

Minnesota Nurserymen's newsletter

Prepared by
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Institute of Agriculture
• Agricultural Extension Service
• Horticulture Department

In Cooperation with
• Minnesota Nurserymen's Association
• Minnesota State Horticultural Society



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GARDEN STORE OPERATOR'S SHORT COURSE
STUDENT CENTER -- ST. PAUL CAMPUS
TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 1963

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN
PLANNING CONTAINER PRODUCTION

A.M.

- 8:30 Registration
Presiding. Conrad Weiser
- 9:00 Welcome H. Macy
- 9:10 Advertising That Sells . Emmett Hoffman
- 10:10 Coffee break
- 10:20 Developing a Sales Force Robert Benham
Red Owl, Inc., Manager of Public Relations
- 11:15 Questions and answers . O. C. Turnquist
- 11:45 Lunch - Dining Center
(second floor, Student Center)

P.M.

- Presiding. Frank J. Smith
- 1:15 Fertilizing: Types and
Timing. Donald White
- 1:45 Chemicals - Curse or
Cure. L. K. Cutkomp
- 2:30 Coffee break
- 2:40 Training Horticultural
Personnel L. C. Snyder
- 3:00 Question and answer
period Speakers and re-
presentatives from Dept. of Plant Pathol-
ogy and Ag. Extension

There are three concepts of container production and sales -- the producer's, the retailer's and the consumer's, according to Dr. L. C. Chadwick, Ohio State University, Columbus.

Dr. Chadwick explained these three concepts in introducing his talk on container production at the recent convention of the Minnesota Nurserymen's Association.

The grower's concept is formulated around the idea that it is an economical way to produce a quality product. Container growing was almost forced on West coast nurserymen, because of scarcity and high value of land. But good, if not better quality is the main reason behind the acceptance of containers on the West coast, according to Dr. Chadwick. Container production is relatively new on a production basis in the Midwest, he noted.

The garden center operator's concept is based on the sale of the plant, inasmuch as container-grown stock extends the selling season; is in a salable package; is easily transportable, and, in many cases, can be sold when the plant is in flower or fruit.

Dr. Chadwick stated that he thinks the consumer's concept of the container plant in the Midwest is that it is a cheap, inferior product. He emphasized that the plants are not inferior and that attitudes must change. He added that the do-it-yourself craze has reached its peak. His talks with nurserymen over the country indicate that landscape business is much better than garden store business. As a result, he predicts merchandising concepts for garden products will undergo a change.

Planning Container Production

Do some careful thinking in making a decision on what to grow in a container production program, advised Dr. Chadwick. Do not try to grow everything, but limit your production to items that can be readily marketed in your area. Produce for a definite market. Do not grow 100,000 plants and hope to "find a market." Give more attention to production schedules and cost analysis.

"We find if you have a shrub that can be produced from a hardwood or a softwood cutting, the softwood generally makes a better plant for container growing," he said. In a smaller size, the plant grown from the softwood cutting invariably is better branched and lower to the ground. Hardwood cuttings have been found to produce rather leggy plants. It is better to move a plant to the gallon can from a pot rather than from the field.

In choosing a site to grow container stock, the nurseryman should select an area with good air and surface drainage. What to set containers on is subject to much discussion, he said. It should, however, be a hard or semihard surface. There are indications that asphalt may not be adequate.

The soil mix influences the marketing and maintainance of a container plant. The soil mix should be tailored to the demands of the particular plant being grown, although this does not mean that a different mix is needed for every kind of plant. A mix should drain well but retain water and nutrients, and the components that make up the mix should be readily available. The components used should be reusable as much as possible and should combine easily. The mix should also lend itself well to mechanical canning.

Dr. Chadwick has found steam to be the best method of sterilizing, and the mix should be able to withstand this treatment.

One variable factor in the soil mix is the soil itself, which should be relatively light. A combination of sand, peat, and perlite gives a more uniform mix, but evidence shows it is not so hardy as one with soil.

The four ways of watering container stock are by hand, by traveling sprinkler, by overhead irrigation and by subirrigation. Dr. Chadwick believes that hand watering is the best method. Traveling sprinklers are good in the majority of cases and give better distribution than overhead lines. Dr. Chadwick stated, however, that he has never seen a traveling or an overhead sprinkler that did not require extra hand watering.

Subirrigation has been used, but Dr. Chadwick states frankly that he is afraid of it, since it can spread disease. Another problem is that the setup will vary with different kinds of plants. Beds with mixed stock may need different quantities of water. As to frequency, Dr. Chadwick said the plants should be watered

whenever they need it. Light growing media need more water than heavy ones.

Fertilizing

If a 1-1-1 mixture is being used at the garden center, Dr. Chadwick said, dry nitrogen should be applied every 20 days. There is no great advantage in using ureaform fertilizer in containers. It is too easy to overfertilize with it, and one application will not last through the year. A November application, though, is helpful for quick growth the next spring.

The usefulness of artificial lighting has been proved, and it can be used by garden centers that carry stock through the summer.

A number of slides were shown by Dr. Chadwick to illustrate various methods of providing winter protection for container stock. Corncobs were used to cover the cans, an effective method if the corncobs were put on before the first freeze. They were found to be unsatisfactory for many ilex varieties.

Mulching gravel was found to be good for relatively hardy varieties. Some varieties, of course, should be put in a coldframe. Setting up a polyethylene tent over the area was found to be the best method of wintering stock.

Reprint, American Nurseryman, January 1, 1963.

1963 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The following officers of the Minnesota State Nurserymen's Association were selected for 1963: president, Charles Hawkins, Rose Hill Nursery; vice president, Max Sargent, Sargent's Red Wing Nurseries; sec-treas., Keith Law, Law's Valley View Nurseries, Inc.

Members of committees are given below, with the chairman listed first in each case:

Convention Committee -- general chairman, Max Sargent.

Attendance and Registration -- Keith Law; Rodney Bailey, J. V. Bailey Nurseries.

Program -- James Weimelt, Nicollet Nursery; James Mitchell, Mitchell Nursery & Garden Center; Lawrence Bachman, Bachman's Inc.; Donald Wedge, Wedge Nursery; Jerry Arneson, Pine Cone Nursery.

Program Booklet, Advertising -- Walter Niehaus, Bachman's Inc.; Joe Whelan, J. V. Bailey Nurseries.

Commercial Displays -- Clarence Seefert, Seefert's Hudson Road Nursery; Vernie Johnson, Jewell Nurseries.

Banquet and House -- Walter Carpenter, Minnesota Tree & Garden Center; Gordon Swanson, Phalen Park Landscaping.

Legislative -- Ed Reid, Park Nurseries; Ken Law; Gordon Bailey, J. V. Bailey Nurseries; Leo Snyder, Fillmore County Nursery.

Public Relations -- Dick Andrews, Andrews Nursery; Mervin Abrahamson, Abrahamson's Nursery; Walter Carpenter; Vincent Bailey.

Plant Material Research -- Dick Bosshard Sargent's Red Wing Nursery; Dick Cross, Cross Nursery; Harry Brostrom, Jewell Nurseries; Clarence Seefert; Rodney Bailey; Ken Zakariasen, Homedale Nursery; Lloyd Wickstrom, Rose Hill Nursery; Vern Lorensen, Park Nurseries; Rod Kelley, Kelley & Kelley, Inc.

Membership -- Gordon J. Bailey; William Coupanger, Elmore Nursery; William Attwood, Minnesota Nursery Sales Co.; Frank Seifert, Summit Nurseries; Ken Law; Vernie Johnson; Joe Whelan; Orie Wiebush, Kelley & Kelley Inc.; Harry Francis, Lake City Nurseries.

Awards and Contributions -- Paul Peters, Evergreen Nursery; Bill Elling, Elling's Birch Lake Nursery; James Mitchell, Mitchell Nursery & Garden Center; Lauritz E. Havnes, Havnes Landscape Nursery; D. T. Grussendorf, Grussendorf's Nursery.

Roadside Development -- Lawrence Bachman, Bachman's Inc.; W. H. Eddy, Jr., Howard Lake & Victor Nurseries; James Weimelt; Ray Sachter, Dundee Nursery & Landscaping Co.

State Fair Delegate -- D. T. Grussendorf; Charles Mathes, Park Nurseries; Vincent Bailey.

Resolutions -- Ed Johnson, Rose Hill Nursery; Howard Schultz; Paul Eddy, Paul Eddy & Sons Tree Farms.

FLOWERING CRABAPPLES

L. C. Snyder

Flowering crabapples are those crabapples that are grown primarily for landscape use rather than for their edible fruits. A few crabapples, such as the Dolgo, are grown both for their edible fruit and their ornamental features.

In nature most of the species of *Malus* are properly classed as crabapples. Nine species of *Malus* occur in North America, three in Europe, and 17 in Asia. When planted together in botanical gardens, arboretums and in private and public collections, these species have hybridized freely and their offspring present diverse groups of hundreds of selected cultivars, many of unknown origin. Some of our better selections have resulted from controlled crosses between selected parents.

Flowering crabapples are grown for their beautiful flowers, showy fruits, foliage color, tree form, shade, and for food for birds and other wildlife. These characteristics combined place the flowering crabapples among the most valued of our ornamental plants.

The flowers range in size from less than one inch in diameter to well over two inches. The number of petals range from five in the single flowers to as many as 35 in the double forms. Petal color is also extremely variable, ranging from white through the various shades of rose and pink to deep purple. Most flowering crabapples bloom about the middle of May just ahead of the lilacs. The period of bloom may extend over several weeks from the earliest blooming Manchurian crabapple to the latest *ioensis* and *coronaria* varieties.

Fruits of the flowering crabapple are also extremely variable. In size they range from less than a quarter of an inch in the Toringo crabapple to nearly two inches in some of the red-fleshed varieties. Fruit color ranges from green to yellow to red to purple with various intervening shades. The calyx may be persistent or deciduous and the pedicel may be short and stout or long and slender.

The tree form may vary from narrow, upright varieties such as the columnar Siberian crabapple to the wide-spreading Japanese flowering crabapples with all forms in between. Even weeping forms such as Red Jade are fairly common. The size is also variable from the dwarf Sargents crab, scarcely over 6 feet, to the Siberian crabapple which may tower 30 or more feet. The leaves also offer interesting variations. Some are simple and unlobed while others may be deeply lobed. The color ranges from green to red and bronze. The red colors are never brilliant but may be quite striking when grown in contrast with green shrubs or trees.

Other characteristics that must be considered when selecting crabapple varieties are hardiness and freedom from diseases. At least three common diseases should be considered -- apple scab, cedar-apple rust, and fireblight. Unless one is prepared to spray at regular intervals, it's well to avoid such as the Almey crabapple, which is susceptible to apple scab, and the Bechtel crabapple, susceptible to cedar-apple rust. Since no practical control is available for fireblight, varieties that are very susceptible to this disease should be avoided. Varieties that drop their fruits as they mature can also become a nuisance.

Walter P. Trampe
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Division of Plant Industry

About 85 varieties have now been tested at the University of Minnesota landscape Arboretum, the Fruit Breeding Farm, and our branch experiment stations. Of these, only a few can be recommended without reservations.

In the list of select varieties that have few serious faults, we should consider the Arnold for its red flower buds and semi-dwarf habit of growth; Manchurian for its early snow-white blooms and its extreme hardiness; Cheals Crimson for its compact form and bright red fruits that start to color in August; Flame for its abundance of white flowers and the small red persistent fruits; Katherine with its double pink blossoms and semi-dwarf habit; Liset for its upright habit and small bright red fruits; Radiant for its compact growth habit, the reddish color of its new growth, the bright rosy pink flowers, and the attractive bright red persistent fruits; Red Splendor for its persistent small red fruits; Sargents and Pinkbud Sargents for their dwarf size; and Zumi for its compact form and small bright red fruits.

Vanguard, introduced this spring, may also prove to be a superior variety because of its upright growth and its attractive rosy pink flowers and bright red persistent fruit.

Varieties which are extremely susceptible to apple scab should be avoided in areas where scab is a problem unless one is willing to follow a spray program to control this disease. Desirable varieties except for their susceptibility to scab include Almey, Athabasca, Cowichan, Crimson Brilliant, Echtermeyer, Eley, Hopa, Irene, Pixie, and Wabiskaw and ioensis and coronaria varieties.

Varieties that are very subject to cedar-apple rust should be avoided in areas where this is a problem unless one is willing to spray for the control of this disease. Desirable varieties that are very susceptible to this disease include coronaria 'Nieuvländiana,' ioensis, ioensis 'Plena Nova,' Bechtel, Klehms Improved Bechtel, and Kola.

Fireblight is a serious bacterial disease that attacks many plants in the rose family. Certain varieties of flowering crabapples are extremely susceptible to fireblight and should be avoided where fireblight is a problem. Spraying to control this disease has not been very successful in this area. Susceptible varieties include baccata columaris, sieboldi arborescens, and Van Eseltine.

Other flowering crabapples being tested have not been outstanding in desirable characteristics. Some have been under test for too short a time to fully evaluate them. There are no doubt many desirable varieties that have not yet been tested in this area.

Proposed Changes in the Plant Pest Act

A number of amendments to the Plant Pest Act have been proposed by the Division of Plant Industry, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, to be presented at this session of the legislature.

These amendments were studied by the designated officers of the Minnesota Nurserymen's Association and later approved by the entire group at their annual convention last month. Space does not permit us to state these proposals in full, but we will present them in substance and explain the reasons we have for requesting them.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT deals with that section of the law which provides the Commissioner of Agriculture with the authority to require that the landowner treat or destroy plants, plant pests, or other material in a dangerous pest situation in order to protect the threatened crops or plants of any area within the state.

Presently, the law gives the owner of the land a reasonable time to do this. Under the new proposal, the word reasonable is changed to given. The word given is much more specific and will avoid misunderstanding in the legal interpretation of the law.

ANOTHER CHANGE provides that in cases where a dangerous pest condition prevails similar to that which is outlined above, the landowner is required to pay the costs of any treatment which may be required to be applied.

To us this appears the logical answer to a vexing problem. The entire proposal is patterned very closely after the present weed law which has operated very successfully for a number of years. We anticipate instances where small infestations of an insect or other plant pest outbreak may occur, and certain measures of treatment must be applied to keep the pest from spreading to adjoining areas. To cite a possible example: A farmer from Minnesota goes into a soybean cyst area down South and brings the pest back to his farm. It becomes established on the farm and recognized before it spreads. Certain treatments may be carried out which can eradicate the pest, but, unless we have some means of paying for the job, it is conceivable that it could not be done promptly.

AN ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL allows the Commissioner of Agriculture to stop the sale of any nursery stock which is being sold by a nurseryman or a dealer who has not paid the fees which may be required under the law. It also provides protection for improper application of

this amendment, if it is adopted. This will expedite collection of fees and save the state time and money in doing it.

THE FINAL PROPOSAL gives the commissioner the authority to refuse to issue a dealer's or an agent's certificate for cause. The primary purpose of this amendment is to prevent perennial violators of the Plant Pest Act from obtaining a certificate when it is clearly evident that they do not intend to comply with the law after they have such a certificate.

ARE YOU PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS?

Mrs. Alice F. Smart, Public Relations and Publicity Director
Florida Nursery and Landscape Co.,
Leesburg, Florida

Successful selling is just one phase of a good promotion program, for there are many factors involved in setting the proper atmosphere. All this is included in a good public relations program.

An example of good public relations is a doctor, who when making preparations for an operation, insisted that all blinds be closed tightly in the operating and recovery room. When asked why this was so important, he explained: "There's a fire in the building next door and I don't want the patient to wake up and think the operation a failure!"

Are you as careful in your public relations?

Someone recently described public relations as living the Golden Rule of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" in business and community relations. Public relations is defined in Webster's New International Dictionary as "The activities of an industry, union, corporation, government, or other organization in building and maintaining sound and productive relations with special publics such as customers, employees, stockholders, and the public at large, so as to adapt itself to the environment and interpret itself to society."

Public relations, a comparatively new field, is most important in the art of forming public opinion. It is fast becoming the most important of human skills, for through public relations you CREATE THE IMAGE of your firm in your trade area, and CREATE A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE in which your business will thrive.

Tools of public relations include promotion, publicity, advertising, product promotion, product publicity, press-agentry, propaganda, and institutional advertising. Media include direct mail, radio, television, newspaper ads, magazine ads, and specific special promotions. It is the combination of these, used effectively, that builds sales volume over the years.

Publicity techniques, properly planned, propel the product or company image into many more areas than the largest advertising budget could reach. Often publicity reinforces advertising. Because of their extremely high readership and credibility, publicity releases are often preferable to advertising.

GOOD WILL IS THE ONE ASSET THAT COMPETITION CANNOT UNDERSELL OR DESTROY

Good will is in your hands, and the hands of each and every employee of your firm, no matter what he does. Very often in our regular personnel meetings of our key personnel, we stress this definitely to make each employee feel his responsibility. While the Public Relations Department is responsible for PR in some degree, the responsibility of maintaining good public relations properly is important to each employee and is to his advantage. Public relations is not effective unless it is practiced effectively to each of your publics -- your employees, customers, and community.

Specifically we sell plants, landscaping, fertilizer, insecticides, and maintenance; professionally we must sell ourselves, building a reputation. We also sell quality, guarantee, dependability! These things, once sold through a planned public relations program, are the factors that build business on a level, healthy basis more than mere merchandizing of bargains... Once these qualities are sold, we make our customers not just repeat customers, but friends of our firms who recommend us. Our experience is gained the hard way, sometimes -- but these factors are the basis for good business relations, and are the key to successful business.

LET'S TAKE QUALITY, FOR EXAMPLE.
QUALITY IS PEOPLE!

A service or product will be only as good as the people who handle it.

Quality is a sweeper's broom, which keeps the place neat and clean. It's in a receptionist's smile, which tells a caller he is welcome. It's in a workman's skilled hands, trained for his specific job. It's in a supervisor's guidance, which gives us the opportunity to grow. It's in a manager's promise that his salesmen's promises shall not be idle ones. It's in the imagination of a thinker -- who finds new ways to do things because he is not impressed by precedent. It's in a salesman's pride conveyed from all employees to the customer.

It's in the assembling crew's care to make sure only good plants go out to a job, or into the sales yard. It's in the pride of a planting crew doing the job faster and better. It's in the patient instruction of a planting foreman so a customer will know how to care for the plants he has purchased. It's in the salesman's follow-up call to make sure the work was completed properly and the customer thoroughly satisfied. It's in the office's billing, collecting, and adjusting complaints.

QUALITY IS A PARTNERSHIP WITH GROWERS, PLANTING CREWS, SALESMEN, MAINTENANCE CREWS, SALES YARD PERSONNEL, OFFICE WORKERS, AND EXECUTIVES WORKING TO HELP EACH OTHER PUT OUT THE BEST IN PLANTS AND SERVICE

QUALITY IS ALL OF US -- IF ONE FAILS, WE ALL LOSE AND QUALITY BECOMES A MEANINGLESS WORD.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

C. Gustav Hard
Extension Horticulturist

Special notice should be given to the committee appointments for 1963. Many of these committees will be active during the year. With the legislature in session the legislative committee is keeping in touch with bills affecting the nursery industry.

Read the "Notes to the Nurserymen" section. Your comments will be of interest to the editor.

Follow the series of articles beginning in this issue with "Are You Promoting Your Business?" and apply some of the tips to your own situation.

Nurserymen should mark their calendars for the Horticultural Short Course on March 27 -- 29.

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