as many locations in my bedding plant sales area as I can find next to almost any other flowering bedding plant, to give my customers a nudge in appreciating its versatility.

Many of you have heard me refer to vinca vine as perhaps the most profitable crop I touch in my greenhouse. Production advantages are available because this crop does not have to grow in the brightest places in the greenhouse.

E DUCATE YOUR CUSTOMERS:

Fall is not the absolute end
of the growing season.

Using plants that tolerate frost

can extend the outdoor growing season

well into November

in the Northeast.



Nor does it require much space. I know some growers who have even grown it under their benches successfully. While that may be possible, I would never recommend cheating this much with such a valuable crop. It deserves better than that for the return that it generates. Florel has transformed this crop from one that could easily get out of control with four-foot-long runners tangling themselves around any thing in site to one that can be maintained at any length desired. And because it is grown as a foliage plant, Florel treatments can be made right up to sales to control growth. I can now grow vinca vine in an 806 pack, keeping the shoots six inches long, full, and just starting to lean over at the time of sales. I would have been out of my mind if I tried to use this pack prior to the Florel project. The runners from one plant would have rooted into the cell from another, leading to all kinds of problems.

Any other annuals that prefer cool weather are possible candidates for fall production. I am considering things like snapdragons, dianthus, and stock. Maybe even petunias. Use your imagination—this can be a lot of fun. During the spring season, I find myself talking customers out of certain annuals because I am not confident that they will perform

well during the heat of the summer. How about trying some of these in the fall?

The biggest obstacle in this discussion has nothing to do with producing these items. It has to do with the perceptions we have and whether we are willing to make the effort to change the perceptions that the customer has of these crops. Some of us will jump on this challenge as an opportunity to better serve and educate our customers. Show me the law that is written in stone that says annuals cannot be sold and enjoyed through the fall season.

Educate your customers that fall is not the absolute end of the growing season as we have all been taught. Using plants in the landscape that tolerate frost can extend the outdoor growing season well into November in the Northeast. It will require time for consumers to change the way they think. It is up to us to work at educating them. It might take two or three years of having these plants in your sales area before your customers get the idea. What have we lost in the meantime? Certainly no fuel. Perhaps some labor, maybe some scheduling effort, a container, some growing media, and not much else.

Dr. Peter Konjoian is part-owner operator of Konjoian's Greenhouses, Inc., in Andover, MA, and president of Konjoian Services, Inc.

(There is a Florel workshop—a discussion of the effects of Florel as a chemical pinching agent to control and time flowering of floricultural crops—in Andover on Saturday, September 16, 9am-3pm. Registration is \$125 for the first member of firm, \$50 for each additional member. For information, call Peter at 508-683-0692; his fax number is 508-683-6962.)

Tips from the Griffin Guru



Change of Phone or Address

TWO RECENT EVENTS HAVE CAUSED A PROBLEM FOR us here at Griffin's. Because of the installation of an Enhanced 911 System, it was necessary to change the street name of our Latham, NY, warehouse and office. All our letterheads, envelopes, business cards, directory listings, etc., now have to be changed.

The second problem is that half the state of Connecticut had its phone area code changed to accommodate all the fax and cell phone needs. In short, all those customer phone numbers will have to be corrected.

If you should get involved with a similar set of circumstances, who would you have to notify? In the case of our company, we print some of that information right on the delivery slip. Please take a moment to look at your slip. Check to see that your two addresses are correct. One is for deliveries; the other, for mailing. Also check your phone number.

In the age of the computer, your incorrect information will be like the Bunny on TV and just keep going and going—unless we fix it.

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As the end user of these living organisms, the grower is given some unusual challenges as well—above and beyond the normal checking of the expiration date and making sure the bottle didn't leak. Growers want to be certain their biological control agents are alive and ready to work. Unfortunately, the health of a good portion of these "good bugs" is difficult to determine—many are hard to see.

This leaves four choices: learn how to perform product tests yourself (very impractical for most organisms); send samples to a testing facility; wait for the end results of their use (the worst of all choices); or take it on faith the bugs are okay.

Needless to say (but I'm saying it anyway), most of us will opt for the last choice. However, those of you who "take it on faith" should take time to investigate the company you're going to be dealing with. Ask them the following questions:

1. Do they offer a live delivery guarantee? (If not, shop elsewhere.)
2. How do they package and ship? Pony Express or overnight?
3. What's their turn-around? If they'll ship Friday for a Monday delivery or if they *have it in stock* (if they are not the producer and are referring to something other than ladybugs or nematodes), watch out—old bugs are normally no good.
4. Will they disclose some product tests you can do yourself? Ask about an easy-to-perform nematode test. The supplier should be more than willing to give you the details. Most companies in the "bug-biz" are not going to lead you down a primrose path—they have their reputations to protect and certainly want your future business. And it never hurts to be a smart shopper.

Mike Cherin is at The Green Spot, Ltd., in Barrington; the phone number there is 603-942-8925.

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RCHARD HILL GREENHOUSES

Orchard Hill—the name is appropriate. Apple orchards are on both sides of the three acres where Mark Tepper's house, seven greenhouses, and an office/storage building form a semi-circle around a steep south-facing slope of lawn.

Mark has been in the business thirteen years, working as head grower at Plant Action in Lexington, Massachusetts, before moving to Londonderry five years ago.

Construction here began in May, 1990. Part of the slope was dug out and the fill used to create a level area, and, by that October, three 30x96 New Englanders (8500 square feet of production area) were facing west along the east edge of the property. The first crop was 3000 potted mums for Thanksgiving. It was sold in two weeks.

Later a 25x25 wooden office/storage building was built above and west of the three New Englanders. It faces south-west.

This February he added over 5000 square feet of production space by putting up four south-facing 17x80 Inflation Busters at the crest of the hill. "We were right behind the construction crew, filling the houses with bedding plants as fast as they put them up." (Mark's home is just beyond the Inflation Busters, slightly below the crest, facing south-east.)

It's a Straight-Forward Operation—The two New Englanders closest to the road have benches—wire stretched on wooden frames set on cement blocks—going the length of the houses. In the rest, the plants are grown on weed control ground cover.

In the Inflation Busters, overhead rotary nozzles are used for the water-

ing or constant feed—usually 250 ppm. All feed lines are part of a system connected to an injector set up in the storage/office.) The height of the nozzles is adjusted in order to give even coverage right to the edge of the house; Mark finds they work well until the plants get bigger and the foliage can prevent the water from getting to the soil. Rotary sprinklers are used in the one New Englander without benches; all hangers and pots are on drip irrigation.

Automation is important: it allows Mark to run the range with surprisingly little help. Family is crucial: Mark's two daughters (ages five years and fourteen months) are still too young to do much, but his father-in-law (retired) puts in full-time hours and Mark's wife (she works full-time at Raytheon) and mother are there during busy times (Mark does his own book-keeping). The only outside employees are two college students who work weekends and summers and a woman hired to handle retail business in spring...a lot is done by these few people.

He heats with propane—"the cost is close to oil and has fewer cleaning problems." There are three 1000-gallon tanks—one behind the Inflation Busters, two behind the New Englanders; each house has a 275,000-Btu primary heater and a 225,000-Btu backup; a 15,000-kw generator to be used in emergencies is in the storage/office.

Mark has saved costs by designing some of his own equipment: the germination chamber he uses is a 2x4x8 box of 8 mm Polygal; inside are five shelves of benchtop metal on angle iron frames and a 2 1/2-gallon humidifier. Florescent and gro-lights outside the box, along with heating cables inside and the heat of the room itself, keep the temperature at 70F. Mark uses all plugs, seeding all his own except begonias.

He recently built himself a flat-filler—a motorized auger, two speeds, room for three bails of mix in the hopper—that can fill 17 flats a minute. Transplanting is done in each house—the prefilled trays—800 per Inflation Buster—are stored at the end of each house until he's ready to use them.

A

TRADITIONAL

MIX

STILL

WORKS

✦ **THE CROPS ARE TRADITIONAL.** In June he pots up the fall's hardy mums, planting rooted cuttings in 3 1/2-inch pots filled with Metro 510. He repots once and fills the houses (the plastic rolls up and, in warm weather, comes off) and between the houses and the hillside that drops down to the road with the 6 1/2s and 8s. He pinches heavily and uses Florel to produce a full, dense plant. 17,000 pots will be ready by late August—along with 1,000 of asters ("they go well—sell out") and another 2,000 of cabbage, kale, sedum, and fall pansies ("pansies didn't go well last year, but I want to try again"). About 1000 pots will be sold retail (the hillside of mums is its own advertisement); the rest go to wholesale customers.

Poinsettias arrive in July. Although he grows a few of all types—Jingle Bells, Pink Peppermint, Marble, "red is what people want." He often uses odd-sized pots—4 1/2-inch, 6 1/2-inch—"you get a bigger plant." And they are bigger—his 4 1/2 has six-to-eight blossoms; his 4 1/2, eight-to-twelve. His 10-inch (a five-plant pinch) is four feet across and shipping requires making his own sleeves—he's currently looking into having sleeves made to order. How does he get the plant size? Pinching heavily and giving them plenty of space seem to be key.

For Christmas, he also brings in Christmas cactus, which he sells in 6 1/2s. An early spring crop (Easter and before) includes Asiatic lilies ("if you miss the date, you can still sell them"), hydrangeas (the florist variety) in 7 1/2s, and azaleas.

The bedding crop is straight-forward. The 1994 spring wholesale price list contained 22 species of annuals and seven of vegetables (no gourmet items) grown in trays of 806s. Houses are filled—the only space is a foot-wide walkway down the centers.

New Guinea impatiens (he likes the Kientzler Paradise Series—"bigger flowers; better performance in general") is Mark's best seller. He sold 5000 4 1/2s this year; he hopes to double that next. He grows geraniums (a wide variety, but feels the Oglevee and Bartlett introductions are most vigorous), but sees the market declining: people "want no cleaning, nothing fussy." He used to grow 10,000 4 1/2s; now he grows 8,000 and plans to cut that to five. He also grows Martha Washingtons and miniature roses.

He claims no specialty, but does sell a lot of hangers—about 3500 of them: New Guinea impatiens, cascade petunias, fuchsia (nine varieties, mostly in the California Dream series—"people insist in hanging them in the sun and these seem to take the heat better"). He grows Proven Winners—scaveola sells best ("It's a tough good-looking hanger"). He grows eights and tens and some 12-inch Buddy Baskets of impatiens. "Big" seems important (one customer is asking for 26-to-28-inch coco baskets) and people are willing to spend for big bright high-quality plants—maybe because a lot of the houses being built in the area today are bigger and a larger plant is needed to make an impact.

In the two houses with benches, the material can be four deep—the plants on the bench, a row of 4 1/2-inch impatiens on a narrow shelf going down the center of the bench, and two layers of hangers. Shading doesn't seem to be a problem.

✦ **WHEN MARK WAS THE ONLY EMPLOYEE,** he'd leave a note for retail customers, telling when he'd get back. It's still pretty casual—the only retail marketing is one 2x3" ad in the *Derry News* before Mother's Day, but the retail side of things has consistently accounted for 20% of his business. Some accommodations are made. In the month of May, the driveway in front of the three New Englanders is filled with benches of bedding plants ("It's not bad—for one month, we don't get to the dumpster") a checkout counter is set up in the first house, and one person hired to help out.

Customers can go into any of the houses—"they like poking around; even the steep climb doesn't bother them." Nothing is marked, but "we're very personalized," Mark says. "Usually one of the employees goes with them—and we help them choose and do all the lugging."

Mark does grow some things specifically for retail: a few herbs ("mints are down, but basil...no matter how much I grow, I sell out") and perennials (3500 quart containers, 26 varieties). His jumbo annuals (7-inch) also aim toward the retail trade as well as landscaper clients, but these are seen as a filler until the mums start selling at the end of August.

Mark sees the business as moving more and more toward wholesale. He sells to local garden centers (Manchester south) and as far west as Vermont. He delivers free of charge, provided the customer buys a full load. He rents two vehicles—a van and a Ryder truck—in the busy season starting in April ("it costs a lot in spring, but we make up for it by having no expenses the rest of the year"). Local landscapers buy here as well. "I send out a price list to wholesale customers," he says, "but word of mouth still works best."

Prices are higher than some of the larger wholesalers, but he feels his quality makes him competitive. And his plants justify his price.

Expansion continues—Mark's eventual goal is 45,000 square feet of production area—and this summer, three new greenhouses are being built behind the New Englanders. One's a 17x48 propagation house; two others will be used for production. The emphasis will be wholesale; the crops will be traditional—and quality will be high: high quality still sells the traditional crops. (BP)

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Where do the numbers come from?

Aubrey R. Davis

Who has heard of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)? What do they do? Who cares anyway? These are good questions because most likely you are paying for this service through your federal tax dollars. Yes, this is part of the huge federal bureaucracy that is getting considerable attention in current media. The following information will attempt to shed some light on this rather small agency of the United States Department of Agriculture and a local field office called the New England Agricultural Statistics Service.

The foundation of NASS was established within USDA in 1863 when the first statistics were published. This marked

From 1984-1993,

the number of farms in New Hampshire dropped from

3,400 to 2,700;

the average size of the farm increased from 159 acres

to 170 acres; and the total acreage

in farms decreased from 540,000 to

460,000 acres.

NASS is considered the data collection arm of the USDA. The mission of NASS is "to serve the United States, its agriculture, and its rural communities by providing meaningful, accurate, and objective statistical information and services."

Statistical data on U.S. agriculture is essential for the orderly development of production and marketing decisions by farmers, ranchers and other agribusiness managers. These data series are also used for monitoring the ever-changing agricultural sector and for making and carrying out agricultural policy relating to farm program legislation, commodity programs, agricultural research, and rural development.

Thousands of farmers, growers, and others voluntarily respond to nationwide surveys about crops, livestock, prices, and other agricultural activities. These surveys are supplemented by field observations, objective yield counts and measurements, and administrative data.

The NASS program utilizes 45 State Statistical Offices (SSO's) serving all 50 states. These offices are operated under cooperative funding arrangements with State Departments of Agriculture and/or land-grant universities. This arrangement efficiently serves data needs at both the state and federal levels and eliminates duplication of effort. Cooperative agreements provide additional agricultural data for state and local needs while minimizing overall costs to taxpayers.

Now, let's get a little closer to home. The headquarters for the New England SSO is Concord, New Hampshire. We are located at 22 Bridge Street on the third floor of the Ralph Pill Market Place. Our staff consists of one part-time and 15 full-time federal employees, plus several contract employees who serve as data entry or telephone data collectors when needed. We also have about 50 contract employees who work as field data collectors. These people are located in all six states in the region.

Data collection is one of our most visible activities. Much of our data is collected by mail. However, we are using the telephone more every year to give us additional time for data analysis, estimate preparation, and publication. We have two comprehensive surveys that are done exclusively by personal interview.

Most of the estimates that we generate are based on national USDA policy. Included under this policy are official crop estimates for apples, cranberries, maple syrup, peaches, pears, corn silage, hay, potatoes, tobacco, tomatoes, sweet corn, oats, and floriculture. The livestock program consists of various estimates for dairy, beef, sheep, hogs and pigs, and poultry. Wild blueberries in Maine are part of the cooperative program funded by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

Not all estimates are prepared for all six states. Inclusion is usually determined by the concentration of a specific commodity within the state and the availability of federal funding. This leaves

From 1984-1993,

gross farm income in

New Hampshire rose

from \$146 million to

\$201 million, and net

farm income rose from

\$25.3 million

to \$57.6 million.

From 1987 to 1993,

the greenhouse/nursery

industry increased cash

receipts from \$30 million

to \$35.7 million, and

the greenhouse/nursery

industry is the fastest

growing sector in

agriculture.

many speciality commodities that are not covered in our statistical program, regardless of their local importance.

Earlier in this summary, I mentioned that thousands of farmers and others contribute to our data collection effort. In New England, the number exceeds 25,000 annual contacts. Many of these are repeat contacts to the same operation as we follow crop progress or survey different commodities within the same business.

Why would farmers voluntarily provide confidential information to our agency? They understand the value of having timely, accurate statistics that represent the true New England agricultural picture and they trust us to safely protect their privacy. We are prohibited from providing names and addresses of farmers and any associated data to anyone except the Bureau of Census for the 5-year Agricultural Census. Our lists and data are exempt from any requests that are based on the Freedom of Information Act. National court cases have upheld our right to protect farmers' confidential data.

We publish only summary data. If a specific estimate discloses individual farm data, it will not be published without written permission from the farmer reporting the data or the estimates will be combined with an adjoining state before publication.

Our publications are free to farmers who wish to receive them.

Aubrey Davis is director of the New England Agricultural Statistics Service. People with questions or interested in receiving NASS publications can call him at 1-800-642-9571.

(Statistics formulated by Bob Rimol, from information found in New England Agricultural Statistics, 1993.)



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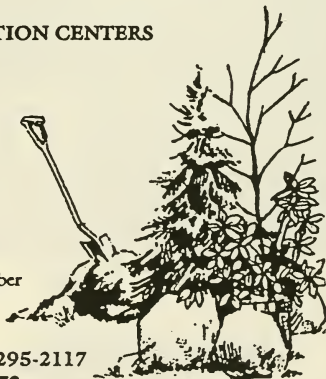
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New Hampshire Fairs

(All area codes in the fairs listing are 603.)

AUGUST 15-20 *Lancaster Fair*, Route U.S. 3, Lancaster: Paul Thurston at 788-4531.

AUGUST 18-20 *Cornish Fair*, Town Hall Road, Cornish: Bob Bladen at 542-4622.

AUGUST 19-20 *Belknap County 4-H Fair*, Mile Hill Road, Belmont: Jo-Ann Shattuck at 435-8788.

AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 4 *Hopkinton State Fair*, Contoocook Fair Grounds, Contoocook; Alan Hardy at 746-4191.

SEPTEMBER 6-10 *Plymouth State Fair*, Plymouth (take Exit 26 off I-93); Russell Merrill at 536-1690.

SEPTEMBER 8-10 *Hillsboro County Agricultural Fair*, Route 13, New Boston; John Robertson at 588-6500 or Marge Rowe at 673-2510.

SEPTEMBER 14-24 *Rochester Fair*, 72 Lafayette Street, Rochester; Jeffrey Taylor at 332-6585.

SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 1 *Deerfield Fair*, Route 43, Deerfield; Jane Boucher at 463-7924.

OCTOBER 7-9 *Sandwich Fair*, Center Sandwich; Earle Peaslee at 284-7062.

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Vines are Fine...

We've talked about perennial vines and how invasive they can be—a good thing to warn customers about. An annual vine is a different story. If you grow one that you don't like, rip it out and don't plant it again. However, I think I've found some that your customers will appreciate. I'm telling you now so you can track them down and take a look and start them early for next year. I planted mine indoors in April and they could have used another month with careful staking to get them off to a good start. We'll create herbal interest with these...remember: fragrance counts—and one of them is edible.

Cathedral bells (*Cobaea scandens*) is a new one for me. We're growing it on a trellis in the Kids' Garden at the Urban Forestry Center. It's a dense twining vine with glossy oblate leaves—and I detect a touch of purple. The flowers are "spectacular two-inch-deep bells shaped like elegant tea cups with softly curving rims. Each blossom begins as a creamy pale green, develops into a striking rose-violet, and seems to be seated on the dainty saucer-like calyxes." I've read of it in descriptions of Victorian gardens and finally found the seed in Shepherd's Seed catalog. The fragrance is light—similar to that of sweet peas.

So we should think of sweet peas when discussing annual vines. Their fragrance is what sets them apart and their flowers are lovely. *Lathyrus odoratus* is an old-fashioned favorite popular with gardeners fifty years ago. My mother used to grow it on an old fence at the edge of the vegetable garden along with her zinnias and nasturtiums (which sometimes climbed as well). The fragrance is delightfully sweet and colors range from deep red to the lightest pink. I find they dampen off very easily, but those that survive climb on a fence near my sunroom door.

Moonflowers (*Ipomoea alba*)—they're related to morning glories—are worth a try. And I have seen

them occasionally at nurseries. The large, fragrant, white flowers are supposed to open only at night, but the ones I grew last year opened during less intense times of daylight. In full light, they do close and are hidden among the heart-shaped leaves. It must be started early to get much of a show and it also seems to be a heavy feeder. This year I've planted them—and given them strings to guide their climb—along a handrail beside a public walkway. I hope passers-by will enjoy the fragrance as they take their evening strolls.

The purple hyacinth bean, once it gets started, will quickly cover a trellis. It's not a true bean: although the deep violet pea-like flowers are edible, the super-shiny purple pods seem to be made of plastic! *Dolichos lablab* has large purple-veined leaves that are very tropical-looking and the stems are purple as well. It flowers in mid-summer and can take full sun and lots of heat. We have it growing on the Bean Teepee (at the Kids' Garden again) and last year it was much appreciated by kids of all ages.

"Exotic love," native to Mexico, is another new one for me this year. It's described as a good climber with dark green three-pointed leaves. Its Latin name is *Mina lobata* and the catalog says that it is a "visual feast" that "will bloom from midsummer for weeks on end with graceful sprays of showy tubular blossoms that graduate from crimson scarlet to creamy yellow." We'll see. We have one growing beside the door on Rosemary's Cottage at the Urban Forestry Center.

This last one is a sweetheart! Last year, mine grew to about six feet, but its finely cut leaves and tiny white flowers give it a very delicate appearance. The main interest is the papery balloon-like seed pods that look like green bubbles (about the size of ping pong balls) floating out from each node around the edge of the vine. From this comes its name, "Balloon Vine." Better yet is the

seed inside: black, the size of a pea, with a distinct heart-shaped spot where it attaches. This gives it its other common name: "Love-in-a-Puff." Scientifically, the vine is known as *Cardiospermum halicacabum* and—although a little tricky to grow—it's a plant that I treasure. I think it could also be successfully grown in a hanging basket and I'm giving this a try as well.

Vines, annual or perennial, are wonderful accents for a garden. They make the most of space and can cool an arbor or provide a living screen. They're fairly undemanding once established. I think it's most efficient to get them started early and not have to fuss with them as they struggle to get going from direct seeding in the ground, so—start them and promote them and provide your customers with something new next year.

Tanya Jackson, a well-known area herbalist, can be reached at 603-431-7664.

Diagnostic Lab continued

Finally, for those of you growing tomatoes or potatoes, be watchful for late blight. Late blight caused major losses in the potato crops in PA, NY, and ME last year and also caused significant damage to some tomato crops. The first symptoms are usually a dark green, water-soaked lesion on the foliage. The fungal disease is favored by rainy periods or overhead irrigation.

As a final note, the Plant Diagnostic Lab will be closed from August 10 through August 18. I will be attending a needlecast workshop at Penn State and the annual plant pathology meetings in Pittsburgh. Samples should be submitted no later than August 4 to allow for diagnosis by the 9th.

If you wish to submit plant material to the PDL for diagnosis, send samples (with a check for \$12) to: The UNH Plant Diagnostic Lab, C/O Dr. Cheryl Smith, Plant Biology Department, Nesmith Hall, UNH, Durham, NH 03824. Samples should be accompanied by an identification form (available from your county Cooperative Extension). Cheryl Smith is the UNH Cooperative Extension Specialist in Plant Health, and can be reached at (603) 862-3841.



Hi folks! It looks like the unusual weather may be keeping some of the pathogens at bay. Sample numbers are down by approximately 30% compared to the same time period last year. Although I did expect a drop in sample numbers due to the institution of the \$12 fee in May, I believe the lack of rainfall during late May and June has provided less-than-optimal conditions for fungal and bacterial diseases (unless of course, you have been providing overhead irrigation). Most areas of New Hampshire are now (early July) experiencing various levels of drought stress. During the last two weeks of June, I received several calls regarding sudden leaf drop of 'healthy' leaves from deciduous trees and shrubs (maple, ash, blueberry). These plants are shedding leaves in response to **drought stress**. One thing to keep in mind is that drought stress, like any stress factor, weakens a tree's (or any plant's) defense mechanisms leaving them more susceptible to attack by pathogens and insect pests. Be sure to provide adequate water (if practical) during prolonged dry periods (2 weeks or more). Hopefully, by the time you receive this issue, we will have had a few days of steady rains (of course, rain may favor some diseases, but it's a worthwhile trade-off).

Some fairly interesting diseases have arrived in the PDL during the last two months. Three diseases, bacterial blight on forsythia, tomato bushy stunt virus (TBSV) on tomato, and bacterial leaf spot on Impatiens were diagnosed for the first time (at least to my knowledge) in the UNH-PDL. The **bacterial blight** on forsythia is caused by the same bacterium that causes bacterial blight on lilac. The controls for the disease are the same on forsythia as for lilac. The **TBSV** occurred on a few plants in a crop of greenhouse tomatoes. Control of **TBSV**, as with all viruses, is to remove and destroy the infected plants. The symptoms of **bacterial leaf spot** on impatiens were black lesions which were limited by the veins. Thus, some leaves almost appeared to be 'striped.' Infected leaves

were shed soon after infection. Control is the same as for any bacterial disease: avoid wetting the foliage and remove infected leaves/plants. Another interesting problem was damage to several species of evergreens caused by improperly applied Wilt Pruf. The foliage was off-color (sort of a gray-green) and some of the needles and shoots were killed. Upon closer examination, globular deposits of a wax-like material were found on the twigs, needles, and stems. In all cases, the Wilt Pruf was applied very late in the season (temperatures below the recommended 50 F).

On woody ornamentals, the major problems during May and June were **bacterial blight** on lilac, **fire blight** on crabapples, and **anthracnose** on oak and maple leaves. **Kabatina dieback** seems to be the major problem on junipers. Symptoms look similar to phomopsis tip blight, but the control measures are slightly different, so a confirmation of the diagnosis is recommended. **Azalea leaf and flower gall**, which causes a whitish gall-like growth, began showing up in mid-June. It is also common on blueberries and rhododendrons. Another problem that was extensive this May and June, although not a disease, was **arborvitae leaf miner**. The symptoms look similar to winter burn, but upon closer examination, the damaged tissues are hollow. Tiny exit holes or insect frass may also be evident. *Monilinia* is once again causing **shoot blight** on *Prunus* species. The infections take place during bloom, so that is the key time for fungicide applications.

The only major problem on fruit was the worst case of **mummy berry** on blueberry that I have ever seen. Other problems included two samples of **fire blight** on pears, and **freeze injury** to the new growth on raspberries.

The most common problems on herbaceous plants were **botrytis cankers** and **blights**. **Botrytis canker** was very common on zinnia, fuchsia, and rosemary. **Botrytis blight** (or **tulip fire**) caused problems on tulips during late May and early June. Now is the time

to apply sanitation measures to clean up the tulips and help prevent the disease for next year. **Impatiens necrotic spot virus** was diagnosed on a 'Tonganesse' geranium (this was another host 'first' for the UNH-PDL). Other common diseases included **anthracnose** (colletotrichum) on lupine, **anthracnose** on poppy, and **leaf spots** on phlox. **Plant bugs**, particularly the four-lined plant bug, have been causing a lot of damage on ornamentals, herbs, and vegetables. The damage looks like leaf spots, often aggregated on a single leaf or several adjacent leaves. The four-lined plant bug is a rather attractive green-and-yellow striped critter. Plant bugs may be controlled with one of several insecticides (consult your recommendations or your county office).

Red thread seemed to be a fairly common problem on turf grasses this spring. The disease pressure on turf was relatively light during June (compared to last June). Symptoms of drought stress are beginning to show up in many areas. The typical summer diseases—*pythium*, brown patch, and leaf-spot have not been major problems due to the lack of moisture. **Anthracnose**, however, has been showing up on samples, probably due to the moisture stress.

One again, most of the diseases that show up during May and June will continue to pose potential problems during August and September. In addition, **powdery mildew** (which is already evident on lilac and phlox) will become more prevalent during July-September. When we do get some rainfall, be ready for **pythium** and **brown patch** to cause turf problems. **Rhizosphaera needlecast** of spruce often has a second infection period from late August through early September. If you have had a problem with the needlecast in the past, you should apply a fungicide at this time. **Slime molds** begin to appear (literally overnight) in late August, although I've already received a few calls from worried homeowners. A strong water spray or shovel will get rid of the mold.

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Celebrate the Fall Equinox

at the final NHPGA Twilight Meeting of this year—5:30-7:30 on Thursday, September 21, at Rick and Beth Simpson's Rolling Green Nursery, 64 Breakfast Hill Road, Greenland, NH

"The goal of Rolling Green is to create an environment that will inspire our customers to create great gardens of their own."

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Breakfast Hill Road connects US Rte 1 and Rte 151. (Rte. 151 is off Rte 33—formerly Rte 101.) Look for the blue highway signs. For details, call Rick or Beth at 603-436-2732.

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