2011 Vermont Flower Show 'Sweet Dreams'

The Stupa

The Bedroom

The Tropical Rainforest
Scenes from the Central Display
2011 Vermont Flower Show

photos courtesy of Bill Kneen and Steve Mease
Lately I’ve been reading a book of short essays called *Hope Beneath Our Feet* (North Atlantic Books, 2010); which I have enjoyed partly because it’s the time of year when I’m completely scattered and I can pick it up and just read a few pages, and also because it is incredibly uplifting, and we all need that once in a while. The short piece I read today was titled *Letter from the Future*, written by Vicki Robin, co-author of the book *Your Money or Your Life* (Viking Penguin, 1992). Parts of it are a bit corny but there are some real gems of wisdom in there too. Here are a few that I think apply:

“It used to be ‘location, location, location’, now it’s local, local, local”. We need to continue to look for ways to become more efficient in our use of energy, and maximize how we buy, sell and share within our local communities. Shared solutions for energy are better than individual ones, and the sooner we figure out how to invest in alternative sources cooperatively the more resilient we will be in the future. For us it means looking into solar, wind, and biomass to power our buildings and our greenhouses, and biodiesel and electricity to power our vehicles and smaller machines.

“Grow your own food.” It’s on everybody’s hot list, and magazines are full of topics like “Lawns to Lunch” and “Making your home acreage edible”. I think that VT nurseries, garden centers, designers and landscapers have a key role to play in this movement, providing not only the plants but also the education and labor necessary. Another indicator of the prominence of this self-sufficiency movement is the fact that the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets has recently identified the following program goals for the FY2011 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program:

1. Increase the competitiveness of organic and/or sustainable production systems.
2. Increase access to Vermont-grown specialty crops by low-income Vermonters

Our industry falls squarely into the definition of Specialty Crops, and so we are in the process of applying for one of the grants to develop programs that simultaneously support the Agency’s goals and our members. Stay tuned for details.

“Create Beauty to improve Human Health”. I think that constructed landscapes can serve multiple functions (provide food, feed wildlife, preserve water quality, etc.) and that creating beauty is one of those functions. People need gardens because they cultivate a calm atmosphere – a retreat from the everyday pressures that we inflict upon ourselves. In caring for plants we learn to care for ourselves and each other.

“Shift from ‘me’ to ‘we’”. I particularly liked this one - “Co” words are the future – cooperation, community, collaboration, and communication. Once again the VT Flower Show was proof of the power of the collective brain. Our Green Works and home communities contain all the intelligence and resources we need – together we can create astounding things. Yet I encourage us all to be brave, being friendly takes guts – to risk rejection, care first, apologize, and be tolerant. We are a diverse group and have different perspectives, priorities, and business needs and yet I believe we still have a lot to learn from each other. Vicki says “If you invite them they will come” – so trade with your community, network with them, play with them, help them through hard times, share meals, call and ask how their interview or operation went. Host work parties, buying groups, stuff swaps. Let’s ask other members to coach us in reaching our dreams and we may achieve more than we expect.

So even though the busy season is upon us, I hope you can make a point to reach out to another member, visit their business, attend a Summer Twilight meeting or two, and continue to learn from each other. I have faith that we’ll all come out on the other side just fine. As always, feel free to contact me, any board member, or the office with your questions and concerns.

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<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>802.828.3999</td>
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<td>802.782.0958</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Landscape Install Maintenance</td>
<td>Active Member</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.heartwoodlandscapedesign.com">www.heartwoodlandscapedesign.com</a></td>
<td>Landscape Design Build; Landscape Install Maintenance</td>
<td>Active Member</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:donbert@comcast.net">donbert@comcast.net</a></td>
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<td>Active Member</td>
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# New Vermont Certified Horticulturists

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<td><a href="http://www.riversbenddesign.com">www.riversbenddesign.com</a></td>
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<td>Nancy Sargent</td>
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Thoughts from Claybrook Griffith

One year ago this past March, Ed Burke and I were riding together in my newly purchased 1-ton to pick up a shipment of plants that had mistakenly been taken off a truck in East Dummerston, instead of their scheduled destination at Rocky Dale Gardens. During this unexpected road trip we discussed the possibility of forming a committee to design and build what would become the central display as seen at this year’s Vermont Flower Show.

The informal conversations Ed and I had as we traveled back and forth, four times between Bristol and East Dummerston, spurred a series of brain trust meetings and design charrettes to form a committee headed by Melita Bass and myself as Co-Chairs, and Ed as the Design Coordinator.

The Central Display Committee, or CDC, as it would be referred to in the hundreds of e-mails that were to follow, was comprised of: Sinclair Adam, Melita Bass, Ed Burke, David Burton, Gabe Bushey, Nate Carr, VJ Comai, Heidi Glesmann, Marie Limoge, David Loysen, Kristina MacKulin, Shannon Moulton, Liam Murphy, Lou Nop, John Padua, Rick Villamil, and myself. These 17 individuals devoted a lot of time, effort, and in some cases, money, to put together what many long time active members have called, “the best flower show yet.”

What makes a successful flower show, you might ask? I had the unique experience to view the success of the Flower Show from several different points of view.

As treasurer, I would say a profit margin of $20,000 or more. If one were to base the success of the Flower Show solely on the profit margin, then one might be inclined to conclude that this show wasn’t much of a success after all. We are still tallying expenses, but are expecting a profit margin of $8,000-$10,000. This seeming deficit can easily be attributed to the biblical snowstorm that we experienced on the last day of the show, which no doubt adversely affected the turnout.

As co-chair of the central display committee, however, I would define “success” in terms of how well everything came together (and apart, for that matter). Despite the snowstorm delaying the clean-up, everything came together as planned. There were no major hiccups. We were even off the Expo’s premises before 11pm each night of set-up!

As a member of the VNLA, however, it is difficult to put a finger on what exactly deems the show a success. On numerous occasions, VJ Comai commented that, “We are all crazy, and should be put in straight-jackets and taken away,” on account of us volunteering to partake in this enormous undertaking. After all, why would so many people, most direct business competitors, work together for something that doesn’t directly benefit him or her…and...for free?!

The very idea did, in fact, seem insane.

I recall a phone conversation I had with David Burton of Trowel Trades (a major contributor to the show). I think he nailed it on the head when he stated, “Everyone that is in the horticulture industry and not a part of this show, should be thanking us, because we are promoting horticulture in general. And this show, while not promoting individuals, promotes the industry as a whole, and therefore boosts everyone.” I couldn’t agree with him more. In this regard, should we as members, look more at how many people actually walked through the doors to see the Flower Show, then? As a member, I really don’t care if the association made $5 or $50,000. I am still going to have to pay dues next year. Yeah, maybe the lunch at the next annual meeting could be surf and turf versus chicken if we had been able to make $50,000, and more money is always a good thing, but my business doesn’t really depend on how rich the VNLA is. Yes, I want the association to survive and thrive, but as long as we don’t go broke putting the Flower Show on, perhaps it will always be a success in members’ eyes.

Did the Flower Show promote horticulture successfully? I think so. The Flower Show defines the VNLA and represents everything the VNLA stands for and supports our mission and purpose fully. In conclusion, I’d say we did a pretty darn good job this year, and “Sweet Dreams 2011” goes down in my books as a complete and utter success!

Thoughts from Melita Bass

As I write this we’ve just come in from splitting firewood, cut to length with the aid of a repurposed tree stand from the Flower Show. One of several odd items which were gathered up in the turmoil of show clean-up in a blizzard, it’s particularly sturdy construction made for the perfect timberjack. I can’t help but recognize the common thread of ingenuity and cross-over of industry which was so strong in this year’s show.

I had the luxury of not having the perspective my Central Display co-chair, Clay Griffith – I’m not the Treasurer, nor am I on the VNLA board. My chief concern was making sure everything went together smoothly, and everybody had a good time – committee members, volunteers and show attendees alike. This was to be my measure of success.

For years I’ve enjoyed being involved in flower show set-up and more recently had the role of “greeter”, welcoming the public and running between the office and show floor. This allowed me to become more familiar with the behind-the-scenes issues, and only served to draw me in further. In 2010, the opportunity came to really get into the thick of it. I don’t recall being asked to serve in my role of Central Display co-chair, Clay and I both saw the need for leadership of the committee and jointly nominated ourselves to the positions.

For some funny reason, nobody talked
us out of it… It was a bold move but we never looked back and I believe would both consider each other friends to this day. This became a common occurrence throughout the planning and execution of this year’s show, with so many individuals recognizing a need and simply stepping up to meet it.

To me a color-coded spreadsheet, complete with timelines and contact numbers, is every bit as beautiful as a driftwood unicorn grazing in a flower river. Last spring I inherited such a spreadsheet from the 2009 show, and at first found it more than a little daunting. Would I really take the time to input all those agonizing little details for the 2011 show? Would the rest of the committee care? I soon understood that it was the only way to wrap my brain around the production of this event, and yes it was important to our team. By December I was carrying it everywhere with me – to a doctor’s appointment to study while I waited, on a family weekend in case I had a few spare moments, in my handbag while out for dinner just to make a few notes on… because dinner conversation every single night invariably turned to the Flower Show.

For 2011 we chose to further develop the idea of a “Featured Artist”. We would showcase the work of an artist outside of the nursery and landscape industry, and in turn elevate the quality of the show and exhibit how their work could enhance that of ours in the industry. Lou Nop, of Nop’s Metalworks, turned out to be the perfect fit. Aside from creating three extraordinary pieces for the central display, he became very engaged in the planning process and ended up going above and beyond - assisting with technical issues and sticking around in an epic snowstorm to help with clean-up. His work created quite a buzz, and the experience of working with him affirmed the concept of a featured artist.

The end result of hours of planning, fretting, compromising and creating was one remarkable show. Perhaps the “perfect storm” of flower shows, it all just came together. The teamwork was seamless. A true credit to who we are as members of our industry. And a tremendous argument for continuing to follow the vision of the Vermont Flower Show – a show which is “designed, coordinated and built by a team of Green Works members and volunteers whose commitment to the green industry in Vermont is strong and vital”. After plan A and plan B for clean-up failed, Peter Norris and Greenhaven Gardens stepped up to make things happen. They got the truly dirty job, no glory whatsoever. But the job was done, both graciously and thoroughly, and for the simple reason of wishing to give something back to the VNLA.

Before the show had ended, people were asking how to be involved in the next one. Volunteers for set-up wanted to know how they could be on the committee. I received many thank-you’s from volunteers before they left at the end of long shifts. People had a good time. Rather than scatter back to our various lives and avoid all things flower show related, we’re already talking about the next one. I hear the date’s being set. Would I do it again? You bet! Was the 2011 show a success by my measure? Absolutely.

**Thoughts from Kristina MacKulin, Chairperson**

WOW - it was a fantastic show this time around in every possible way! I think a recent conversation I had with Bill Kneen, our lighting guru from KPS Productions, sums the 2011 show up for me - “it was like being in Camelot”. The definition of the word “Camelot” is “A place associated with glittering romance and optimism”. And that is exactly what this year’s show felt like. The public greeted our show in force, except for, of course, the day of the blizzard of the century, and even still many braved the show that Sunday.

The Flower Show Committee met over the course of 18 months planning all the details it takes to put our show on. I would like to thank the following committee members for their commitment and energy in producing the 2011 show: Melita Bass, Mary S. Cliver, Ann DeYoung, Oliver Gardner, Claybrook Griffith, Shari Johnson, David Loysen, Debbie Page, Leonard Perry, Llyn Rice, Terry Skorstad, and Janice Valgoi.

The central display was a masterpiece and became a collaboration of so many people and businesses donating time, plants, materials and labor to create a beautiful display, as you can see by some of the photos included in this issue. You can view all the photos on the Green Works website. There is also a time lapse video, taken over a 4 day period and whittled down to approximately 3.5 minutes posted on the Green Works website. It is fascinating to watch.

We could not go wrong with the theme “Sweet Dreams”! The first steps into the central display landed you in a bedroom fashioned out of plants and flowers - truly stunning. As you continued down the path you walked through a gigantic bird’s nest complete with prehistoric sized robin blue eggs! The bird’s nest was fabricated out of steel (by Lou Nop) and willow stems interwoven which created a nest like no other. The path then led to a stupa. What is a stupa you ask? It is a shrine used by Buddhists to mark relics or sacred sites. It felt just like that as you stood to contemplate and reflect in this very quiet space. The stupa and additional stone wall were created by members of the VT Chapter of the Dry Stone Wall Association of Great Britain.

The path continued to lure you along. In the distance a spiral mountain of flowers with a river of flowers leading to it beckoned you to walk on. To the left sat a full sized Hobbit house and vegetable garden where you just wanted to enter and sit down for tea. The Hobbit house was constructed by building technology students from the Center for Technology in Essex. The vegetables were grown by students at Hannaford Career Center, UVM Horticulture Farm, and David Loysen. Continuing on you then walked into the courtyard of a castle, complete with castle doors fashioned out of stone, wood, and metal. You could almost envision the king and queen walking through the doors.

The path then led you to a tropical rainforest and over a lighted bridge which was a true piece of art constructed by Lou Nop. The bridge overlooked a pond and if you looked close enough you could spy a treasure chest overflowing with jewels below. Overhead a tropical mist of rain was falling - umbrellas were on hand. The rain magic was created by Dick Villamil Jr. and with the sounds of the rainforest all around, you were truly transported.

The entire display was theatrically lit by Bill Kneen and his staff, which truly enhanced every step you took through the central display. While I have mentioned a few names above there...
We could not produce this show without our members, sponsors, master gardeners, and community volunteers who donated their time, labor, materials, cash sponsorship, and collaborative commitment to bring this show to the public. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE who helped make the 2011 Vermont Flower Show such a success!

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Billy, Ralph, and Ted

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2011 Vermont Flower Show

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were so many involved in all aspects of the central display creation! The entire display was a true work of art collaborated on by so many people.

Once through the central display the rest of the show was still to behold. Once again Delaney Meeting & Event Management did a phenomenal job organizing the 90 exhibitors as well as seeing to all the facility details that go along with this show. In other words, they keep things seamless. We conducted some 40 seminars and workshops over the course of the three days, all of which were extremely well attended. Leonard Perry once again helped put an wide array of creative craft projects for kids to take their hands to. Entertainment this year was provided by No Strings Marionettes and Tom Verner, Magician Without Borders. During the three days of the show we held a silent auction and live auction on Saturday organized by Mary Cliver with an impressive array of products and services to bid on. We ended the show with our plant sale and it was impressive just how many people came with a blizzard roaring outside.

Last but not least came the monumental task of clean up! With snowplowing calling and bad roads looming it was impressive just how many people helped that Sunday night into the wee hours. By Monday the clean up crew had been whittled down considerably! A special shout out to Sarah Holland and Lou Nop who went above and beyond when it came to clean up that day. Luckily CVE gave us an extra day to vacate and a small crew was back at it on Tuesday. We were able to get the hall emptied and broom clean by 1pm. Aaah but it was not over yet! Outside there was a mountain of bark mulch, peat bales, root balls, etc. to be dealt with in 3+ feet of snow. Over the course of the next week Peter Norris from Greenhaven Gardens and Northland Job Corp students worked tirelessly to see that all was taken care of. Our thanks really cannot be measured in words for that effort.

In looking back I do believe Bill Kneen described this show perfectly - it was like being in Camelot for a short while. We did not run short on optimism! So many volunteers dedicated their time, expertise, and passion toward the 2011 show. I know of no other group of people who work so hard on a project just for the sheer joy of watching people of all ages walk through the central display as well as experience all the other aspects the show offers. It is inspiring to be part of such an effort and know how unique our show really is. I even heard comments this year on how our show was so much more impressive than the Chelsea Flower Show in England. Not bad! We have a true gem of a show and remarkable people to make it happen.
Changes for Rising Sun Landscape Company

I have always been a gardener. I started out as a young mother with a large vegetable garden that very quickly became mostly flowers. I would plant a packet of seeds and not be able to kill any of the seedlings and I would line out all of those seedlings in wide long rows. Very quickly, people started stopping on the road asking me if I would sell them flowers. It didn't take very long for me to realize that I could have a business growing cut flowers. In 1987 I started my first company, Rising Sun Floral, a small wholesale cut flower business. Growing all sorts of flowers allowed me to learn what their basic needs and growth habits were. There is nothing like waking up first thing in the morning when everything is covered with dew and picking gobs, and gobs of long stemmed flowers.

In 1989, I decided to enter the horticulture program at Vermont Technical College. I was a non-traditional student and found it somewhat disconcerting to be surrounded by 18-year-olds. I was a late bloomer of 38 years at the time, as I had waited until my children were old enough to start elementary school. Being a non-traditional student allowed me to take advantage of being able to step into the role as the greenhouse work study student. I was able to hone my skills at greenhouse growing and plant propagation. This work study job was extended into the summers and I began to landscape the campus. I ran small crews of kids from the Vermont Farm Youth Corps, of which I was a board member. I continued to grow wholesale cut flowers at my home, as well as a working with a partner growing large scale wholesale certified organic vegetables. In 1992, representatives from the Vermont Department of Agriculture asked if I would be interested in helping to spearhead the Vermont Cut Flower Council, and by default became the founding President.

I graduated from VTC in 1992 and, that same year, I became a member of the VAPH. Concurrently, I continued my education at Johnson State College (graduating with a BS three years later). In 1993, I was offered a full-time job at VTC, as an adjunct instructor, greenhouse manager, campus landscaper and resident horticulturist for the Vermont Veterans Cemetery adjoining the campus. While growing and harvesting fresh cuts and trucking them to various florists was quite enjoyable, it was labor intensive. Simultaneously, people started to ask me to landscape their homes. It was not long before I realized that the cut flower perennials had certain value in the landscape industry and I used them in my design installations. I worked my job at VTC, and landscaped privately on the side. I am exhausted writing this just thinking about the many hours I spent in my diverse horticultural endeavors. Ah, youth! I worked in the VTC position for five years, having changed my business name to Rising Sun Landscape Company, becoming a corporation in 1997, en finally going out on my own in 1998.

I launched my landscape business with one John Deere professional lawn mower and one big commercial lawn mowing job (this was to be my consistent life saving bread and butter for 20 weeks, hoping that landscape jobs would come along). I advertised once and never looked back. It didn't take long for me to realize that opportunity resides in my unerring ability to always say "yes." I am an ardent lover of plants and I am keenly interested in what is new. I also like to work with plants that are old and have fallen out of fashion. This curious part of me resulted in buying my first greenhouse and growing my own materials for my own use in my landscape business. It didn't take long

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before other landscapers learned that I had product that wasn't easily accessible - and over time, I developed a decent wholesale clientele. Winters were a struggle as is the case with most. I worked at Dartmouth College as a temp for a couple of years. I taught at the high school level in a horticulture program for a couple of winters. I went back to Dartmouth College and was a writer in the president's office, which enhanced my writing skills. Everywhere I went people were interested in gardening and I always seemed to get jobs for the following summer. And so, the business grew and grew. By 2005, I stopped needing winter work.

It is no secret that I lecture extensively throughout New England. My lecturing venue started back in 1992. Over the years it has become an exciting opportunity for me to continue to educate in the field of horticulture. I am also an adjunct instructor for New England Wildflower Society. Gardeners are my favorite audience and garden clubs serve the most delicious assortment of finger sandwiches and desserts that anyone could wish for. Truly, I am blessed. A few years back, at one of these garden club lectures, I met Mundy Wilson, co-owner of Chippers, Inc. She invited me to come to her house and plant several containers. Quickly, this became a property wide landscaping project. Mundy and her husband, Will Russell, allowed me free reign and a beautiful garden, and an enduring professional friendship, resulted. Sadly, Will passed away suddenly last summer, and Mundy stepped to the helm of Chippers as sole leader. She is a true hybrid.

Last summer, I employed six full time people to complete projects in Vermont and New Hampshire. It was exhausting as I was also doing the administrative of work late into the evening. I had considered selling my company, but my greenhouses were located on my property, and I couldn’t see how this could easily happen. Undaunted, I obtained A NOFA Accredited Organic Land Care Professional certification, a noteworthy educational experience. Serendipitously, in the fall I was approached by Chippers, Inc., and asked if I would like to merge my business with theirs. Chippers has historically been a company of professional arborists, turf specialists, landscapers and foresters serving Vermont and New Hampshire. And now, this spring a wholly new garden division is added to the twenty five year old business. I am the garden and landscape design consultant and production greenhouse manager.

For so long I had admired Chippers for the expanse of the territory that they work, the pristine fleet of trucks, the awesome arsenal of equipment, the wholesome crew and management team, the quality of work they do and their general business savvy. It did not take much for me to decide to leave my small business behind and become part of something much bigger. I am doing everything I have always done but on a much larger scale. I now have many other people to share my business concerns and professional growth with. If there is a horticulturist heaven – I am there. It is excellent to be a Chipper.

Submitted by Liz Krieg, VCH, AOLCP

On April 14, 2011 Board Member Heather Mason attended an awards ceremony at Vermont Technical College. On behalf of Green Works, Brittny Tyler was awarded $350 for outstanding academic achievement. Brittny is a student at VTC in the Landscape Design and Sustainable Horticulture program. Brittny was born and raised in Dummerston, Vermont. Her interest in landscaping began while attending Windham Regional Career Center in Brattleboro. Brittny is currently in her second year at Vermont Technical College and will be graduating this May, 2011.

After many dry stone walling workshops with Dan Snow and an internship working besides Jared Flynn and closely with Dan Snow, Brittny completed the initial dry stone walling exam for the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain. She is the first female in the US to hold this certificate. After graduation Brittny wishes to travel to the UK to work with fellow stone wallers and eventually plans to move to the Mount Washington Valley to pursue her career in the landscape field. We wish her well on all her upcoming endeavors!
Green Works
Member Survey Results

We conducted a survey at the Winter Annual Meeting where we asked members to place 16 Green Works services/programs in order of importance. We had 18 members participate which is roughly 10% of our 177 members, and the types members were a wide mix. Here are the results in order of most important to least important:

#1 – Annual Meetings (Winter and Summer)
#2 – Special Guest Lectures (i.e. Michael Dirr)
#3 – Twilight and Winter Workshops
#4 – VCH Program
#5 – Sustainable Practices Education
#6 – Website, Brochures, Stickers (and other marketing efforts)
#7 – VT Flower Show
#8 – The Dirt (online)
#9 – The Dirt (printed)
#10 – VT Legislative Monitoring
#11 – Achievement Awards
#12 – Industry Awards
#13 – Research Grants
#14 – Gorgeous Gardens and Green Living Show
#15 – Federal Legislative Monitoring

The Board of Directors would like to use this information to help us focus our energies/funding on the programs and services that the membership values the most. If you disagree with the order above or would just like to add your input we encourage all of our members to sort the 15 items above and forward us your list and we will add it to the data.
It’s nice to be able to say all is rather slow on campus with only budget cuts but no crises as at most other state colleges around the country. We have a search process underway for a new President, as you may have read in papers (our current one is stepping down to return to academia). We have completed the search for the landscape position in our department and the candidate selected for the position is Dr. Stephanie Hurley. Dr. Hurley is currently a post-doc in the Rubenstein environmental program on campus. Dr. Hurley has an MLA from the University of Washington and Doctor of Design from Harvard."

Please let us know if interested in our July 25, 26 tour of gardens and nurseries in the Connecticut Valley (I can provide a discount for industry members), and please let your customers know of this (http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/vt11an.pdf). Watch for details soon on our day tour once again to the Montreal Botanic Gardens and lantern display in early fall, hosted by your association.

It’s a great time of year when classes are done, meetings for the most part are done, and there is once again time to devote to field plantings and trials. This year I’ll be expanding my perennial trials including new introductions from international firms such as Ball Horticulture, ones(such as Fides) represented by McGregor Plant Sales, and Danzinger (added this past year). Genera that seem to be popular for these trials include, in particular, Dianthus and Coreopsis. I’ll also be continuing my field trials of Coralbells for hardiness. The controlled freezing studies of 5 additional villosa cultivars was done this winter, with results to be posted on my website (perrysperennials.info) under research. Thanks to the New Hampshire Horticulture Endowment for helping fund this study. The main two lessons this year from this research was the amount of cold these cultivars could take when frozen in early January (little loss even at a soil temperature of 8 degrees F), and the difference when frozen in late February when plants were less hardened (losses at 23 degrees F and very little survival at the lower temperatures).

Also this year we’ll be having our All-America selections and new annuals display at the Burlington Waterfront Park, in collaboration again with Burlington Parks and Recreation. The list will be posted online on my website in June, and results from this past year are there under the Research link. Thanks to D.S.Cole and Pleasant View Gardens of New Hampshire for once again providing so many of the varieties. Thanks too to your Association and board for once again providing support to make these, and the perennial trials, possible. With no longer any funding on campus for such applied projects and trials, industry support is what enables them to continue.

We’ve been fortunate this year on Across the Fence, thanks to our producer Will Mikell, to have three shows featuring your Association and its activities—the landscape awards, the flower show, and the half hour Memorial Day show on Vermont
grown. These can be viewed on my website under the Home Gardener page in at least a couple formats, as well as another show to air in May featuring our member (and keynote speaker from the flower show) Julie Moir Messervy.

For grad research, the student currently working with me (Grace Matiru, also teaching ag economics subjects on campus), will be conducting a survey this season of gardeners to determine their interest in and needs for the increasingly popular vegetable and fruit plants and growing supplies. Results should help many retailers serve their customers better.

Sarah Kingsley Richards, a full-time technician working with others in our department, has finally completed her Master's thesis on hardiness studies with perennials. Her research presentation powerpoint is available online under the research page of Perry’s Perennial Pages (perrysperennials.info/sures.htm). Here is the summary of the findings from her thesis.

Three studies on container-grown herbaceous perennials were conducted to examine the influence of plant age, water stress, and temperature cycling date on cold hardiness. In January, plants were exposed to controlled freezing temperatures of -2, -5, -8, -11, and -14C (28.4, 23.0, 17.6, 12.2, 6.8F) then returned to a 3-5C (37-41F) greenhouse. In June, plants were assessed using a visual rating scale of 1-5 (varying with species, but in general 1 = dead, 5 = best, 3-5 = saleable quality) and dry weights were recorded. Controlled freezing also in November and March were included in the third study.

In the first study, two ages of plants, plugs potted-up at the beginning of the growing season and plugs that had been potted at the beginning of the previous growing season, were exposed to controlled freezing temperatures in January. For Geranium x cantabrigiense ‘Karmina’, studied for one year, age had no effect on either rating or dry weight. In two Sedum ‘Matrona’ study years, age had no effect on dry weight but ratings were higher for older plants than younger plants in the first year and higher for younger plants than older plants in the second year. In two Leucanthemum x superbum ‘Becky’ study years, age had an effect on both rating and dry weight, which were both generally higher for younger plants than older plants.

In the second study, plants were maintained in pots at two different soil moisture levels, above and below 10% volumetric water content (VWC), prior to exposure to controlled freezing temperatures in January. Coreopsis ‘Tequila Sunrise’ and

continued to page 13
Carex morrowii 'Ice Dance' showed no effect on either rating or dry weight from moisture level. For Geranium x cantabrigiense 'Cambridge' and Heuchera 'Plum Pudding', moisture level had no effect on dry weight but ratings were higher for wet Geranium plants and for dry Heuchera plants. Carex oshimensis 'Evergold' moisture level had no effect on dry weight but rating was higher for dry plants at certain temperatures. Carex laxiculmis 'Hobb' (Bunny Blue) moisture level had an effect on ratings at certain temperatures favoring wet plants but dry weight was higher for dry plants.

In the third study, during November, January, and March, plants were subjected to temperature cycling treatments of -2C/+3C prior to exposure to controlled freezing temperatures. The highest Geranium x cantabrigiense 'Cambridge' ratings were observed in January and November and in 0 & 1-cycle. Highest dry weights were observed in January and March and in all cycles. The highest Sedum 'Matrona' ratings and dry weights were observed in January and in 1 & 2-cycles. The highest Leucanthemum x superbum 'Becky'; ratings were observed in January, March, and November and in all cycles in the first study; and January and March and in all cycles in the second study. Highest dry weights were observed in November and March in the first study and January and November in the second study.

In general, when an effect was observed, younger plants produced more growth and rated higher in quality following exposure to freezing temperatures. A general effect of moisture level on containerized herbaceous perennial survival and salable quality following exposure to freezing temperatures was not apparent in these studies. A general tendency was observed for hardiness to be highest in January than November or, and for cycles to increase re-growth (hardiness) following exposure to freezing temperatures.

Submitted by Leonard Perry
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Invasives Management Training: Invasive terrestrial plant management is more than heading out with the clippers or a bottle of RoundUp and removing unwanted plants. Over the years, landowners’ awareness has increased of the impacts of invasive terrestrial plants on forest regeneration, wildlife habitat and ecosystem function, and the need for knowledgeable invasive plant managers has also increased. Landowners are faced with weighing the cost of control measures against the loss of woodlot values, sugarbush production and overall forest heath. Vermont has a shortage of qualified invasive removal contractors and Green Works members could fill that void.

In order to respond to this need, several efforts are underway:

TNC, in partnership with Vermont Forest, Parks & Recreation (VT FPR), and Redstart Consulting, is in the process of developing Best Management Practices for prevention/control in managed forest settings. They have partnered with other state and federal agencies in VT and beyond to do this. Outcomes will be a manual, site assessment protocol, and a series of trainings for fall 2011. They’ll be tying into Current Use regulations and USDA NRCS WHIP/EQIP.

TNC, VT FPR, and UVM Extension will have a new website this summer: www.vtinvasives.org. It will be the go-to source for management strategies, a calendar, e-newsletter, and up to date downloadable fact sheets, etc.

TNC has contracted with iMapinvasives, a web-based geo-referenced database. Landowners and land managers can use this to map and prioritize management activities on properties throughout the state. It’s free for anyone in the state – people will need to go through a short training, however, to be registered to use it. This is a big need – before people start to spray or do any cutting, they should have a plan for now and ongoing management.

A regional collaborative effort is also being explored. Participants thus far include The Nature Conservancy (TNC), VT Forestry Parks & Recreation, the Ecological Landscaping Association, The Massachusetts Department of Transportation, VT Technical College and Green Works. The goal would be to develop a multi-part training to standardize and improve the quality of invasives management/restoration work. The training would include the following:

- Introduction to natural communities
- Introduction to native plant identification
- Invasives identification
- Management options by species/site
- How to develop a weed plan
- Pesticide certification

The challenge will be to identify funding sources for curriculum development, promotion, the trainings, certification process, etc. VT Technical College and the Landscape Design and Sustainable Horticulture Program is interested in hosting the trainings. The benefits are many – environmental, as well as job creation and filling a sorely needed niche. If you have interest in working on this project or have ideas about grants and funding, please contact Rebecca Lindenmeyr.

PlantWise program: Our program is catching the national eye - Sharon Plumb gave a presentation about the PlantWise program to the New York Invasive Species Conference in Albany in April, and will be speaking about our collaborative efforts again at the American Landscaping Association next fall. We are still encouraging our members to join the PlantWise program by voluntarily ceasing the sale and use of several invasive species including Berberis, Acer platanoides, Euonymous alatus, Acer ginnala and yellow iris. You can sign up on our website: http://greenworksvermont.org/membership/voluntary-code-of-conduct/ and receive signs and decals for your business. Let us know if you are planning any promotional events to encourage customers to purchase alternative plants.

Rebecca Lindenmeyr, Sustainable Practices Committee
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Don’t Sell Plants...Build a Relationship with YOUR Customer

John Stanley

Recent research carried out in the USA indicates that garden customers have lost trust with many independent retailers and now prefer to purchase from “box” stores. Box stores are benefitting from increased sales and the market is therefore shifting. There are many reasons for the shift in trading patterns.

One is that the consumer now uses the internet to find out the information they need on plant material. They no longer have to rely on the salesperson. Many of whom are perceived by the consumer as not having the knowledge the customer is looking for.

The perception is that plants “turn” faster in a “box” store and are therefore fresher. A fresher plant is more likely to grow in the consumer’s garden and social media means the message gets out quickly when new plants arrive at the local hardware store.

Technology is also a factor. Many independent retailers are not keeping up with technology whilst larger retailers are grasping the opportunity. For example, QR Codes are quickly being taken up by some “box” stores as a means of communicating with the consumer, whilst many independent retailers are still asking the question “What is a QR Code?”

Finally, the new consumer is more price led than ever before and they perceive many independents as expensive and therefore favour other outlets. This is creating a rapidly advancing challenge for retailers and therefore an action plan to combat it is important. The latest retail report published by Jones Lang LaSalle has a wonderful quote in it” Going shopping simply to acquire more stuff is unlikely to bring enough meaning to people”.

Placing plants on the sales bench and waiting for the customer to buy is not going to lead to a successful future in plant retailing.

If we are to have a variety of different types of retail outlets for plant material there are some lessons we need to be taking on board as retailers.

1 Back to basics

Consultants in the past have promoted the fact that you need to sell the benefits or the wants to make the sale. I was one of them that promoted this concept and it has worked very successfully in the past. We now live in different times and we need to go back to the basics and promote the needs to the consumer.

Today’s consumer wants you to address three basic needs in their mind

* Keep me and my family safe and stress free. Are you promoting the right messages on your display boards to get this message across to the consumer?

* Make parking and getting around your garden centre easy for me. Is your plant area layout out with the new consumer in mind?

* Save me time. Help with planting, pruning and general care as well as providing the right size plant at the right time.

2 Become Social Media Savvy

Consumers have built communities on social media and many of those communities revolve around plants and gardening. This means that you need to be a member of that social media community. I use the word “member” purposely. As soon as you start to dominate the communications channels the consumers you are trying to attract will reject you and move to another plant guru.

A plant retailer today needs to integrate their traditional marketing strategies with social media strategies. Some of this is basic marketing techniques, but they still need to be implemented.

For example:

- The consumer expects your web page to be smartphone friendly so they can see what you have to offer while they are travelling. (Check out my ebook on Smartphone retailing on my website www.johnstanley.com.au) They expect to click onto your webpage and have a virtual tour of your garden centre and to be introduced to your team. You Tube allows you to do this at low cost and bring your place to life in the eye of the consumer.

- They expect you to send them garden tips and E Vouchers via Twitter. Other retailers are doing this and they are expecting it for their local garden centre.

- They enjoy having a conversation on gardening with you and their friends on Facebook. They expect you to introduce new ideas and products via this media and to engage with them as their local gardening expert.

- Being on “Foursquare” or “Facebook Places” allows them to find you easily when they are travelling around. The Phone GPS has now replaced the map and this is an opportunity to have your business as a key location in the data base.

- Your weekly garden Blog keeps them up to date with local garden issues and ensures you are seen as the local expert they can rely on and trust.

3 Recognise that the Nursery person who grew the plant is now the hero

During the 90’s retailers controlled the supply chain in the eyes of the consumer, growers grew the plants then passed them onto the retailer who was perceived as the plant expert who then sold the plants. We are now seeing a shift in power in all supply chain distribution. Manufacturers are now talking directly to the consumer and this puts the retailer in a difficult place. That communications may be via internet access, but also directly. Take a walk thought any major shopping centre and you will see major manufacturers opening their own stores rather than selling to an independent retailer.

Manufactures are now starting to control the supply chain. This control of the supply chain is also taking place in the plant industry. Consumers can now communicate with the grower directly via QR Codes and the internet. The result is that retailers have lost some of the credibility they had in the past and growers have gained credibility. This shift in power will continue to get stronger over the next few years. The answer for the
Price increases are a sore topic. In our current economic climate, cost cutting has become a way of life as businesses fight to conserve cash and preserve margins. The unwelcome news of a price increase from a supplier is usually the last thing a buyer wants to hear. The ornamental tree business has been no different. Growers have suffered a crushing oversupply of trees which was, in fact, developing 6-7 years ago, but was masked by the frenetic pace of construction through the middle part of the decade. When the bubble burst in 2007-2008 the demand for trees was reduced dramatically, beyond what few of us have ever witnessed. Since that time, growers, desperate to maintain a market share, have reacted by cutting prices for each of the last 3 years to the point where prices, on some items, have reached 30-year lows.

Unlike many businesses, tree growers cannot simply downsize their company to a scale that matches their sales. Existing inventory requires upkeep and that costs money. Like everyone else, growers have aggressively cut costs to try to staunch the negative flow of cash. That is a tall order in a world where the cost of raw materials such as burlap, diesel, and plastic have only increased. So, in many cases, fertilizer, pesticides, pruning, and staking have gone by the board. The results of excessive cost cutting are evident in the marketplace this year and many growers are simply not capable of supplying trees of adequate quality. For most growers, even the cost of culling bad trees is daunting when cash is tight and so the trees sit around, on display in the fields, or in the cast of containers, growing increasingly pot-bound.

The other major area of cost cutting has been a sharp decrease in tree planting in nurseries. Many cash conscious growers have realized that if they cannot afford to maintain what they have, then there is little point in putting more trees in the ground. As a result, tree planting has declined 70-80% over this period. This reduction occurred progressively: first by about 20% in 2008-2009 and then an additional 30-40% in each of the two following years. This trend has only just begun to become evident, with many smaller-sized trees and evergreens outgrowing the market, becomes ruined from neglect, is sawed down to increase spacing, or grubbed out entirely to prepare fields for re-planting.

Growers are watching carefully to see which items are selling out and they will raise prices whenever market conditions allow. This is not a matter of greed as much as survival. Most nurseries are just hanging on and absorbing losses, if they are even doing that. We are all watching while prominent nurseries fail, unable to continue is an economic meltdown that was nearly impossible to predict.

The shock waves from the sub-prime melt-down will continue to be felt, but will soon be felt in different ways. The crash of demand will be followed by a crash in supply caused by a reduction in the number of nurseries that have been willing and able to continue to risk investment in the planting and maintenance of quality inventory these last three years. And just as the construction boom masked the over-supply of trees 5-6 years ago, the construction bust is masking the currently developing shortage. When we experience even a modest resumption in news construction, the shortages will be difficult to manage.

It is important for businesses to educate their customers for what is coming. There is a special challenge for those who are bidding projects that are further out. There is a shocking gap between the desperate pricing of 2010-11, and the prices of, even, the over-supplied market of 2007. But when scarcities become prevalent, prices will return to their former levels, and eventually go higher still. That market of shortages may be much closer than you realize. Buyers should be prepared for price increases in the fall 2011 and very large increases in 2012 and 2013.

**Why Tree Prices Will Increase**

**John H. Barbour, President Bold Spring Nursery**

This means that one retailer in the plant sector will own a specific market. Those plant retailers who have no focus will find it even more difficult to develop their market share.

4 *Build Relationships and Stop Selling*

The key to success amongst all this turmoil is to build relationships with your consumer rather than just be focused on selling plants. The garden centre model that was built over the last few decades now needs to change to meet the needs of a new consumer.

Plants should be the focus of the offer to the customer and the retailer needs to be seen as the local expert in the territory.

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reprinted w/ permission; Bold Spring Nursery is located in North Carolina
Industry Calendar

June 4, 2011- Saturday-1-4pm
Tour of Pine Oak Heath Sandplain Forest Community at Camp Johnson
Colchester, VT
Register w/Victoria Weber
wdimock@sover.net or 802.234.9832

June 8, 2011
Treatment Options for Hemlock
Woolly Adelgid Workshop
Walpole, NH
Contact:  Karen Bennett
@karen.bennett@unh.edu or
802.862.4861
http://extension.unh.edu/fwt/docs/
TreatmentOptionsHWA.pdf

9:30-3:00 pm
Burlington International Airport
Burlington, VT
Contact:  jenna.calvi@state.vt.us or
http://www.vtwaterquality.org/stormwater/
htm/sw_WorkshopRegistration.htm

June 25, 2011-Saturday 9:30-noon:
Cranberry Meadow Wetlands
S. Woodbury, VT
Rain date 6/26/11.  Limited to 7 people due
to fragile habitat.
Register w/Eric Wood
@ericw5@myfairpoint.net or 899.4451

July 9, 2011
Millican Nurseries Customer Appreciation Day
187 Pleasant Street
Chichester, NH

July 13, 2011
CNLA Summer Field Day
Veterans Memorial Park
Watertown, CT
www.flowersplantsinct.com

July 14, 2011
MNLA Summer Conference & Trade Show
Mahoney's Garden Centers
East Falmouth, MA
www.mnla.com

July 16, 2011-Saturday
10:30am-noon
Hidden Garden Tour w/Paul Wieczorek
Hinesburg, VT
Contact Robin Worn - robin@gmvnt.net or
802.434.3584.

July 18-23, 2011
Perennial Plant Symposium
Hyatt Regency Atlanta
Atlanta, GA
www.perennialplant.org

July 24-26, 2011
PLANET Legislative Day on the Hill
Key Bridge Marriott
Arlington, VA
www.landcarenetwork.org

July 28, 2011
Establishing Trees in Difficult Sites Technical Workshop w/Nina Bassuk
Franklin Conference Center
Rutland, VT.
Contact:  Green Works/VNLA Office
888.518.6484

August 3, 2011
RINLA Summer Meeting
Holiday Acres Campgrounds
North Scituate, RI
www.rinla.org

August 17, 2011
Griffin Greenhouse & Nursery Supplies MA Expo
Eastern States Expo Center
1305 Memorial Ave
West Springfield, MA
1.800.888.0054

September 14, 2011
Green Works/VNLA Summer Meeting & Trade Show
Allen Bros., Inc.
6023 US Route 5
Westminster, VT  05158
Contact:  Green Works/VNLA Office
888.518.6484

September 15, 2011
NENA Simple Gathering
Tarnow Nursery
Chicopee, MA

September 17, 2011
RINLA Golf Tournament to benefit the Kenneth Lagerquist Scholarship
Laurel Lane Country Club
West Kingston, RI
www.rinla.org

November 2, 2011
NENA Volunteer Leaders Summit
MHS Elm Bank Reservation
Wellesley, MA

ANLA Management Clinic
Galt House Hotel & Suites
Louisville, KY
www.anla.orghttp://
www.landcarenetwork.org

February 1-3, 2012
New England Grows
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center
Boston, MA
www.NewEnglandGrows.org

classifieds . . .


Lovely garden center with active customer base, in operation
for 15 years, with landscape business. Located on 2 acres
along scenic Route 100, one mile North of the beautiful
village of Rochester, Vermont. Currently has 780 square feet
of greenhouse space. Lots of room for expansion, and more
greenhouses. Ranch style home with attached large 2 car
garage. Wonderful opportunity to have your dream business
at home. Priced to sell at $260,000. Contact Wayne at
802-767-9236. e-mail. wayneinvermont@yahoo.com.

Frost Hill Farm Peony Nursery

Frost Hill Farm Peony Nursery is closing and looking to sell
all of its peony nursery stock. (25 yr collection). Open to any
and all offers. Approximately 5000 root divisions could be dug
this year on 100 different cultivars. Over 300 one of kind
mature (10+ yrs) plants could be b&b and relocated or divided
as well. All cv’s are well marked and mapped and are
accurately labeled. Contact via website -

Ryan Sod Cutter

12” model 544844. Used only for landscape projects. Not a lot of
hours. Original owner: $1800.00; Stannard Vt.
Contact:  802 533 7044.
Scenes from the 2011 Vermont Flower Show

See all the photos and time lapse video of set-up at www.greenworksvermont.org