

JUNE/JULY 2007



The Plantsman





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Visit www.nhplantgrowers.org for additional calendar items.

Calendar

June 17, 2007 Father's Day

June 26, 2007, NHPGA Spring Twilight Mtg, Lake Street Garden Center, Salem
Mark your calendar today for our annual twilight meeting jointly sponsored with UNH Cooperative Extension. Plans are underway to offer pesticide credit for presentations by UNH Cooperative Extension Specialist. We'll gather around 5:30pm. Watch for details in the mail.

July 14 – 17, 2007, OFA Short Course, Columbus, Ohio

July 18 – 19, 2007, Green-Blue Summit: Clean Water Through Residential IPM, Penn State's Great Valley Conference Center, Malvern, PA northeastIPM.org/greenbluesummit.cfm

August 5-11, 2007, Perennial Plant Symposium and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus, Ohio, (614)771-8431, www.perennialplant.org

August 16, 2007, NHPGA Summer Meeting, Great Hill Horticultural Endowment/Bayberry Nursery, Hampton Falls, NH, 3:30pm – 7:30pm, Pre-registration required, Contact: Nancy Adams, 292-5238.

September 3, 2007 Labor Day

October 1- 4, 2007, Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers National Conference and Trade Show, North Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh, N.C., (440) 774-2887 www.ascfg.org

October 10 – 12, 2007, New England Nursery Association Green Summit, Cranwell Resort, Lenox, Massachusetts. Contact: Mary Simard, (508) 653-3112, mary@nensyassn.org www.nensyassn.org

February 6 – 8, 2008, New England Grows, Boston Convention and Exhibit Center, Boston, Mass., (508) 653-3009 www.negrows.org

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*Cover photo credit:
Nancy E. Adams*

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

For further information, please contact the editor:
Nancy Adams, 25 Riverbend Road, Newmarket, NH 03857; 603-292-5238; email, nhpga@comcast.net

2007 Advertising Rates The Plantsman				
	Member	Non-Member	Member	Non-Member
SIZE	6X	6X	1X	1X
1/8 pg.	\$165.00	\$181.50	\$33.00	\$36.50
1/4 pg. V	\$220.00	\$242.00	\$44.00	\$48.40
1/4 pg. H	\$220.00	\$242.00	\$44.00	\$48.40
1/2 pg.	\$412.50	\$453.75	\$82.50	\$90.75
Full	\$550.00	\$605.00	\$110.00	\$121.00

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Our catalog is available in good old-fashioned book form or online at www.vanberkumnursery.com. Your password is *vbn* for the catalog page. The photo page of our site has all our catalog information plus photos for your customers to peruse, and there is no password.



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NHPGA Web Site Redesign

“Making Life Easier and Better for Our Membership”

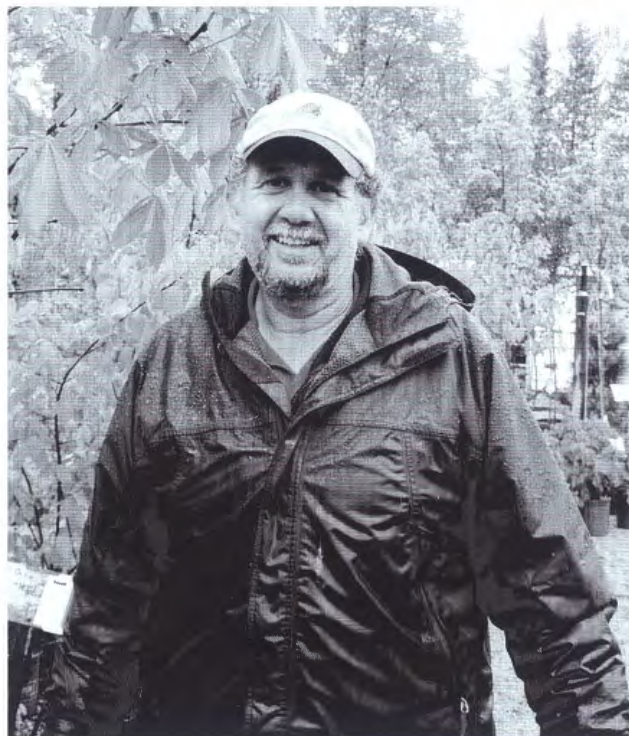
Things are changing. I will be one of the first to complain about the internet. Just one more distraction in my day. But I find I use it more everyday. Information that would take sometimes hours to research now just takes minutes. Submitting applications for this or that is now processed at speed far quicker than any before. Instant access to all sorts of inventory from vendors.

The NHPGA has realized that our industry has to keep pace with the rest of the world. That's why this year we are redoing the NHPGA web site. We need to bring this technology to you. Let's say you don't have time to fill out your annual membership form and get it to the mailbox, you will be able to do on line and just click and send it in. Need to ask someone about a specific problem you may be having, a message board will be posted just for this. Companies need more and different advertising can buy banner space right on the

website. The list of benefits of a web site keeps going on.

Is it easy or inexpensive to bring this technology up to date? No! Lots of hours have gone and still will go into making sure the web will be in the best interest of our membership. Good web site designers are not cheap, but worth every penny. Upgrading will only help make life easier and better for or membership and attract new members wanting these same benefits.

Brett Andrus
President, NHPGA





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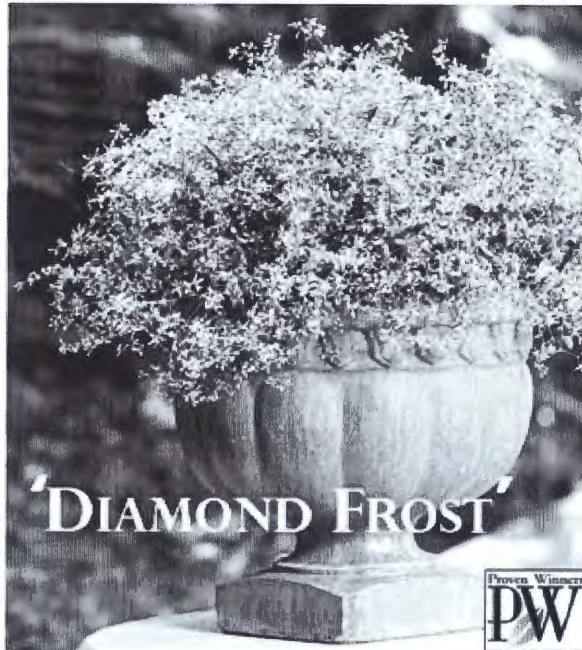
EUPHORBIA 'DIAMOND FROST'
 has been named one of the
GREATEST ANNUALS FOR 2005!
 per Dr. Allen Armitage - Nov '05 issue of
GREENHOUSE GROWER...

"We try to stay away from repeating winners from year to year, but this is the second year 'Diamond Frost' has earned this award. Plants just kept flowering and flowering all season. They never stopped, period! We placed plants in containers and in the garden, and in both cases they were outstanding. The habit was perfect, never exceeding 20" in height, and maintenance was minimal. The delicate...

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Embracing the Web for our Association

By Nancy E. Adams, Executive Director

NHPGA Web Site Redesign Your NHPGA Board of Directors is constantly looking to

increase membership value. To that end, we realize that the existing NHPGA web site has lost focus and impact as a portal to the association. For many, the web site is the first introduction to the association and the Board feels that a web site redesign is necessary to better present and represent New Hampshire's plant growers.

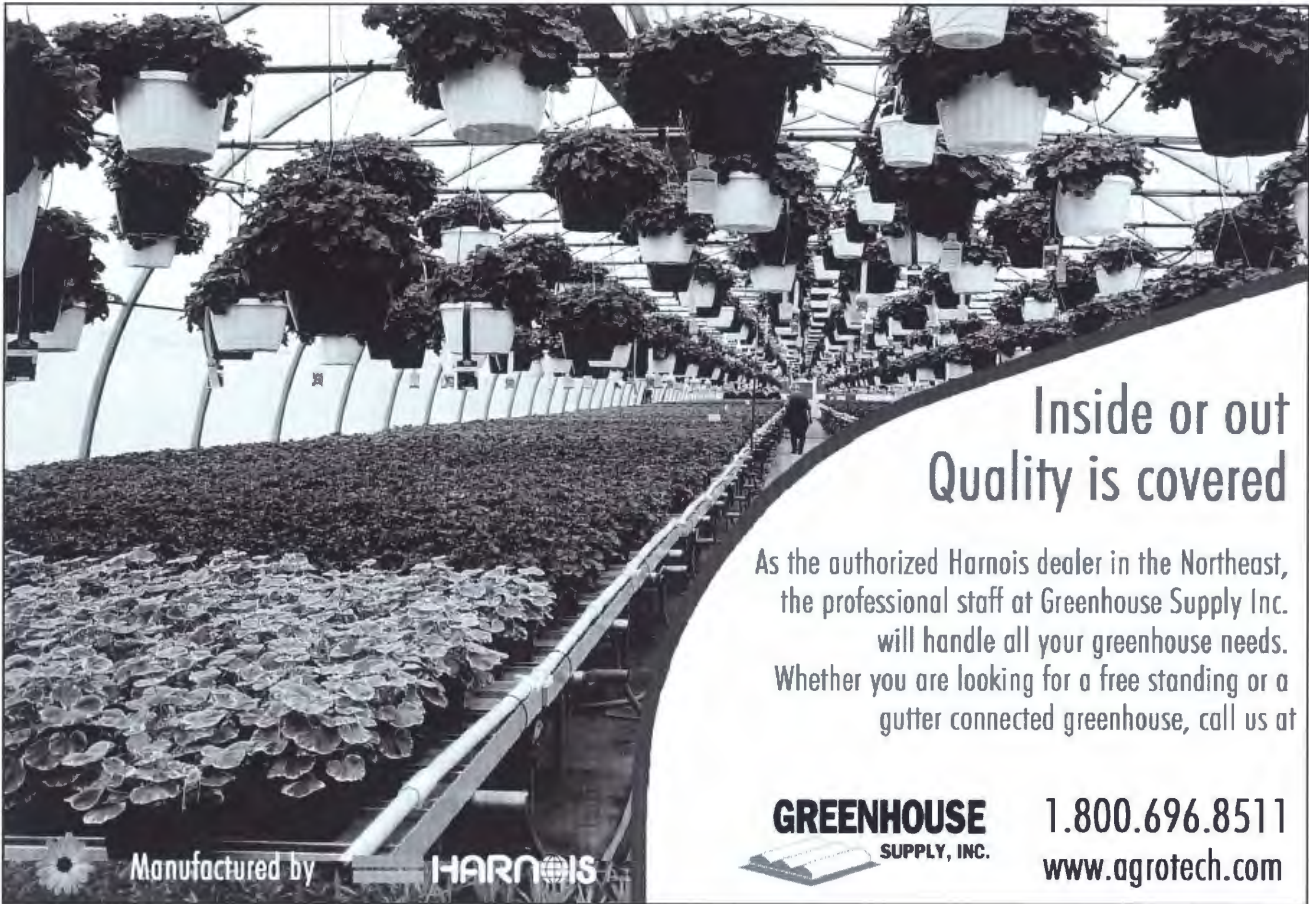
Thanks to two grants from New England Floriculture Inc. (the granting arm of the New England Greenhouse Conference), the redesign is underway. A web site committee has been working diligently with Dan Truesdale and Darian Hendricks, Dan Truesdale Design, to evaluate the existing site, establish the content scope of the redesigned web site, provide a visual direction, and develop a framework for future e-commerce opportunities.

Our Goals:

- *Reach both the garden enthusiast and affiliated NHPGA members*
- *Provide timely information*
- *Promote the New Hampshire horticultural industry and its members*
- *Advocate for our industry*

The accompanying chart outlines four implementation phases that will ultimately bring the site towards a fully interactive web presence.

PHASE	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
TITLE	Refresh	Enhance	Extend	Differentiate
GOALS	Simplify and Improve Usability	Increment of value-added content and features	Generate income by developing unique content, products, services and programs	Create new online programs
	6 - 8 weeks	8 - 10 weeks	12 - 16 weeks	16 + weeks
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consolidate content · Remove bulletin board · New visual style · One navigation scheme · Re-code back end · Add banner and online ads · Create Style Guide · Establish web committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extend member database fields · Online member sign-up · Online member directory · Online scholarship application · 'Plantsman' online (current issue) · Weekly/monthly industry reports · e-newsletter · Partner references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Full 'Plantsman' archive · Online Auction · "Private sale" · NH plant catalog · NHPGA products and services catalog, i.e. t-shirts · Online event registration · Discussion forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Advocacy forum · Webcast of events · Member extranets · NH plant shopping mall · Online consultation · Online training and education · Partner collaboration
BUDGET RANGE FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$2,000 - \$3,000	\$3,000 - \$5,000	\$5,000 - \$8,000	\$8,000 - \$12,000
STAFF RESOURCES	.10 FTE <i>(full time employee)</i>	.25 FTE	1 FTE	1.5 FTE



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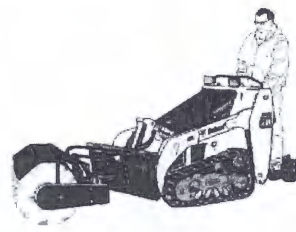
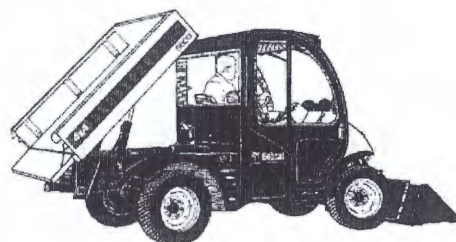
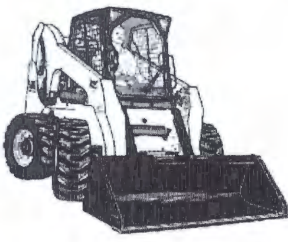
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NHPGA Web Site Assessment

Presented by Dan Truesdale, Design

The Dan Truesdale Design team of Dan Truesdale and Darian Hendricks recently evaluated our existing NHPGA website. Here is a synopsis of their findings as well as recommendations and guiding principles.

Our Findings

The site is not visually consistent or appealing, resulting in a poor branding for NHPGA

The site is overly complex for such limited content and functionality

The site is poorly implemented by technical, graphical and interaction design standards

The site has functionality that is not used or broken, such as the Bulletin Board

The site is not easy to maintain or update without the use of professional services

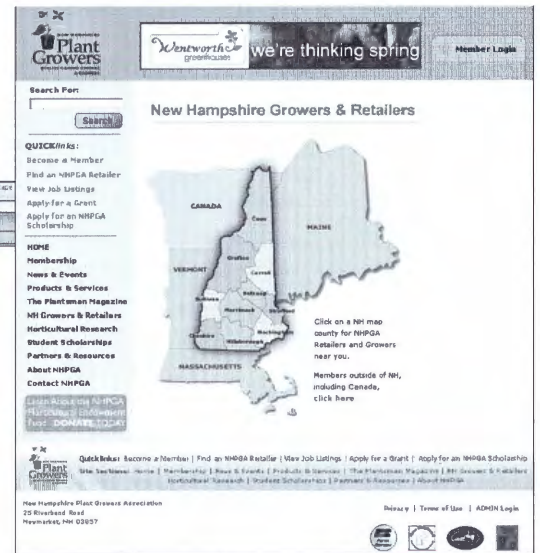
The site does a poor job in supporting the goals of the organization and presenting NHPGA's value proposition to new and existing members

The site is missing the greatest opportunity to provide additional revenue to the NHPGA

Recommendations

- Simplify the site
 - Combine 'Gardening Enthusiasts' and 'Industry Professional' sections into one
 - Remove Bulletin Board

old design



new design

Reduce the number of graphics

Have one navigation scheme

Refresh the visual style of the site

Create a Visual Style Guide

Update the technical back end for ease of maintenance

Create a back end content editor for NHPGA webmaster

Adopt "guiding principles" to direct ongoing site enhancements

Create user profile and regularly perform usability tests on website

Create a Website Committee to oversee the evolution of the website

Invest financial resources

and people in upgrading and maintaining the site in a phased approach

Select and prioritize content, features, and functionality in accordance with the seven objectives in the NHPGA mission

Suggested Guiding Principles

Choose content and features that directly support the mission statement

Promote our members and member businesses every chance we get

Make it easy to find information, purchase or join

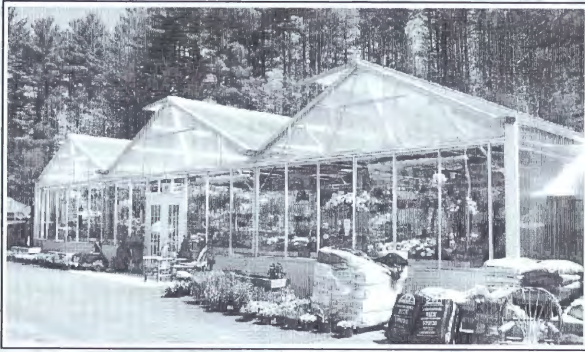
Keep search alive and accessible

Make our site come alive like plants

Visually entice the end-user

If You Are Building A Greenhouse . . . Call Rimol Greenhouse Systems

Gutter Connect Greenhouses



Woodman's Florist, Peterborough

Mason Brook Nursery, Mason



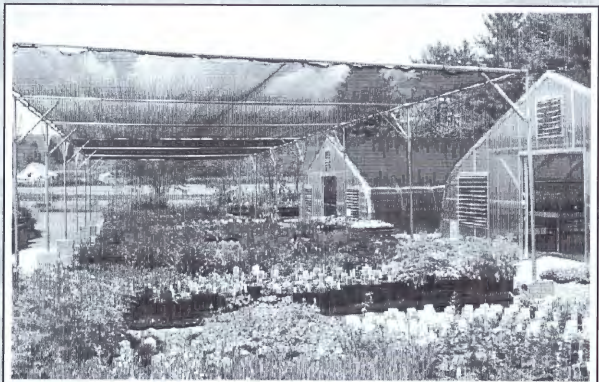
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Member Survey

HELLO NHPGA MEMBER:

We hope that you will participate in our web site assessment survey to gather your thoughts and ideas regarding internet/web usage. The survey can be taken on-line at: <http://www.questionpro.com/akira/TakeSurvey?id=705641> OR you can fill it out the 'old fashioned way' using the enclosed survey. Either way, please take a few minutes to answer the questions. We will be using the results to better shape the future NHPGA web site.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at 292-5238 or email me: nhpga@comcast.net
Survey result should be mailed to: NHPGA 25 Riverbend Rd., Newmarket, NH 03857

OVERALL SERVICES EVALUATION

The following series of questions addresses your overall satisfaction with NHPGA.

Overall, how would you rate the quality of each of the following activities we engage in?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Advocacy, i.e. Invasive Species Committee, Horticultural Industry Council, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New England Horticulture Survey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer Meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Winter Meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twilight Meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horticultural Endowment Fund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scholarship Fund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Membership Directory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newsletters / Magazine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf Tournament	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product-All-Purpose Soil	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product-Best Plants Book	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall, how satisfied have you been with NHPGA?

- Very Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Neutral Somewhat Satisfied Totally Satisfied

How long has your company been a member of NHPGA?

- Less than 1 year
 1-5 years
 6-10 years
 11-15 years
 16-25 years
 26-35 years
 Over 35 years
 Not applicable

How long have you been a member of NHPGA?

- Less than 1 year
 1-5 years
 6-10 years
 11-15 years
 16-25 years
 26-35 years
 Over 35 years
 Not applicable



Which of the following events have you attended? (Please check all that apply)

- Summer Meeting
 Winter Meeting
 Twilight Meeting
 Golf Tournament
 Board Meetings
 New England Grows
 New England Greenhouse Conference
 None of the Above

Do you want a new membership directory online every year for download?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Would you support the idea of opening NHPGA Membership to garden enthusiasts, such as retail customers, under a new membership category called, "Friends of NHPGA"?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

What was your primary reason for joining NHPGA?

- Increase sales
- Networking
- Member Benefit Program
- Advocacy
- Annual Events
- Speaker Events
- Other



What suggestions do you have to help improve NHPGA?

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE

The following questions address your general computer and Internet usage.

How comfortable do you feel using computers, in general?

- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable

How satisfied are you with your current skills for using the Internet?

- Very satisfied - I can do everything that I want to do
- Somewhat satisfied - I can do most things I want to do
- Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
- Somewhat unsatisfied - I can't do many things I would like to do
- Very unsatisfied - I can't do most things I would like to do

Why don't you purchase more products and services on the web, either for yourself or for your work/business? (Please check all that apply)

- Not applicable
- Never tried it
- Too complicated to place order
- Faster/easier to purchase locally
- Not familiar with vendor
- Don't trust that my credit card number will be secure
- No receipt/documentation
- Difficult to judge the quality of a product/service
- Not enough information to make a decision
- Generally uncomfortable with the idea
- Other



In your opinion, what is the single most critical issue facing the Internet and our industry?

- Finding things/navigating around
- Cost of having an internet presence
- Providing e-commerce for customers
- Making money on the Internet
- Time and resources to manage an Internet presence
- Speed/bandwidth
- Government regulation
- Equal access for all
- Competition
- Paying for online services or information
- Privacy
- Other

Complete the following sentence in the way that comes closest to your own views: "Since getting on the Internet, I have "

- become MORE connected with people in the horticultural industry.
- become LESS connected with people in the horticultural industry.
- Don't know/can't say

Which of the following have you done? (Please check all that apply)

- Ordered a product/service from a business, government or educational entity by filling out a form on the web
- Made a purchase online for more than \$100
- Created a web page
- Customized a web page for yourself (e.g. My Yahoo, CNN Customer News)
- Changed your browser's "startup" or "home" page
- Changed your "cookie" preferences
- Participated in an online chat or discussion (not including e-mail)
- Listened to a radio broadcast online
- Made a telephone call online
- Used a nationwide online directory to find an address or telephone number
- Taken a seminar or class about the Web or Internet

NHPGA WEBSITE FEEDBACK

The responses to the next set of questions will be used to improve the functionality of the NHPGA web site. In addition, detailed comments and suggestions on how we can improve the site can be forwarded to nhpga@comcast.net

Thank you.

Tell us how often you visit our site.

- Everyday
- Once a week
- Once in two weeks
- Once a month
- Once a quarter
- Once a year
- Rarely
- Never
- Other

When you visit the site, are you using the computer from

- Office
- Home (including a home office)
- Equally from the home and office
- Other

At home, what connection type do you use to connect to the Internet?

- Not applicable
- Dial-up (phone line)
- DSL
- Broadband (cable)
- T1 Line
- Other

At work, what connection type do you use to connect to the Internet?

- Not applicable
- Dial-up (phone line)
- DSL
- Broadband (cable)
- T1 Line
- Other

Please tell us why you visit our site. (Please check all that apply)

- Looking for general information
- Looking for rules/regulations
- Looking for forms such as membership grants or scholarships
- Looking for Qualified Professional/Consultant Information
- Looking for employment opportunities
- Looking to network with others
- Looking to order products
- Looking to become / renew membership
- Looking to donate money
- Looking for news (Committee reports, Meetings, Seminars, Calendar, Public Hearings, etc)
- Looking for Contact Information (Agency and Staff Phone #s, Mailing Address, etc)
- Research for Work
- Research for School
- Looking for updates on earlier information
- Other

Several non-profit organizations and associations have moved on to e-commerce, that is, conducting business on-line. If NHPGA provided e-commerce functionality, would you take advantage of conducting the following NHPGA transactions online? (Please check all that apply)

- Payment of membership fees
- Payment of sponsorship fees
- Payment of event fees
- Payment for products
- Payment for services
- Donate to the endowment fund
- Donate to the scholarship fund
- Payment of advertising fees for Plantsman or website
- Submission of reports, articles, questions, committee meeting summaries, surveys, site assessments, etc
- Registration for conference or events
- Submission of online coupons
- Submission of equipment to swap
- Post job opportunities
- Other (please specify)

Would you say our web site is:

- Very attractive
- Somewhat attractive
- Average
- Not very attractive
- Not attractive at all

How much effort did you have to take to find our web site?

- A lot less than I expected
- Less than I expected
- About what I expected
- More than I expected
- A lot more than I expected

From what you have seen and your experience with other sites, please rate the following features of our website:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not sure
Visual appearance/layout:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing style:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Features	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From your experience, what do you find as the biggest challenges with using our site? (Please check all that apply)

- I am new to the Internet
- Information I am looking for is not available
- Information is not well organized
- There is just too much information
- Hard to navigate through the information
- Takes too long to load a page
- Downloadable files or forms are in a format I cannot use
- Other (please specify)

Do the menu of items on the current NHPGA home page make sense to you?

- Yes
- No

Do you experience any problems downloading files from our website?

- Yes
- No
- Did not try

How did you hear about our website?

- NHPGA Meeting
- Literature: The Plantsman
- Literature: Membership Mailing
- E-mail announcement
- NHPGA member
- Media (newspaper, radio, TV)
- Associate/friend
- Followed Link from another web page
- Search engine
- Other (Please Specify)



Would you advertise online with NHPGA?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Would you be willing to provide product or service discounts at your company for retail customers / gardening enthusiasts who visit our NHPGA website?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Which of these website features or content would you like to see added to the NHPGA website? (Please check all that apply)

- Online Membership Dues Payment
- Online Donations - Scholarships, Horticultural Endowment Fund
- Online Event and Class Registration
- Employment Opportunities
- Downloadable Membership Directory
- NH Plant Library
- Web Polls
- Advocacy Forum
- Discussion Forum
- Bulletin Board
- Industry Reports and Research
- Online Member Video Profiles
- Equipment Swap area
- Wholesale Product Sales Area
- Online Auction
- NHPGA Store
- NHPGA Coupon book for retail customers
- NHPGA Members Shopping Mall for retail customers to buy plants and supplies from Member companies, i.e. SkyMall for NHPGA
- Plantsman Monthly issue
- Plantsman Archive
- Committee Reports
- Sales Lead Generation tool
- Online Training and Education Courses
- Other



We would like to hear your suggestions on how we can expand or improve our site. What additional information or features would you like to see added to the site?

Email

Demographic Information

Your Responses are optional and will not be shared with anyone

Name

Title

Address

City

State

Zip

Email Address

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please contact nhpga@comcast.net if you have any questions regarding this survey.

The Plantsman

NHPGA/UNH Cooperative Extension Spring Twilight Meeting, Tuesday, June 26, 5:30pm, Lake Street Garden Center, Salem, NH

Save the date for our annual co-sponsored spring twilight meeting. Plans are underway offer two pesticide credit for educational presentation by UNH Cooperative Extension specialists. Details to follow in the mail.

NHPGA Summer Meeting, Thursday, August 16, Great Hill Horticultural Foundation/Bayberry Nurseries, Hampton Falls, NH

Great Hill Horticultural Foundation welcomes the New Hampshire Plant Growers Association members for a diverse horticultural experience. During your 2007 annual summer meeting, you will enjoy the spectacular beauty of the Great Hill landscape and gardens. You will also take a tour of Bayberry Nurseries' growing fields and visit GHHF's new headquarters and greenhouses.

As we did last year, we will be having registration around 3:30p.m. followed by our annual meeting, tour of the grounds, and an evening dinner. Pre-registration will be required. Watch for complete details including a registration form in the coming weeks.

\$36,360 Risk Management Education (RME) Grant Received

The NHPGA will be working with
July/August 2007

At the recent UNH Cooperative Extension State Advisory Council meeting held April 19, 2007, Peter van Berkum (right) presents a \$2,000 check on behalf of the New Hampshire Horticultural Endowment to UNH Cooperative Extension. The money will support the new Greenhouse/Floriculture Extension Specialist, Brian Krug, in his travels to meet



growers throughout the state. Accepting the donation are Anna Boudreau, Chair of the UNH CE State Advisory Council and the Exec. Director of the Strafford Rivers Conservancy, and Dr. John Pike, Dean and Director of UNH Cooperative Extension.

Lynda Brushett, Cooperative Development Institute and William Zweigbaum, First Pioneer Farm Credit, on a \$36,360 RME grant entitled: "Managing Input Price Risk Through Cooperation" to investigate how group purchasing (energy, fertilizer, plastics, supplies, services, etc.) might reduce price risk through cooperative market buying power.

The project targets "Price or Market Risk", resulting in improved capacity to conduct business and strategic planning, manage capital and financial assets, and improve understanding of financial analysis, credit, contracts, and negotiating skills. The combination of training workshops followed by technical assistance supports successful planning and implementation of a group purchasing enterprise that reduces price risk and serves as a replicable industry model.

The project will begin this fall and continue through February 2009 with a variety of educational and informational activities. Watch for more complete details in the months ahead. Exciting times ahead for the NHPGA!

Welcome UNH Cooperative Extension Greenhouse/Floriculture Specialist, Brian Krug!

We are pleased to welcome to New Hampshire the newest UNHCE Specialist, Dr. Brian Krug. Brian will be joining the staff in early January, 2008 after he completes his doctoral studies at North Carolina State University in the Department of Horticultural Science. His dissertation is entitled: Physiological Effects of Boron on Pansy Plugs. It will be wonderful to have his youth and enthusiasm for ornamental horticulture with us here in New Hampshire.

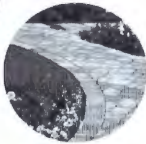
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Two Industry Leaders Sold **Jackson & Perkins sold to private investors**

Harry & David Holdings Inc. plans to sell its Jackson & Perkins subsidiary for \$49 million, according to a statement issued last week. An investment group led by Donald and Glenda Hachenberger will acquire the direct marketing and wholesale business along with the J&P brand, catalog, Web site and inventory. The Hachenbergers own several other horticulture businesses, including Southern Sun, a technology company involved in plant propagation. A separate private investment group will purchase approximately 3,200 acres in Wasco, Calif. as part of the Jackson & Perkins sale. Bill Williams, president and CEO of Harry & David Holdings, said the divestiture will allow the company to focus on its core gift and gourmet food businesses.

Syngenta acquires Fischer

Syngenta, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, acquired the Fischer group for about \$67 million. Fischer GmbH & Co., headquartered in Hillscheid, Germany, is a privately held company specializing in breeding and marketing vegetative flower crops. Fischer specializes in 3 of the 10 best-selling crops: geranium, poinsettia and New Guinea impatiens. Fischer reported sales of \$86 million for fiscal year 2005-06. The company employs about 1,700 people. Syngenta's S&G Flowers breeds and markets bedding and pot plant flowers as seeds, young plants and cuttings. In 2006, Syngenta reported flower sales of \$228 million. The

transaction is expected to close in the 2nd quarter.

AARS Picks 2008 Winners

Two gold-tinged roses made the cut as 2008's All-America Rose Selections Winners: *Mardi Gras* and *Dream Come True*. These two roses excelled during the two years of testing against 15 criteria, including ease of maintenance and disease resistance.

Dream Come True, introduced by Weeks Roses, produces flawlessly formed yellow blossoms, blushed with ruby-red tips, according to AARS. The bushy, vigorous plant yields long-stemmed, long-lived blooms with a mild tea fragrance.

Mardi Gras, introduced by Jackson & Perkins Wholesale, is defined by fantastic bloom production and a color combination of yellow and bright pink with orange undertones, according to AARS. It grows in large clusters of 25 petals per blossom, and offers a moderately peppery perfume. With an upright, columnar habit, *Mardi Gras* makes for a great hedge or border for mixed perennial beds.

Late Spring Gardening Survey

Here are the results from the late spring gardening survey conducted by the Garden Writer's Association Foundation, a group that publishes garden consumer surveys throughout the year.

Incidence of Gardens and Lawns

- The majority of American house

holds (79%) have some type of lawn or garden.

Please note that from this point forward the terms "household" or "Americans" refers to households with a lawn or garden.

Planned Lawn Activities

- As observed the last several years, weed and insect control have been the top two activities Americans planned for their lawns (47% and 24% in 2007, respectively). When it comes to weed control, significantly more Americans are planning to do this activity this year when compared to last year (weed control: 47% vs. 39% in 2006).
- About one in six (17% in 2007) plan on over-seeding with new seed this year, while 9% are planning to resod; one in three (34%) say they are not planning to do any of these things.

Reasons to Garden

- Nearly one out of three (31%) say that their primary reason for gardening is because it helps to create a better home environment.
- Furthermore, many Americans find that gardening and related activities stimulate better mental health, improved nutritional habits and the promotion of physical fitness. In fact, almost a third (31%) say that this is the primary reason motivating their gardening activities.
- A similar proportion of gardeners say that their primary reason for gardening is to increase the curb appeal and property value of their homes (29%).

Garden Property Additions

- How will Americans enhance their properties during this year's spring and summer seasons? Many are looking to add more perennials and vegetable gardens (38% and 34%, respectively), while nearly a third (31%) will add more annuals.
- Approximately one in ten are planning a herb garden or foundation plantings to enhance their properties (12% and 8%, respectively), while a smaller number (4%) are relying on water gardens.

Changes in Lawn Area

- Most households (80%) have no plans to change their lawn area this year. Only 9% say they are planning to increase the size of their lawn (down from 16% last year) while 10% are planning to reduce them in size (vs. 9% last year).

Garden Area Preparation

- Americans preparing their garden areas for this year's spring and summer plantings are most likely to rely on fertilizer only (31% up significantly from 2006, when it was 19%).
- More than a quarter (27%) say that their preparations will consist of utilizing store-bought soil mix while about one in five (19%) are planning to use manure.
- A smaller proportion (12%) say that their preparations will consist of using Peat moss, while 14% say they are not planning to prepare their garden area and 16% say that they will not use any of these (i.e., fertilizer, soil mix from store, work-in manure and work-in peat moss).

Spring Plant Preferences

- In general, American gardeners

tend to prefer smaller, less expensive spring plants that take more time to grow and maintain over larger, more expensive plants that take less time to grow and maintain.

- In fact, the former are preferred to the latter by a ratio of more than 2 to 1 (61% prefer smaller, less expensive plants vs. 25% who prefer larger, more expensive plants).

Recycling

- In general, gardeners recycle things like plastic nursery pots and trays, mulch or compost grass clippings and compost waste.
- In fact, 38% recycle plastic nursery pots and trays "always," 32% recycle mulch or compost grass clippings "always" and 30% recycle mulch or compost waste "always." About a quarter or more recycle these items at least "some times."

Hiring a Professional

- Gardening remains dominantly a Do-It-Yourself activity (79%), but 15% of households plan to seek help by hiring a professional to mow their lawn, one in ten (9%) plan to hire a professional to prune shrubs and trees and about one in five say that they plan to hire a professional for such activities like planting seasonal flowers (6%) or designing a garden (4%).
- As expected, the number of households planning to hire professionals to help with lawn and garden activities increases with both age (50+) and income (over \$75,000).

2008 Gold Medal Winners Fleuroselect chose 6 varieties as 2008 Gold Medal winners.

The winners are: 3 varieties from

Kieft Seed Holland: *Delphinium consolida* 'Sydney Light Blue', *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Ellagance Purple' and *Monarda x hybrida* 'Bergamo'; *Begonia x semperflorens* 'Volumia Rose Bicolor' from S&G Flowers; *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Cappuccino' from Clause Tezier; and *Salvia farinacea* 'Fairy Queen' from Ernst Benary. All Gold Medal winners will be on display at the Fleuroselect Public Gardens & Trial Grounds this summer.

Personal Consumption of Flowers & Plants Rises

Consumer spending on floriculture reached \$20.771 billion in 2006, up from a revised \$19.738 billion in 2005, according to updated statistics from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

The change represents a 5.5 percent increase for the year. The increase was less than the 7.7 percent increase reported from 2004 to 2005; however it exceeds the modest 2.2 percent increase the year before. The new information was released March 1 and is subject to subsequent revisions.

"It is energizing to know consumers continue to love the products we sell," says SAF's president-elect Rod Saline of Engwall Florist and Greenhouse in Duluth, Minn. "It is our individual business challenge to do more to differentiate our products and services to meet the increased demand for floriculture products." The revised figure for 2005 was contained in the bureau's table 2.4.5U titled, "Personal Consumption Expenditures by Type of Product." These data are available in an interactive table on the bureau's Web site (<http://bea.gov>).



Making \$en\$e Coaching the Next Generation

Today's fast-paced farm business atmosphere requires the next generation of owners to be even better leaders and managers than the previous generation. Skills are needed not only for the production of quality crops and livestock management but also for seeing the big picture and setting the future direction of the farm. Also needed are skills in human resources, financial management, production economics and risk management. The skills needed for the production of quality crops and livestock management are learned in school and/or on the farm from the more experienced workers. The leadership and management skills for human resources, financial management, production economics and risk management skills are usually learned via the school of hard knocks.

For many of us, those leadership and management skills are learned through observation, mentoring and coaching. Most times the relationship between the coach and the next generation is informal. However, more and more farm businesses rely on a more formal coaching process.

You will benefit from having someone outside your business facilitate the process and discussions. A third party is not faced with all the daily transactions the owners and man-

agers are flooded with every day. It brings a fresh perspective from someone that sees many businesses succeed with the critical management transition between generations. An outsider can help you deal with sensitive issues that are difficult for families to work through objectively.

A formal program of coaching should include one-on-one meetings reviewing a key issue, i.e. financial management, production economics, etc. The one-on-one meetings are followed by work assignments that will improve the farm business and the next generation's ability to manage better. As the next generation completes the work assignments, the coach will discuss with them what they learned, how it helps the farm and what obstacles they encountered. Suggestions for recommended reading will usually be made after each session.

A formal coaching program needs to be very flexible. It should be struc-

tured to accomplish the goals and objectives of the owners and the next generation. If you would like assistance, First Pioneer's consultants have developed just such a program called Generation NeXt. First Pioneer consultants have worked with farm families for over 30 years. This gives us the experience of seeing what works as well as what may not. We have assisted hundreds of families travel the road of management succession.

First Pioneer Farm Credit provides financial services to the agriculture, ag-related and commercial fishing businesses. Their services include recordkeeping/accounting support services, tax preparation/tax planning, credit, leasing, consulting, appraisals and payroll. For more information about any of the above financial services, please call the Bedford, NH branch office at 1-800-825-3252. (KDK)

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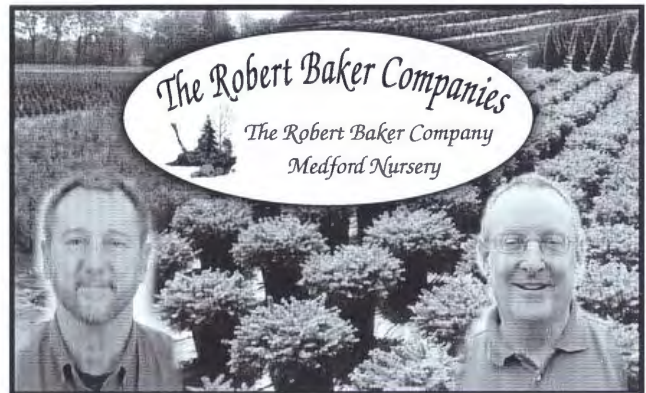
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