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Important Note!

"Growing Concerns" will soon start embracing the Web and being published electronically as well as in paper format. If you are on the Web and are comfortable receiving e-mail we need your e-mail address. Send me an e-mail with the words "Growing Concerns" as the body of the message to dkp@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu , and I'll plug your e-mail address into our electronic mailing list. Don't delay, do it now.

Highlights of Upcoming Events

- Jan 15** - Landscape Bidding & Estimating
Tampa
- Jan 20** - IPM Seminar - "Least Toxic Pest
Management" - Plant City
- Jan 21-23** - Tropical Plant Industry
Exhibition - Ft. Lauderdale
- Jan 21** - FTGA Turf Conference - Tampa
- Mar 5** - Tree & Landscape Short Course -
Tampa

Pesticide Potpourri

*** A new paper from the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology explores the possibility of high-risk pesticides being prescribed only by trained and licensed professionals, similar to the way medicines and drugs are prescribed. The Council concluded that prescriptions are one mechanism by which certain valuable, high-risk pesticide uses could be maintained, while still addressing public concern related to safe use. View the 10 page paper at <http://cast-science.org> (Source: Chemically Speaking, Nov, 1998)

*** London-based 3M is investing \$1.5 million in equipment to produce a complete line of micro encapsulated pheromones. The pheromones, which mimic a female insect's scent produced to attract a mate, have long been used in other ways. By encasing the pheromones in a polymer coating, the company has created a mechanism for controlled release of the chemical come-on. As the capsules break open, they release a steady stream of pheromones that mask the scent of the female insect, thus rendering her invisible to the males. (Source: Chemically Speaking, Nov, 1998)

*** Researchers are utilizing foraging honeybees to deliver biocontrol pesticide products to fruit, vegetable and field crops by placing an applicator containing a fungicide or a narrow-spectrum insecticide, like BT, at bee hive entrances. The bees pick up the material, which is harmless to them, and rub it on the host plant as they visit the flowers. Scientists in Canada, Oregon and Washington have used the technique with success. (Source: Chemically Speaking, Nov. 1998)

*** The Agricultural Research Service has a Formosan termite website that contains information on infestation maps, frequently asked questions, video clips, expert and technical information, photos, and even homeowner tips. This site can be found at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/fullstop/> (Source: Chemically Speaking, Nov. 1998)

Attention Limited Certificate Pesticide Applicators:

Mel Edelstein, Executive Director of CPCO - Certified Pest Control Operators Association of Florida asked us to remind you that all Limited Certificate applicators are qualified to join CPCO and enjoy the many benefits of membership. Some of the benefits he mentioned are FREE CEU classes, an excellent and informative monthly magazine, and numerous discounts from suppliers. Call Mel at 954-724-8806.

"Do-It Yourself" Termite Control Deception

Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth charged United Industries Corporation, a manufacturer of do-it-yourself termite control called "Terminate", with deceiving consumers. The joint complaint was filed by the Federal Trade Commission, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. In his complaint, Butterworth said United Industries has been unable to substantiate that it's product will actually protect consumers' homes or eliminate termite colonies as advertised. In addition, the complaint charged that the company's "guarantee" of Terminate's effectiveness is just a "money-back-if not-satisfied" offer, not a warranty covering damage to the consumer's property. The complaint further states that the company's advertising fails to disclose that it's product is not intended to be used as protection against Drywood termites or that professional pest control services are recommended for homes with active infestations of Formosan termites, both of which are commonly found in Florida. (Source: CPCO Advantage - Nov '98)

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Unlicensed Pest Control Operators

The Fla. Dept of Agricultural & Consumer Services (FDACS) reports that 25 "Cease and Desist" orders were issued to unlicensed pest control operators across the state of Florida during the past several months. Most of the 25 were landscape maintenance companies. Be sure to understand the law and get properly certified if you are thinking of doing pest control. (Source: FDACS Memorandum # 698)

CEU Tutorials For Sale

The computer-verified tutorials developed by UF Entomology and Nematology Dept are now offered for sale by Pest Control magazine www.pestcontrolmag.com and several golf course maintenance websites. A new UF/IFAS policy allows a discount to resellers. Complete details on ordering these tutorials and CD-ROMS can be found at www.ifas.ufl.edu/~ent1/software/fasulo.htm#CEU

Back to the Basics - Proper Planting

When planting a new vine, shrub or tree, here are a few things to consider. One key to success is to plant the right plant in the right spot. A plant cannot be expected to thrive unless the site is compatible with the needs of the plant. Imagine the mature size of the plant and look again at the site. Will the size of the mature plant be appropriate to the site in 5 or 10 years time? Dig a \$10 hole for a \$5 plant. Make the hole at least twice as wide as the root ball of the plant, but do not dig too deep. To reduce settling, dig the hole only as deep as the root ball. Water well to eliminate air pockets that could dry out the roots. Finally add several inches of mulch to conserve moisture and buffer the roots from temperature extremes. Notice that no soil amendments were added. Consider that roots will seek out the best environment to grow in. If conditions in the planting mix are far better than the surrounding soil, roots tend to concentrate there, as though the plant were still in a pot.

Landscape Maintenance Wake-Up Call - By Bill Phagan

Ah yes...fall is in the air...grass is slowly going dormant, cooler weather just around the corner, cut back on customer visits so I can finally relax, right? Wrong Bahia breath! Sit down while you've got the time and remember what's happened this summer. Was this you?...costs so high you weren't making money, employees not showing up, techniques not good, couldn't answer some customers' questions about trees, plants, etc. and just maybe you "faked" it. People weren't paying you on time or not at all, losing contracts because you "just couldn't get there", people canceled you because winter is coming and now they'll take over, equipment down due to lack of preventative maintenance, working eighty hour weeks with nothing left over for you after bills and employees were paid...any of this sound familiar?

So don't start resting on your St. Augustine... this is the best time to organize your business and learn about your profession. Kick the BK and McDonald's cups out of the trucks and trailers and listen up... here's what you could be doing...

*** Get educated about our industry... get on the mailing list of the local county extension office, establish yourself with the local extension agent, sign up for all the green industry publications since most are free... work on passing the limited pest control exam BEFORE you get caught breaking the law, sign up to attend every educational seminar available for both business and horticulture, buy some landscaping type books with plants in color, some diagnostic tools to help you assess problems in the landscape and in general start getting it together for next year.

*** How are your job estimating system working? Are you making any money? Have you thought about diversifying your business? What could you do to increase profits and revenues? What qualifications should your employees have? Do you have a good strong contract that protects you? Is your job routing maximizing time management and saving you money? How many jobs do you lose money on? Which ones are the most profitable? Are your property specifications the same for any and everybody and is forcing this square peg into a round hole a problem? Do you have a marketing program in place to replace the deadwood and non-profitable accounts? Do customers dictate your pricing? Write down some areas of concern to you about your pricing...what are you doing about them? Call me if you need help. Bill Phagan - Central Florida Grounds Consulting - PO Box 271908, Tampa, FL., 33688 (Editors note: Bill will be holding a Bidding and Estimating Class on January 22, 1999 see the Events Calendar in this newsletter)

Rare or Unusual Plants?

The USF Botanical Garden Plant Shop is always looking for rare or unusual plants. Call Bob Koehler 974-2329 only on Fri 11am-2pm, Sat 9am-4pm, or Sun 12am-4pm.

What's in a Name?

If a customer should ask, "what's the difference between a variety and a cultivar?" would you know the answer? To answer fully let's use Hibiscus as an example. The proper name of the plant is "HIBISCUS rosa-sinensis". Hibiscus is the genus of the plant and rosa-sinensis is the species. If there is a specific type of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis and that type was created by Mother Nature, then that specific type of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis is called a variety and written "var." as in "Hibiscus rosa-sinensis var. China Rose". If the specific type of Hibiscus was created by man with hybridization then it's called a cultivar, written "cv" as in "Hibiscus rosa-sinensis cv. Red Snapper".

Landscape Trends

At the 1998 Horticulture Extension Agents Conference, Dr. Gary Knox gave a great presentation and overview on the latest landscape trends and how these trends have changed since the 80's. According to Dr. Knox, the landscape trends of the 80's were Color, Low Maintenance, Native Plants and Cultivars (man-made variations of existing plants). Since then society itself has shown trends toward Time-Deprivation, Downsized Homesteads and Home Extending Gardens, Cocooning: the Need for Nurturing, and the Disneyfication of Garden Expectations. These influences have lead to the desire for "Multi-tasking" plants. Multi-tasking means plants will be required to fill not one but several roles. Plants will be required to have some combination of:

Interesting foliage Beautiful flowers

Fragrance Fruit

Beautiful form A practical function

Interesting Bark Overall toughness

Beautiful branching

Other trends mentioned were "refined" natives, that is, new species or varieties of natives a little less "wild", wildlife gardens, heirloom gardens (good things from grandmother's garden). The trends in perennials include "cottage gardens", ornamental grasses and, tropicals and vines. Another trend of special interest to you retailers includes the emphasis on "features and furnishings of garden rooms" such as benches, birdbaths, water gardens, fountains, topiary, espaliers and garden accents.

All trends have their advantages and disadvantages. Dr. Knox indicates that the disadvantages of these trends will be:

-Disneyfication of garden expectations (editors note: education of consumers is our only defense)

-Diminution of the urban forest - tall stately shade trees aren't being replaced within the urban areas.

Introduction of "new" plants continues and accelerates. Some of these plants are truly new to the consumer, some are improved varieties, some plants have not been previously available, and some are old favorites newly rediscovered. Dr. Knox also spoke about the need for regional evaluation of new plants and varieties. Plants that do well in North Florida may not thrive in South Florida. Overall a great presentation and a lot to think about, especially the retail industry. Dr. Knox also provided a 4 page listing of new plants for North and Central Florida. Call me for a copy. (Source: Presentation by Dr. Gary Knox)

Vet's Open House

On January 27th Vet's Nursery will have an open house from 9am - 3pm. The Cooperative Extension Service will provide educational exhibits and Extension Agents to answer questions. Other exhibitors include Hillsborough Community College, FNGA, American Farms, Elsberry, and some trade magazines. Information will be provided on bedding plants, sod & plugs, the Florida Certified Nursery Professional Program, other educational opportunities for retail garden professionals, roses, dooryard citrus and trees. Retail buyers are invited. Last year 60 buyers from as far away as Jacksonville attended. Call Vet's for more information 1-800-940-2056

1999 Plants of the Year

The FNGA has announced its selections for the 1999 Plants of the Year. The selections this year include one medium to large tree, the Winged Elm, one small tree or large shrub, the Desert Cassia, several shrubs, Firespike, Snailseed, and a Ligustrum 'Lake Tresca'. Also included are two groundcovers, the black Sweet Potato, and the Chartreuse Sweet Potato, the Cross Vine, and an Aglaonema known as "B.J. Freeman". Several of these are described below.

The Winged Elm (*Ulmus alata*) is a medium to large native tree with a moderate growth rate. It tolerates a range of conditions including some alternation between wet and dry conditions. It reached a height of about 45' with a spread of about 40' but forest specimens of up to 70' have been reported. The dense and rounded appearance of the head in the summer gives way to an attractive winter look when the winged branches and twigs add to the trees interest.

The Black Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) "Blackie" is a groundcover or hanging basket plant with deep red-purple leaves. It prefers rich moist soil and partial sun but will thrive in full sun if there is a constant water supply. As a groundcover it is about 9" high and the vines can reach 6'-8' long.

Firespike (*Odontonema strictum*) has a mature size of about 4' x 4' and prefer light to moderate shade but can handle full sun if they have enough water. It flowers through much of the year and each lasts several weeks. Relatively fast growth rate and is hardy in zones 9b - 11.

The Cross Vine (*Bignonia capreolata*) is an under-used vine hardy from zone 6-9. Its main flowering period comes in late spring and has occasional flowers throughout the summer. It is a native that grows rapidly and will cling to rough surfaces or twine as it climbs. The blooms are orange to orange-red but hybrids are expanding the color range. Cool weather will bronze the leaves by they remain on the plant most of the year.

Snailseed (*Cocculus laurifolius*) is a large shrub (18' x 12') hardy in zones 9b-11. It has handsome green foliage used for flower arranging. A moderate growth rate and dense foliage make it an excellent choice in zones where it is hardy. (Source: FNGA)

Battling the Mealybug

Mealybugs get their name from the mealy or waxy secretions that cover their bodies and eggs. This waxy covering helps protect them from predators and pesticides. Mealybugs belong to the same order as scale insects (Homoptera), but unlike scale, mealybugs are mobile during all stages of their lives except when they are eggs. Mealybugs can be found on almost any part of a plant. Rain or overhead irrigation, however, can cause the mealybugs to hide under the leaves so they don't get washed off. Cleaning the plant is actually a great way of helping control the population in areas where you can use water. Anytime you are able to reduce the population before you spray with a pesticide, you increase the chance of gaining control more quickly than with a spray alone. The life cycle from egg to adult is about 60 days, depending on the species and the temperature. One of the goals of pest management is to prevent another generation of the pest from emerging. To this end, try to do a complete rotation of controls, from physical to chemical within the pest's life cycle. Certain pesticides can also affect beneficial insects, thereby slowing the control of the pest. Soaps and oils are less damaging to beneficials than most synthetic pesticides. If you wish to use systemics, use them as a soil drench to minimize the effect on beneficials. As always, read all pesticide labels carefully. Most pest infestations, including mealybugs, are more easily controlled when the infestation is new and the population is low. Once the pest gains a foothold, it will take multiple pesticide applications to gain the upper hand. Also bear in mind that the earlier you start trying to control a pest, the quicker you can get rid of it. Every day you wait is another day the population matures. (Source: Controlling Mealybugs by William H. Reeve IV, Interior Landscape Summer 1998)

New IPM Friendly Chemical

The Scotts Company will soon release Ovation, a new chemical to control mites. Clofentezine is the active ingredient. The main activity is on mite eggs - it interrupts respiration of developing mite eggs, causing them to shrivel and die. It is reported to be an effective mite ovicide and non-phytotoxic on ornamentals. Trials indicate that Clofentezine has little or no impact on beneficial insects, making it suitable for IPM programs. (Source: Scotts flyer)

FCNP Classes

Hillsborough Community College will offer a Florida Certified Nursery Professional (FCNP) certification class starting on January 6th and ending on March 10th. This class, sponsored by the FNGA, offers a solid foundation in horticulture. It is designed for those unfamiliar with horticulture and is especially good for entry level employees. The class will meet from 6-9pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. For more info call HCC (813) 757-2103

FCNP CEU's Available

Along with the new FCNP certification classes, the Extension Service will offer more CEU's for the FCNP program throughout the year. At this writing, the first opportunity to earn FCNP CEU's will be at the Tree and Landscape Short Course March 5th at the Florida State Fairgrounds in conjunction with the Spring Expo trade show sponsored by the Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers. Call Dave at the Extension Service (813) 744-5519 x 103 for more details.

On the Environmental Front

The director of global food issues for the Hudson Institute told the 45th World Food Production Conference "The very people who are pledged to save the environment are telling us to use low yield organic and traditional farming systems, which will mean the destruction of wildland. The stakes are now not famine, the stakes now are defined in wildlife habitat saved. Groups such as Green peace cannot afford to recognize this because their campaigns against pesticides and

biotechnology have been the best fund raising techniques they have ever come up with. We are already using 36 percent of the earth's surface for food production, and that means if we do not radically raise the yields still further, there will be disappointed, possibly malnourished consumers and no room for wildland". It was estimated that modern agriculture is already saving at least 15 million square miles of wildland, which is the greatest conservation triumph in human history. (Source: Chemically Speaking, Nov. 1998)

Ficus Forever

When most people think of ficus, the first thing that comes to mind is leaf drop. Another thought is that they are fairly plain and available in only limited varieties. A ficus is a ficus, right? Wrong! New varieties of ficus are causing a dramatic resurgence in popularity. One new line of patented and trademarked ficus varieties is being introduced by Miami Agra-Starts Inc of Homestead. Their new line of ficus is called Ficus of the Future (TM). In Europe, ficus has been the number one selling crop for the past 5 years. Ficus of the Future varieties typically command a 25%-35% premium over other varieties. A rigorous and highly critical trialing process has led to 8 varieties in the Ficus of the Future line. 'Monique' is an upright F. benjamina type with ruffled leaf edges and a superior resistance to leaf drop. 'Amstel King' is similar to 'Alli' with long banana-shaped leaves. The leaves are wider and thicker, the tree is faster growing with superior resistance to leaf drop. 'Rianne' is a natural bonsai variety. It's growth pattern is horizontally instead of vertically dominant. The internodes twist and turn naturally giving the appearance of a bonsai that has been manipulated and trained for years. 'Midnight Princess' has very dark, almost blue-black, foliage and a more cascading look usual. This variety won the "Best New Foliage Plant Introduction Award" at the 1998 TPIE (Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition) in Ft. Lauderdale. These and other new varieties assure that ficus will continue to be an industry standard well into the future. (Source: "Forever Ficus" by Sally Stribling, Interior Landscape, 1998)

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Websites of Interest

Environmental Horticulture Events Calendar - <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/1999calendar.htm>

HortWorld - Betrock's Horticultural Network - <http://www.hortworld.com> The website for the horticultural publisher Betrock. Hugh website covering turf, palms foliage, ornamentals, associations, links, botanical gardens, etc. Big diverse site.

HortDigest - <http://www.hortdigest.com>

Pesticide MSDS Sheets - <http://msds.pdc.cornell.edu/issearch.htm>

USDA IPM Network - <http://www.reeusda.gov/agsys/nipmn/>

Grounds Maintenance On-line Magazine - <http://www.grounds-mag.com>

Interiorscape Magazine On-line - <http://www.interiorscape.com> Nice site! Lots of good info on foliage plants, includes search engines, tech tips, insect and disease info.

Division of Plant Industry Homepage - <http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~entweb/dpibro.htm> Interesting site! Especially check out their Library page and the extensive links to everywhere.

Upcoming CEU Class Listing - <http://fshn.ifas.ufl.edu/pest/ceu.htm> For those of you that have to renew certificates or licenses this is a complete listing of CEU classes provided to IFAS by FDACS.

Calendar of Events

Jan 7 FNGA Retail Garden Center Seminar - Orlando 1-800-375-3642

Jan 9 CPCO CEU class - Tampa - Call 954-724-8806 for info.

Jan 12 FTGA Turf Conference - Lake Worth 1-800-882-6721 or ftga@aol.com

Jan 13 FTGA Turf Conference - Ft Myers 1-800-882-6721 or ftga@aol.com

Jan 15 Landscape Estimating & Bidding Seminar ½ day Tampa \$30 744-5519

Jan 19 IPM Seminar for Least Toxic Pest Management 8-12 noon Manatee County Civic Center, Palmetto \$10 Contact Frank Melton 941-722-4524

Jan 19 IPM Seminar for Least Toxic Pest Management 1-5 pm Highlands County Extension Service \$10 contact David DeVoll 941-386-6540

Jan 20 IPM Seminar for Least Toxic Pest Management 8-12 noon Pinellas County Extension Service \$10 Contact Bill Kern 727-582-2100

Jan 20 IPM Seminar for Least Toxic Pest Management 1-5 pm Hillsborough Community College, Plant City \$10 Contact Dave Palmer 813-744-5519

Jan 20-23 ALCA Interior Landscape Conference - Ft Lauderdale 1-800-395-2522

Jan 21-23 TPIE Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition - Ft. Lauderdale 1-800-375-3642

Jan 21 FTGA Turf Conference - Tampa 1-800-882-6721 or ftga@aol.co

Jan 21 FCNP Exam at TPIE - Ft Lauderdale 1-800-375-3642

Jan 22 FTGA Turf Conference - Sanford 1-800-882-6721 or ftga@aol.com

Jan 23 FCLC & FCLT Review Courses at TPIE - Ft Lauderdale 1-800-375-3642

Jan 27 Vet's Nursery Open House 9am - 3pm Contact Vet's 1-800-940-2056

Feb 3-5 Turfgrass Producers International Conference and Expo - Tampa 1-800-405-8873

Feb 3 FTGA Turf Conference - Jacksonville 1-800-882-6721 or ftga@aol.com

Feb 4 FTGA Turf Conference - Pensacola 1-800-882-6721 or ftga@aol.com

Feb 19-20 1999 Northeast Florida Horticultural Trade Show - Jacksonville (904) 292-1117 Fri 9-5 Sat 9-3 Admission \$5

Feb 24-25 1999 Weed Science Society Meeting - Tavares, Fl., 813-681-3461

Mar 5 Tree & Landscape Short Course Tampa, (813) 744-5519 x 103

Mar 5-6 Tampa Spring Expo & Lawn Equipment Show - Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa (813) 655-1914

April 11-12 USF Botanical Gardens - Spring Plant Festival (813) 974-2329

May 17-20 Aquatic Weed Control, Aquatic Plant Culture & Revegetation Short Course Ft Lauderdale Research & Education Center (954) 475-8990 or

<http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~conferweb/awpre.htm#info>

Mid-August Florida Turf Grass Association Conference and Trade Show - Gainesville, FL.