



Louisiana Nursery News

JULY/AUGUST 1999

The Newsletter of the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen

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Presidential Affairs

by Rick Webb



As your current Louisiana Association of Nurserymen President, I wish to thank the membership, the Board of Directors, and especially my family for allowing this to be so.

The recent year has seen significant changes to the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen. This past January saw the inaugural Gulf States Horticultural Expo as our winter trade show. This was and should continue to be a real success! Also the past year saw a return to a one-year term for the Officers of the Association. The relationship with the LSU Agricultural Center through Dr. Allen Owings and the able contribution of our Administrative Assistant Laura Crnko and the continued hard work of a talented Board of Directors has taken some of the importance away from who the current President is. Also, the financial foundation of the group that was laid over the past decades has come to strength through funded, dedicated, interest-generating reserves for Research and Scholarship; wise investments of current cash; and solid revenues from dues, book sales and the trade show. It is a good time to be President.

All this being said, it is still important for me to set ahead some goals that can make the LAN better. I brought these before the Board at an earlier meeting and now will suggest the membership consider the following ideas.

Name change to Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association: Reasons to change the name do not include increasing membership. Several other recent name-changed associations reported very little membership changes. However the reasons do include:

1. To reflect current membership that includes 50% employed primarily as landscape contractors and in maintenance.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept 9-10 Certified Nursery Professional Review & Exam
City Park Botanical Garden,
New Orleans, LA
- Oct 2-6 IPPS-SR Annual Meeting,
Adam's Mark Hotel,
Mobile, AL
- Oct 20 Landscape Maintenance Workshop
Calcasieu Agricultural Center,
Lake Charles, LA

**GULF STATES
HORTICULTURAL
EXPO**

January 28 -29, 2000

(Education Sessions - January 27th)

**Mobile Convention Center
Mobile, AL**

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1999 LAN Officers, Board & Committees

OFFICERS

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1st Vice-President

Wanda Chase, Imahara's Landscape, 225/ 767-2250

Treasurer

Randy Bracy, Bracy's Nursery, 504/ 748-4716

Executive Secretary

Allen Owings, LSU Agricultural Center, 225/ 388-2222

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Robby Barry, Barry's Nursery, 318/ 662-5318

Chris Bollich, Chris' Nursery, 318/ 748-6513

Dan Devenport, Dan's Nursery, 318/ 898-9295

Robbie Dupont, Dupont Nursery, 225/ 659-2822

Mike Hoogland, Hoogland's Nursery & Landscape, 318/ 746-8655

David Lowery, Windmill Nurseries, 504/ 796-9655

Pat Newman, Folsom Nursery, 504/ 796-3088

Frances Thorne, Thorne's Plant Farm, 318/ 462-2914

Associate Director

Andy Zimlich, Lerio Corporation, 800/ 457-8113

Director/ Research & Education

Dan Gill, LSU Agricultural Center, 504/ 482-1107

Administrative Assistant

Laura Crnko, 225/ 667-4744

COMMITTEES

Education Committee

Chris Bollich, Ed Bush, Dan Gill, Allen Owings, Wanda Chase

Executive Committee

Randy Bracy, Wanda Chase, Gerald Foret, Rick Webb, Allen Owings

Finance Committee

Randy Bracy, Wanda Chase, Allen Owings

Louisiana Farm Bureau Nurserymen's Committee

Dan Devenport, Robby Barry

Membership Committee

Chris Bollich, Laura Crnko, David Lowery

Research Priority Committee

Robby Barry, Dan Devenport, Mike Levy, Pat Newman, Pat Steltz

Website Manager

Gary Marmillion

ANLA Governor and ANLA Lt. Governor

Wanda Chase, Margie Jenkins

GSHE Representatives

Wanda Chase, Rick Webb

TAN/MISSLARK Trade Show Representative

AllenOwings

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2. To relate our association to the buying public as the "Go-to-guys" for information, service, and quality standards.
3. To represent a unified front on any affairs affecting our industry.

Public awareness projects: It is clear to me that almost every problem we face today is rooted in perceived and actual received value of our products and services. Our association currently is providing good and growing efforts toward research, scholarships and inter-trade shows, but our public service projects are just starting. What and how to improve:

❖ **"Put your two-cents worth in" program:** A program to get people planning new construction to budget and set aside a minimum of 2% of the total budget of their project for landscape improvements. Show photos of with-and-without-landscaping buildings and parks. Quote real estate data that show the roll-over of investment dollars in landscaping at point-of-sale and ease of leasing landscaped commercial properties; quote energy cost reductions from well-sited correct trees; discuss the "social" value of being "Green", air pollution reduction, etc.; maybe even discuss the beauty of the garden.

❖ **An awareness campaign:** Public education possibly through a video production explaining our industry and its impact to run on "free" T.V. (cable access channels, public service announcements on broadcast and cable T.V., at other meetings around the state; an audio spot announcement for public service advertisements on radio; stock articles for print media weekly columns by county agents or for Spring and Real Estate special sections that could feature our programs; a Speakers Bureau of association members to be available to speak at any function, i.e. Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, home builders, home shows, garden clubs, etal, where the public will listen to us talk up "Green".

❖ **Stress licensed professionals:** It is imperative that we get the buying public (as well as industry people) to demand a licensed professional to provide their horticultural materials and expertise with warranties; insurance; adequate and recent training; and service and quality, and expect to pay a fair price. Also, we need to mention the Louisiana Certified Nursery Professional (LCNP) program that proves the individual service-provider has participated in continuing education.

❖ **Home and garden show booths:** At the public hort shows around the state, our association would have available public information through speakers, statistics, or audio-visual aids to promote the perceived and actual value of our business.

❖ **Memorials:** Every family in the state (nation ?, world ?) could be persuaded to plant a tree, donate money to a public greenspace planting, or in someway enhance their environment to mark the change of the century and millennium. When there is a death in a family in addition

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to cut flowers or donations to research, why not donate money to a public park for landscape improvements? People will pay to have a brick with their name on it that doesn't do a thing except get stepped on.

Enhancement of current efforts:

♣ **Louisiana Select:** Great program that is currently underway. Possible enhancements are increasing public awareness of the program (see above); establishing longer range plans to allow production and distribution of releases; panel input from around the state on plant selections.

♣ **LCNP:** Great program that is currently active. Possible enhancements are increasing awareness (see above); starting a continuing education (CEU) program to upgrade older and current certified professionals; developing a logo for retail centers and landscape pros to display at point-of-purpose that would be easily identified with quality, etc. and promote the association's website.

♣ **The Website (www.lan.org):** This should be widely known as the Answer Place for environmental horticulture in Louisiana, from plant materials to planting and care. The general public is the most common respondent (according to one current webpager) to our site. We could list members that serve the public with search features for different areas of the state, the licensed professionals by category, and LCNP's; or promote the Louisiana Select Internet is the future of all communications.

I invite discussion with any and all on these goals and others the Board should hear. Please contact me straight-away. All of this, I know, will not get done right away, though I am confident that, while we will continue with our research, scholarship and trade show work and as this year continues and the next presidents step up, we will, through the collective process, continue to make the changes for the best!

THANKS !
Rick Webb

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SNA '99 - Louisiana Exhibitors

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The 6th Biennial Southern Plant Conference



**September 23-25, 1999
Richmond, VA**

Sponsored by the:
Southern Nursery Association and the
Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association



In Cooperation with SNA's 16 Participating State Associations and Major universities and extension services across the southeast...

The 6th Biennial Southern Plant Conference, co-sponsored by the Southern Nursery Association and the Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association, will be held at the Richmond Marriott, 500 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA. The conference will run from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM on Thursday, September 23 (followed by a special reception at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden) and from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM on Friday, September 24 (followed by a Question & Answer Session). On Saturday, September 25, attendees will have an opportunity to enjoy a special tour of Shreckhise Nurseries (Grottoes, VA) and Saunder's Brothers, Inc. (Piney River, VA). The day will end with a tour of Monticello - Thomas Jefferson's homeplace.

- New plant varieties and new applications for old cultivars
- New and superior cultivars adapted to a wide variety of growing conditions
- Nationally and internationally recognized plant experts
- Leading growers and researchers from across the country
- Intensive 2-Day Format and Optional Tour
- Unique Plant Auction



*Don't miss this exciting event!
For registration information contact:*

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Voice: 770.953.3311 • Fax: 770.953.4411 • SNA Infoline: 770.953.INFO
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How To Build A Staff of Experts

Try taking a unique approach to building a staff of experts. Unless your product mix is very limitless, it's unrealistic to ask your staff to assume responsibility for learning all about the facts and features of each and every product they sell. It's more realistic—and much more effective—to ask them to focus on one particular category. Really become an expert on that particular type of merchandise, service, or whatever it is they're assigned to master, then (this is the key!) have them share their knowledge with their co-workers in a formal learning session. Special store meetings can be called before each salesperson's presentation.

This system has several benefits. First of all, the whole staff is launched into a learning mode and a little competitive spirit develops. Salespeople tend to make sure that their presentation is impressive. Finally, you'll never see a more receptive audience than your salespeople will provide for their peer/presenter.

Tell it to the peers

If you expect your salespeople to confidently communicate product information to customers, then it's perfectly reasonable to ask them to make "trial run" product knowledge presentations to their peers. Give them the floor for a designated amount of time (30-45 minutes) to thoroughly acquaint their peers with the category they've been studying. They may be a little bit more nervous in this setting than they would be on the selling floor because everyone's watching and listening, but it requires no more skill than is required to make effective presentations to customers.

Be specific

It's important to provide very specific guidelines to your staff before they begin their assignment. Any facts that are to be shared with customers or co-workers must first be submitted to the manager for verification and approval. This authorization procedure is your way of ensuring that no incorrect information is disseminated. It also allows you to monitor the salesperson's progress throughout the project and offer guidance and helpful suggestions along the way.

It's advisable to insist that product information be communicated in the form of features and benefits, and in simple, easy-to-understand terms. If it's absolutely necessary to use industry jargon or highly technical terms, the jargon or terms must be defined using language that completely uninformed customers would understand.

Other tips

Here are the other things you should provide to make this product knowledge-building endeavor a grand success:

◆ **A deadline** for submission of the information to be shared with the staff, a final completion date, and a presentation date.

◆ **A list of research resources**, including the public library, the store's "library" of reference books, trade magazines, topic-related consumer magazines, product brochures, advertisements, vendor-supplied fact sheets, training manuals, videos, and other educational material. Also consider trade associations, buying groups, and the Internet.

◆ **An information gathering outline** that salespeople follow to ensure that they gather data that directly pertains to selling the merchandise. This could be composed as a series of questions that the salesperson must answer.

Through these "home grown" product knowledge seminars, your entire staff will be treated to a wonderful and valuable learning experience. Also, you'll have a designated expert in each category who can be consulted when a customer has a tough question, or when the sale needs to be turned over to the most knowledgeable salesperson in a particular category.

To institute ongoing follow-up, consider publishing your store's own quarterly product-knowledge newsletter. Each salesperson will be responsible for contributing the "fast breaking news" and updates related to their area of expertise.



This article was provided by the American Nursery & Landscape Association (formerly the American Association of Nurserymen) and its grower, retail and landscape divisions, in partnership with your state association. For more information on ANLA, call 202/789-2900; fax 202/789-1893.

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Senate
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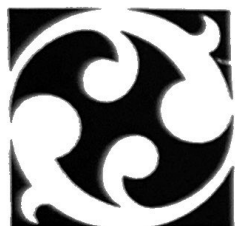
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Congratulations !

Walter Imahara, Imahara's Landscape, Baton Rouge, was named president of the Southern Nursery Association during the association's annual membership meeting recently held in Atlanta.

Also at SNA, **Dennis McCloskey**, Windmill Nursery, Folsom and **Frank Akin** were named honorary members of SNA. Both have served as presidents of LAN.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

UPDATE

JAPANESE BEETLE

This summer marked the second year of LDAF survey activity for Japanese beetle (JB). Last year, 20 traps were set out as a spot check for possible introduction of this beetle, known to be a pest of ornamental nursery stock and turf in the Northeast and Midwest U.S. This year nearly 100 traps were placed at nursery grower, nursery stock dealer and turf grower locations across Louisiana. The purpose of the trap survey is to determine whether JB is being introduced into Louisiana and if so, to determine the possible pathways of introduction. Currently, Louisiana is considered "JB-free."

Reports from surrounding areas indicate that the JB populations may be heavier this year nationwide. The state of Mississippi, typically free of JB, has reported a number of multiple trap captures in selected counties, including several counties adjacent to Louisiana's border.

Results of this year's LDAF trap survey should be available in the fall.

FLORIDA BROKER FORM

During the past two years LDAF has encountered a number of problems with nursery stock entering the state without proper certification. Many of these instances involve Florida stock, which often is brokered into Louisiana. A recent agreement with Florida may help solve the problem.

A "Consolidation Form" for Florida brokers now has been approved for use by LDAF. This form allows a broker to list pertinent certification information such as burrowing nematode and lethal yellowing status for all of his/her sources without revealing names of sources to the customer. A copy of the form will be left at each drop point so LDAF inspectors can spot check paperwork during routine inspections. Periodic audits of the forms by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services personnel will insure the form is used properly.

This form protects broker source lists while providing required LDAF certification. It should simplify LDAF inspections while better protecting our state's nursery industry. Use of the form will begin later this fall.*



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