

Louisiana's **NURSERYMEN**

Official Publication of the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen, Inc.

Volume 6, Number 1

Spring, 1983



Convington Conference Recap

Article on pages 8-9

Application for L.A.N. Certified Nurserymen's Examination *

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Nursery Affiliation: Owner: _____ Employee: _____

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Scions of the times

Certification exam

Imahara's Nursery will host the next Certified Nurseryman's Examination on May 19. To pre-register, use the form on the opposite page. Those wishing to re-take part of the exam should send \$10 per part, and indicate what part they'll be re-taking. The program will include a review at 9:30 a.m. and the exam at 1:30 p.m., and will be administered at the Florida Boulevard location of Imahara's in Baton Rouge. Anyone wishing to take the test should register by May 10. The newest Louisiana Certified Nurserywoman is Susan Jennings of Cochran's Nursery, Ruston.

Conferences coming

Kent Langlins of Youngsville will conclude his AAN presidency by presiding at the American Association of Nurserymen conference in Montreal, July 16-20, at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel. LAN is planning a group rate travel package to Montreal, which would include the AAN conference and a week of sightseeing in Canada and the Northeast. For more

information, contact LAN Secretary Dr. J.A. Foret at P.O. Box 40024, Lafayette, LA, 70504, or by telephone at (318) 235-4366. The Louisiana Greenhouse Growers Association will hold its annual short course at USL in Lafayette, May 13 and 14. For more information, contact Dr. Robert Barry, (318) 231-6640. TAN will hold its Field Container and Bedding Plant Seminar May 23-24 at the Dallas Sheraton. Write the Texas Association of Nurserymen for more information: 512 East Riverside Drive, Suite 207, Austin, Texas 78704. Dallas will also host the annual TAN-MISSLARK show August 13-16 at the Dallas Convention Center. More on that in the next issue.

Magazine changes

This issue is reaching you about a month early, thus it's in abbreviated form (16 pages). The adjustment in circulation dates will allow the magazine to give you earlier notice of the August TAN-MISSLARK show and the January LAN-MNA conference.

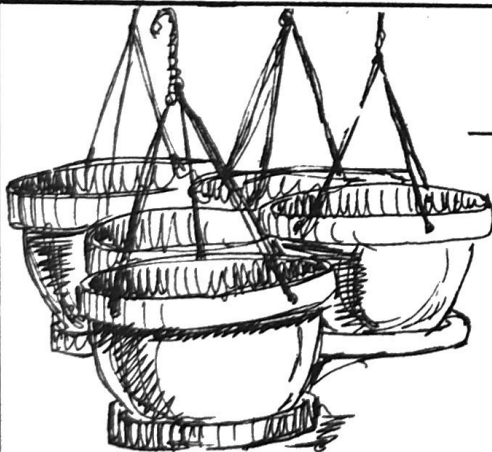
Flower imports increase

Vic Ball reports in the Grower Talks News Alert that U.S. imports of roses increased by 23%, pompons by 18% and bunch carnations by 39%. Ball also notes that several European countries are seeking to circumvent Quarantine 37, which has protected U.S. horticultural crops from pests introduced from foreign-produced plant material.



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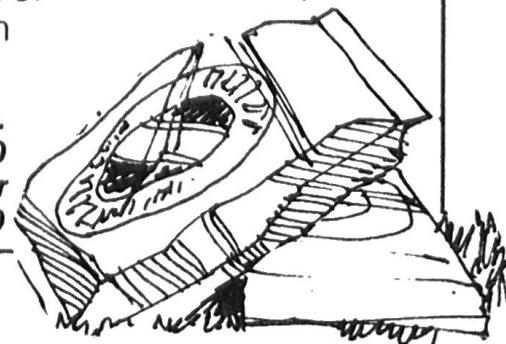
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From the editor

During the past year this nation has weathered its most severe recession since the 1930s. Yet look at the opposite page. Thirty-nine new LAN members. And in the December issue of this magazine, we welcomed 44 new members.

In the past 12 months, the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen has grown by 100 members—a 50 percent increase in membership.

In the past 12 months, LAN member Kent Langlinois became President of the American Association of Nurserymen, LAN President Frank Akin became President of Garden Centers of America.

In the past 12 months, the LAN leadership has been working on your behalf for reform of Louisiana blue laws and workmen's compensation insurance ratings.

Since I've been editor the circulation of this magazine has increased sevenfold. *Louisiana's Nurserymen* now reaches over 1,400 recipients, 450 of whom are receiving this issue as their first.

But lest we get calluses from patting ourselves on the back, Frank Akin has

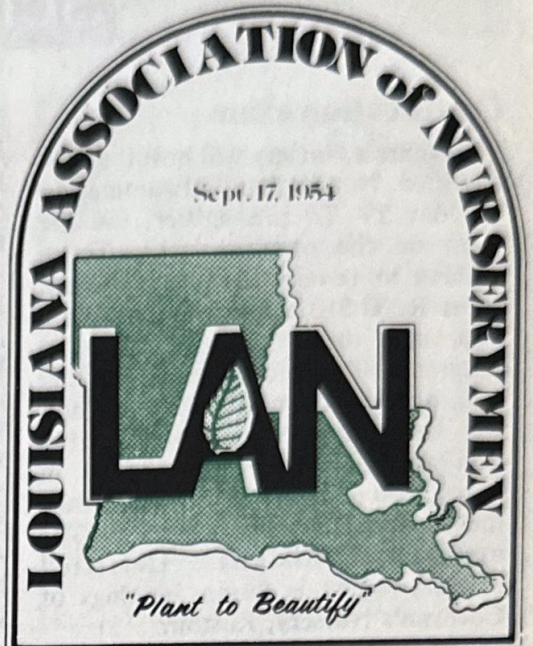
announced the following set of goals for 1983. To reach them we've got to keep moving.

Goal 1: Increase membership to 350 by December 31, 1983. There's strength in numbers, and a greater input of information and ideas will help LAN become number one in the South.

Goal 2: Create an endowed LAN Scholarship and Research Fund (LAN-SAR). Scholarship and research are vital to the continued improvement of the nursery industry. An endowment would be invested permanently to yield annual revenues for these purposes.

Goal 3: Build the LANSAR fund to a \$35,000 endowment in 1983. Such an endowment would require a contribution of \$100 from each LAN member.

Goal 4: Restructure the August trade show. The TAN-MISSLARK show needs to become more attuned to the needs of nurserymen from all of the participating states.



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Simpson Sod

Jim Simpson has the largest lawn in Louisiana...400 acres of it. And if you think mowing is a problem, consider having to water it.

Simpson's lawn, of course, is for sale. He keeps 14 employed full-time to dig and ship it all over the South. Simpson's Sod, just west of Covington, is the largest sod farm in the state.

A Mississippi native, Simpson saw his first sod farm—Martin Beck's Farm in Auburn, Alabama—while a student at Mississippi State University. He started Mid-South Turf with Martin Beck in 1964, and eventually sold that operation to T.L. James Construction in 1970.

After managing Mid-South for two years, he started Simpson Sod. Now he owns all but 40 acres of the farm. Simpson Sod specializes in centipede grass, Tifgreen and Tifway Bermuda.

"This is a labor-intensive business," Simpson says. "It's just a big yard; we're continually cutting it off and rolling it back."

During the summer Simpson irrigates with the equivalent of one-and-a-quarter inches of rain every week. He



Jim Simpson

uses several central pivot sprinkler irrigation systems—devices common to the wheat belt but a novelty in rain-drenched Louisiana. One apparatus sprinkles 1,000 gallons a minute from a 12-inch well.

The growing regimen also requires fertilizing five times a year (seven times for the bermuda grass), and both field and spot spraying with pesticides. Then there's weekly mowing.

"We guaranty every piece to be

perfect," Simpson says, "and we ship year-round. We have two 18-wheelers and a three-axle bobtail truck. Everything is completely palletized."

What's the best lawn grass? Simpson admits he has centipede in his lawn, primarily for its disease resistance, good appearance and low fertilizer and mowing requirements.

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LAN-MNA Confer

More than 200 participated in the joint Louisville, Louisiana, January 8-10. Below are s

Frank Ross



Financial wizard Frank Ross revealed some of his favorite incantations for turning lead into gold, but he regularly admonished nurserymen from getting carried away with tax alchemy.

A partner in a Chicago consulting firm, Ross began his discussions with an introduction to the basics of financial management. He noted that the balance sheet and the income statement were the two primary financial documents of any business. He said there was more than one way to prepare financial statements, and recommended that nurserymen consider preparing both tax records and business books from the same data. The business books should be departmentalized so that management can see where profits and losses originate—for example, the growing, landscape and retail divisions of a nursery.

Ross discussed budgeting in his second presentation to LAN. Calling the budget "one of the most valuable management tools you'll ever have," Ross emphasized that every nurseryman should aim for two goals in preparing a budget: to make a profit, and to have fun.

He said every budget should be realistic, flexible

(it's a guess), capable of modification and current. Nurserymen should compare their monthly income statement to the budget to see if their goals are being met.

The first step in preparing a budget is forecasting profit. "Profit should be greater than what you'd get if you liquidated your net worth and invested it," Ross said.

After figuring profit, the budgeter divides his overhead into fixed and variable costs. "Profit plus overhead equals your gross margin; that's your standard of living," Ross concluded.

He then discussed such other aspects of the budgeting process as predicting capital needs, cash flow, credit and pricing strategies, and the amount of new business needed to meet business goals.

In his third talk, Ross delved into tax avoidance (not evasion), and ways to achieve personal goals with business earnings.

"With a little imagination, there are a whole bunch of ways we can make money with money," Ross said.

He enumerated 19 top management perquisites (perks) which are non-taxable to the employee, and a write-off in the company taxable income. They are: medical reimbursement, accident and health insurance, medical examinations, group life insurance (up to \$50,000), interest free loans (use with caution), business clubs, social clubs, lunch clubs, meals on company premises, and supper money.

Other perks include lodging on company premises, travel, spouse travel, entertainment, financial services, legal services, education, toys (boat, airplane, etc.), and deferred compensation plans.

Ross said the IRS, in evaluating the legitimacy of any claimed write-off, considers whether the perks are conducive for business, non-discriminatory, a condition of employment, and are ordinary and necessary.

Ross allowed there are significant "gray areas" of tax avoidance. He advised everyone to have a CPA with a good imagination, who knows the law but who's willing to take risks.

He discussed such tricks as "free" vacation homes



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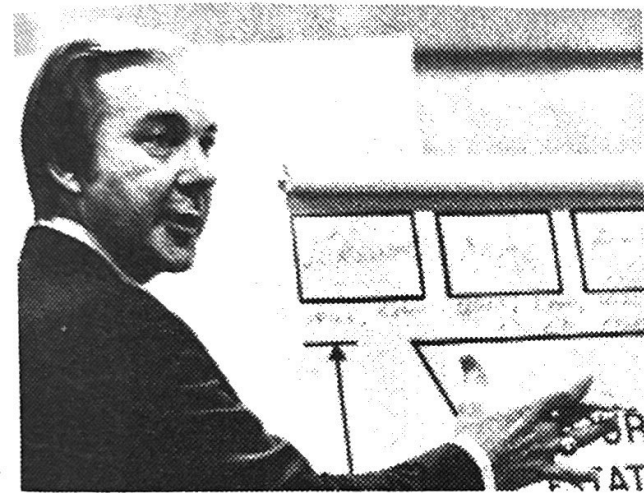
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ence Highlights

Louisiana-Mississippi Conference held in Covington. Summaries of the two principal presentations.

arranged through limited partnership shares in condominiums; as well as tax sheltered investing in oil and gas ventures, fine art and horses. He showed how some businessmen have deducted the costs of boats or camps by chartering or leasing them 100% of the time to their companies. In all cases, he advised nurserymen to follow the law explicitly, keep meticulous records, and get good advice from an attorney or CPA.

Gerald Jackson



When it's time to meet your Maker, you can't take your estate with you. But you can leave more of it for your heirs than Elvis Presley did, according to Gerald Jackson.

An estate planning specialist for the Louisiana Farm Bureau, Jackson told nurserymen that estate settlement costs vary dramatically. Attorney fees, state inheritance taxes, estate taxes, bonding fees, court costs and appraiser fees can consume from 18 to 70 percent of an estate, he said. Elvis lost 73 % of his estate.

"I hope you'll all draw up wills. You'll eliminate lots of headaches for your family," Jackson said.

Jackson defined estate planning as the acquisition, conservation and distribution of property. "Tax avoidance is usually not the number one priority in

estate planning," he noted. "It's desired distribution. Most people want their family as beneficiaries of their estate. Minimizing settlement costs is the number two consideration in estate planning."

The estate planning team usually consists of an attorney and/or a CPA, a trust officer and an insurance agent. Good estate planning can reduce both the time of settlement of an estate, and the costs of that settlement.

Jackson listed four principal types of property covered by estate planning: personal, real, business interests and life insurance. "When a person dies, his property goes into 'temporary receivership' and remains until settlement," Jackson said. The time of settlement can be as brief as six months or as long as ten years.

Jackson reviewed recent legislation regarding estate planning. He noted that the 1976 Tax Reform Act established a unified tax credit for settling an estate. That credit is \$79,300 for 1983, an equivalent of an exemption of \$275,000 of taxable property. During the next four years, that credit will grow from \$96,300 in 1984 to \$121,800 in 1985 to \$155,800 in 1986 to \$192,800 in 1987.

"Prior to 1976 you could give away property to your intended heirs before you died, and pay less tax than had you died owning that property. That's no longer allowed," Jackson said. There is an unlimited marital deduction that allows a person to give all of his or her property to a spouse, but when the spouse dies it becomes taxable, Jackson said. Gifts of property of up to \$10,000 per person per year is allowed under present tax and estate laws, Jackson said. "To qualify as a gift, the donation must be complete. The donor cannot retain the right to use the property, nor can he recapture it or gain income from it."

Jackson discussed four of the most common means of providing cash liquidity for settling an estate. These are savings (an expensive proposition since the savings dollars have already been taxed once as income), forced sale (which usually yields 50 cents on the dollar), borrowing and life insurance (which is never taxed for income tax purposes and can be considered outside the estate).

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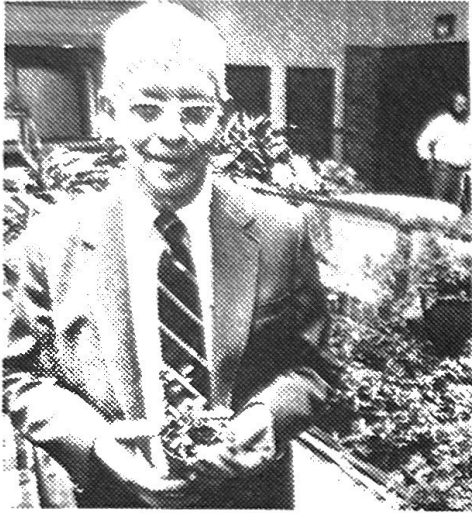
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People



A rose by many other names

Would you buy a used car from this man? How about a miniature rose? **Lou McGuire** of Southaven, Mississippi, sells about 50,000 miniature roses a year, yet he seems to have an even greater supply of anecdotes and irreverent opinions.

His nursery is only two blocks from Memphis, Tennessee, thus it's only fitting that he offers such hybrids as the **Dolly Parton** rose, the **Elvis**, and the **Danny Thomas**. Both **Elvis** and **Danny** are patented, and proceeds from the latter go to the St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Then there's the Bedroom Series: **Any Time, Some Time, Once in a While, Too Tired** and **Headache**. And the autobiographical roses: **Sweet Lou** and **Cuddles**. "My wife doesn't agree with those names," he admits.

His roses comprise only about 20% of a thriving nursery business which is primarily retail. He began propagating roses 17 years ago because he felt he couldn't get the quality he wanted from other nurseries: "It took me two months to get 'em saleable."

The nursery trade is McGuire's second career, one he began after retiring as an electrical engineer. "I saw my friends retire and fall apart. I wanted to get into the nursery business—nurserymen always seemed like nice people.

He's since developed a \$10,000 investment into a \$250,000 business. Yet he umpires his game with lots of unusual ground rules: He won't sell on consignment. He won't bid on government contracts. He accepts only cash, Visa and MasterCard. He does all his own shipping. All roses are \$6.95.

"This is the nicest business I've ever known; I wish I'd gotten into it earlier," McGuire says. His nursery, the Patio and Garden Shop, is on State Line Road, Southaven, Mississippi, 38671.

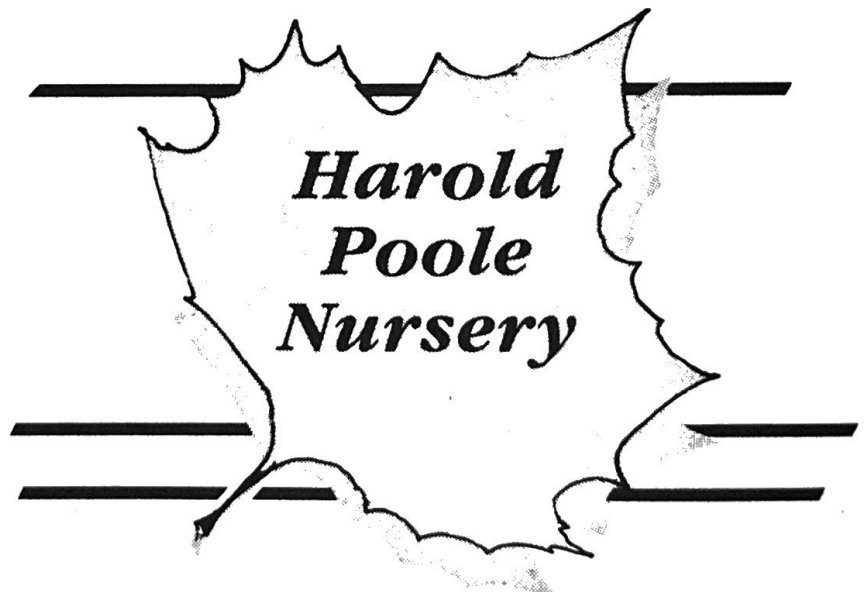
Akin presides again

LAN President **Frank Akin** assumed another presidency earlier this year, as he took over the reins of Garden Centers of America. Seated with him at the GCA meeting in Louisville is Vice President **Paul Uenaka** of Springdale Garden Center, California. Standing, from left, are GCA Director **Dennis McKeown**, Natrop Garden Stores, Ohio; Secretary-treasurer **Robert Heifner**, Heifner Nursery, Kansas; Director **John Teas**, Teas Nursery Company, Texas; and Director-at-large **J. D. Causey**, Causey's Garden Center, North Carolina.



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LAN - MNA Conference honorees

Dr. Walter Davis received the MNA Annual Service Award, a double-barrelled token of MNA esteem for his years of work as secretary of that association. In December, 1982, Davis retired as MNA secretary, and also retired as horticulture specialist for the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service, a position he'd held since 1972. Dr. Davis had also owned and managed commercial greenhouse businesses, and had held teaching positions with Mississippi State University and Gulf Coast Junior College at Perkinston.



George Johnson was recognized as Louisiana's Nurseryman of the Year. The Forest Hill grower entered the business in 1948, co-owned a nursery from 1955 to 1970, then formed his own nursery in 1970. Johnson is a past president of LAN, and is currently on the LAN Board of Directors and the TAN-MISLARK Trade Show Policy Committee. He is a member of Rotary, and a board member of the Bank of Lecompte. George's son Murphy is also a board member of LAN. With Johnson is LAN president Frank Akin, right.



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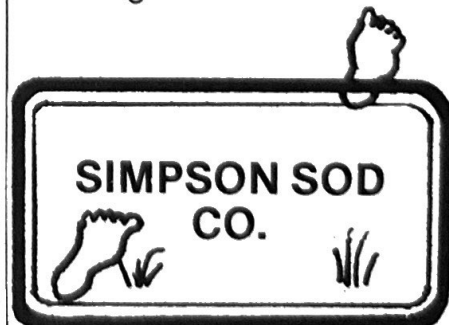
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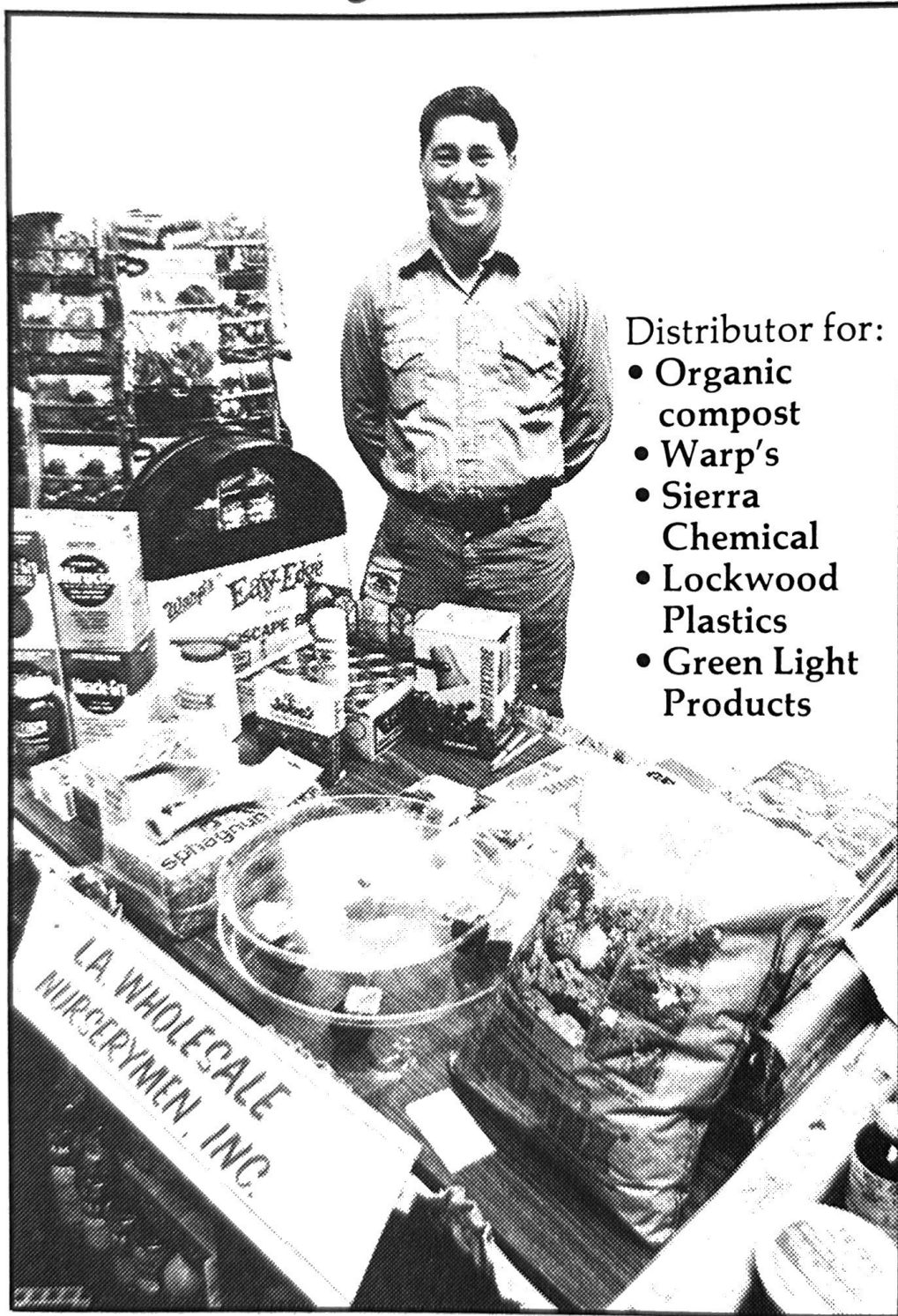
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LAN scholarship alumna succeeds with Covington nursery

Metairie native Pat Stelz entered Southeastern Louisiana University later in life than your average college freshman, but with a definite goal. She and her husband Bob wanted to get into the nursery business.

"We'd had two daughters, I'd worked to send Bob through school, then my time came," she remembers. As a sophomore at SLU, she won a scholarship from LAN—it was her first scholarship but not her last, since she maintained a 4.0 average throughout college.

When she graduated in 1980, her college preparation was put to an immediate test. "We started out thinking it would take many years to get wholly into the nursery business, but in the middle of our first spring we realized it was an all-or-nothing proposition."

The Stelzes began growing bedding plants in a greenhouse Bob had constructed adjacent to their home near Covington. Demand for their product, and the demands of producing bedding plants, were both greater than they had anticipated.

"Growing vegetable and ornamental plants is not as simple as many phases of horticulture," Pat acknowledges. "You've got to be willing to put in seven days a week."



Pat and Bob Stelz

They did. Bob left his job as a steel detailer, and it was sink or swim for Stelz's Nursery. They swam.

"We doubled our greenhouse space from 1981 to 1982, and this year we've doubled again, to four greenhouses. I don't want to double again next year, though. We'd like to remain small enough to maintain consistent quality.

We sell primarily to garden centers in the New Orleans, Covington, Slidell and Bogalusa areas—it's a good arrangement and we get good turnover."

They sell about half vegetable and half ornamental plants, with tomatoes and impatiens as the major items. Four part-time workers help in the busy season.

Prairie Wholesale Nursery

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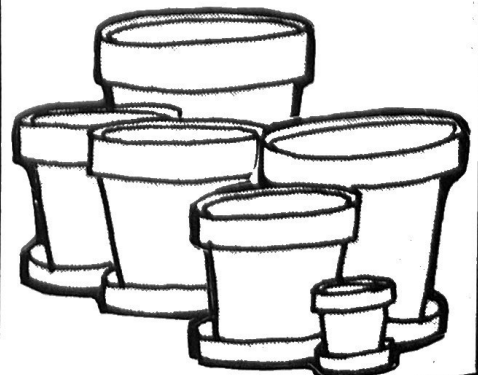
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source of vegetable plant damage still unknown

Across the state, growers of vegetable plants are in a quandary about what is making their plants die. As this publication went to press, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture was, too.

Plant deaths have been reported from Oak Grove, St. James Parish Erath, Lafayette, and several other sites—including Angola Prison.

Since the groups who have lost plants were using potting soil from different sources, many have speculated that the problems originate with the pots themselves. All were 2¼" Jiffy pots. However, no other area in the country is experiencing the plant kill problems, and Jiffy pots are sold nationwide. Furthermore, some of the pots from problems sites were 1982 carryover pots, from shipments that caused no problems last year, according to Ed Swallow, marketing director for Jiffy. Swallow said that gin trash, which was common to much of the potting soil, is under investigation as a potential source of contamination, too.

Dan Devenport of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture said that he had collected samples from nine different sites of plant kills. He said that although potting soil and peat pots

were not regulated by the Department of Agriculture, he had turned over the samples to the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service for further study.

Hershel Morris, a chemist for the extension service, said that tests he had run for the presence of heavy metals or salts in the pots had revealed no lethal levels of either.

Some growers have speculated that the pots could have been contaminated during shipping, by a herbicide spill. The LSU tests would not reveal herbicide in the pots.

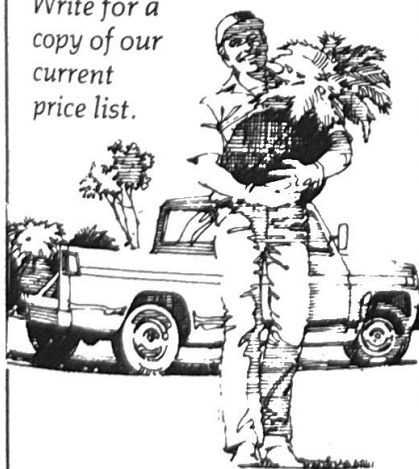
However, the manufacturer of the pots has commissioned more extensive tests at the University of Georgia. Dr. Parshal Bush, pesticide residue chemist for the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, said that he had run tests for three families of herbicides: triazines (Sencor, Simazine, Atrazine and Propazine), dinitroanilines (Treflan), and Ronstar. These tests revealed the presence of none of these herbicides. At press time, the Georgia chemists were testing for phenoxy herbicides (2-4 D and its cousins).

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