



Bulletin

The Information Source for the Floriculture Industry Since 1929

CIRCULATE

Overwintering Perennials Outside

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Editor's Note: This is the first of three articles on the topic of overwintering perennials. This month's subject is traditional overwintering outdoors under foam, blanket, or other covering. Overwintering in traditional greenhouses will come next month, followed by overwintering in retractable or open-roof structures.

Overwintering perennials outside is a learning experience every year. There is so much that growers cannot control. The weather dramatically affects the way your

crop looks in spring. Each year when we uncover, we take note of what the winter was like. Did we have snow cover all winter? Did the temperatures fluctuate from freezing to thawing? Did we have a long warm spell in January? These are conditions that will determine how our crop comes out in March.

Over the past 20 years, we have experimented, trying to determine which varieties can successfully be covered outside from December through March and look good, and which varieties must go into polyhuts and greenhouses with heat. My seed sowing schedule and plug production for plants to be overwintered outside is dictated by the information

gained from previous years and the growth habits of the cultivars to be wintered outside.

Starting in June, plugs are potted into 1-quart pots and placed on a stone production area, in 100-foot beds. By October, any plant to be overwintered outside must be planted and growing in order to have a well-established plant.

When the fall brings cooler nights and heavy dew in the mornings, we need to spray fungicides on a strict schedule. Plants must be healthy and disease-free when they are covered. We

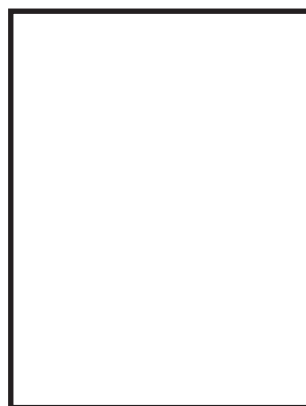
also start putting out bait/poison for mice and voles. We have had years where we have uncovered in March and found entire beds destroyed by rodents.

Shearing is an important part of successfully overwintering perennials. Certain cultivars need to be cut back in October to produce a heavy crown and a full plant when it is covered. Some cultivars' growth habits and dormancy characteristics dictate whether or not and when they need to be sheared.

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MEDIA MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

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The bedding plant industry has been reluctant to embrace the garden media and support it with information, sample plants, or plain-old "friendliness." This reluctance is changing as retailers become more marketing-oriented and realize the impact of a positive relationship with the media.

One of the reasons for the success of the AAS organization and AAS Winners is their relationship with the media. Since it began in 1933, AAS has allocated considerable resources to provide press releases, images, and contact with garden media.

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OFA Mission Statement

To support and promote floriculture professionals through lifelong learning, career enhancement, and public awareness.



OHIO FLORISTS' ASSOCIATION

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2001 OFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2001

Dennis M. Kirven

OFA Executive Director - retired April 2002

FINANCES

The audited financial statement for the period January 1 to December 31, 2001 is included on page 5.

Review of 2001 Financial Statements: Includes Ohio Florists' Association, a 501(c)(5) Tax Exempt (not for profit) organization, and OFA Services Inc., its (for profit) subsidiary.

The audited financial statement for the period January 1 to December 31, 2001 has been presented to the OFA Board. Review of 2001 Financial Statements: Includes Ohio Florists' Association, a 501(c)(5) Tax Exempt (not for profit) organization and OFA Services Inc., its (for Profit) subsidiary.

The 2001 year-end consolidated statements of financial position show the following assets and liabilities changes. Total assets were up \$45,818, compared to the decrease of \$117,877 between 2000 and 1999. Our cash balance in the CNBC checking account increased \$80,491. Investment in the "Reserve" grew from \$387,755 to \$391,076. The investment split recommended by the Finance Committee's investment sub-committee is 37% CDs, 25% Vanguard 500 Index Fund, 20% Vanguard Money Market, and 18% Bank Money Market Sweep Account. The Vanguard Money Market and CDs fared well earning \$18,024. The Vanguard Index 500 did not fare as well declining by \$14,704. Building/office furniture and equipment decreased \$44,883 due to depreciation and write-offs of office equipment that was fully depreciated.

On a consolidated basis, total revenues were \$2,232,718, above prior year by \$241,427 from \$1,991,291. As you can see we have had a relatively good year. Trade Show booth sales were up \$147,186 due to the increase in exhibit booth fee and the number of exhibit booths sold. Publication sales were up in 2001 due to the release of the interior plantscape and growth regulator books. Investment income was down \$18,850 due to fluctuations in the stock market. In addition we had 10,122 attendees at the 2001 Short Course.

Total expenses were \$2,243,128, up from \$2,107,137. Short Course expenses were flat over prior year. Income over expenses showed a loss of \$10,410, versus a loss of \$115,846 in 2000. Our 2001 budgeted excess over expenses was \$25,561. This difference was mainly due to unanticipated investment loss and depreciation.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of December 2001, the total OFA membership (including affiliates) stood at 3,701 versus 3,448 - an increase of 253 members or 7.3 percent. This does include the 320 former BPI members that we provided initial free OFA membership as part of the dissolution of BPI agreement. This is the fourth consecutive year with a gain in membership since 1997, when membership last declined. Much credit for this reversal goes to Melinda Howells, our membership manager. Her promotional leadership efforts, the strong support of the OFA Membership Committee, and the on-going support of the OFA staff continue to result in increasing membership.

The total paid membership of 3,617 compared to 3,430 in 2000 was up 187 members. Of the total paid membership, 1,770 (48%) were Active Growers compared to 1,655 the previous year; 1,048 were Active Non-Growers (28%) versus 999 in 2000; Associates were 796 (22%) versus 717 in 2000; and Honorary and Affiliates were at 84 versus 77 the prior year. Of the total paid membership 846 (23%) were from Ohio; 2,580 (70%) were from other U.S. states; and 275 (7%) are from foreign countries. Of those 275 from foreign countries, 188 members were from Canada – up from 150 in 2000, or a 25% increase.



OFA BULLETIN

The *Bulletin* continues to be the membership's top-rated member service. It contains timely original technical industry and management/marketing articles. The *Bulletin* continues to be the Association's best-known, continuously available educational tool.

OFA continues to fine-tune the *Bulletin* to better satisfy the diverse OFA member needs. This is accomplished through member input, surveys, the OFA Publications Committee, and the OFA publications team. The Publications Committee meets twice a year and is chaired by Peter Konjoian. The staff publications team is chaired by Michelle Gaston with Steve Carver, Laura Kunkle, Dennis Kirven, Peter Konjoian, Melanie Wilt (resigned in August 2001), and Cheryl Cuthbert (replaced Melanie in October 2001), and meets up to three times per year. The success of this effort is due to the continued leadership of Michelle Gaston.

This year, the team also used the results of a fax-back member survey sent to 1,710 randomly selected members. A total of 437 responses were received and summarized with the help of Bridget Behe of Michigan State University. A couple highlights of the summary were that 86 percent of the respondents read 50 percent or more of the *Bulletin* and approximately 50 percent read the *Bulletin* immediately or within two days of receiving it. Overall, the survey revealed that most readers are very pleased with the content and quality of the *Bulletin*.

Another addition made to the *Bulletin* during the past few years has been using color in some issues. In 2001, the color option was used in five issues in articles where its addition results in more effective communication and presentation.

Because the Association provided the leadership to fund the D.C. Kiplinger Chair at The Ohio State University, we provide OSU and the current chairholder an opportunity to update the industry across the country in a column dubbed the "Kip Korner."

The monthly "Forum" allows industry representatives an opportunity to provide OFA members with ideas, opinions, and information of importance to the industry. The *Bulletin* also continues to provide coverage of industry legislative and environmental issues.

Several years ago, a partnership was developed with the Michigan Floral Association to provide their magazine, which contains more specific information on floral design and floral shop management, as an option to our members. We later also made it available on a subscription basis so members could order it in addition to the *Bulletin*. In 2001, 314 opted to receive or subscribe to that magazine. Currently these

subscribers reside in 38 states and five foreign countries.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The outreach activities are designed to take educational opportunities closer to the

diverse, widely geographically distributed membership by cooperating or "partnering" with other groups to increase educational opportunities, yet reduce the duplication among associations.

In 2001, OFA conducted the following outreach educational activities:

- Garden Center Merchandising and Display Seminar at Berns in Middleton, Ohio
- Interior Plantscape Pest Control Seminar at Krohn's Conservatory in Cincinnati, Ohio
- Retail Wedding Workshops – Toledo, Cleveland, and Columbus (x2), Ohio and Indianapolis, Indiana
- Plant Growth Regulator Seminars – Cheshire, Connecticut and Chicago, Illinois
- Retail Holiday Workshops – Hamilton and Columbus, Ohio

OFA SHORT COURSE – EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS AND TRADE SHOW

The Ohio Florists' Association's Short Course and Trade Show continues to be the Association's best-known, educational member and industry service. The event has earned the reputation of providing the most extensive, affordable range of information and usable ideas along with the best-known, all-industry floricultural Trade Show. The Short Course is known as "U.S. Floriculture's Premier Educational and Trade Show Event." In fact, in the eyes of most in the industry, the OFA Short Course ranks third after the HortiFair in Holland and the IPM show in Germany.

In 2001, the OFA Short Course attendance was again more than 10,000 with 10,122 attending the Trade Show. Of these, 3,468 (35%) also attended the educational sessions versus 3,238 (32%) the previous year. Attendees for the event came from 49 states (9,346); 776 from foreign countries (496 from Canada and 280 from other countries). In all, 190 seminars were conducted by 180 industry professionals.

The 2001 Trade Show exhibit sales were once again up significantly! Exhibit sales of 1,218 exceeded the 2000 Trade Show by 105 spaces. The 112 New Varieties spaces were up by 16 spaces, and 46 companies exhibited in the New Products Display.

Success with our all-industry Trade Show doesn't just happen. It continues to be successful due, in a large part, to the leadership of Wendy McAtee, our OFA Trade Show manager with 18 years of experience with this event. She knows and understands the exhibitor base, which results in their continued interest and cooperation. In addition, the OFA Trade Show Committee provides insights and feedback for continually improving the show.

Also adding to the Trade Show's success is that exhibitors continue to select the OFA Short Course to introduce new equipment and products. The event's timing after the spring season and before the fall ordering season is also most fortuitous. Attendees know how successful their spring season has been and have adequate time to place orders for their next season. The Trade Show is also blessed with its association

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 3

with the Short Course's educational seminars. A past attendee survey confirmed that the educational sessions are complimentary to the Trade Show. Both parts of the event are of equal importance for exhibitors and attendees. The event is a true one-stop opportunity for education and purchasing for exhibitors and attendees alike.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Since the Ohio Florists' Association, which was incorporated in 1931, has its "roots" with The Ohio State University and its early Secretary-Treasurers/Executive Directors were floriculture faculty, the Association has continued to support floriculture-related programs in teaching, research, Extension, and student activities. It is estimated that the Association and the Foundation that it created, the Ohio Floriculture Foundation, have contributed in excess of \$2.5 million to OSU.

Another educational activity associated with the University for any eligible Ohio adult is the Leadership Education and Development (L.E.A.D.) program. The Association has provided one-half tuition for one floriculture representative since its inception. The most recent representative for L.E.A.D. class IX is Craig Graf of Graf Growers, Akron, Ohio.

The Association also provides two undergraduate scholarships for floriculture majors each year. These \$500 scholarships are in support of the D.C. Kiplinger and Jerry Robertson Memorial Awards.

OFFICE ACTIVITIES

Historically, the Association's office has grown from locations in the homes of the early Association leaders, to a rented office in 1984, to a purchased building in 1990. (Figures 1 and 2). The 7,500-square-foot office building at 2130 Stella Court was paid off in 1995. Making this possible was the payment of building pledges by 137 OFA members and the judicious fiscal management by your Association staff and its Finance Committee.

This year was one of those that did see a change in staff, but it occurred after the 2001 Short Course. The most tenured of the staff – Gaston, McAtee, and Carver – along with Kunkle, Howells, and Savoia constitute the Association's "core" staff who have a history of pulling together and providing the leadership to orient and train newer staff members, helping them to quickly become contributing team members. The newer staff members, such as Melanie Wilt and Libby Streamer, rapidly assumed their duties and along with the others became the effective team that successfully provides the services OFA members expect, including the OFA Short Course. As I have said before, the total team contribution is always greater than the sum of their individual strengths!

The 2001 OFA Team, their start date of full-time employment, current position, and/or previous positions held follow:

Michelle Gaston – (January 1, 1993); Director of Association Projects (May 1999) – Acting Assistant Executive Director (April 1997)

Dr. Steven Carver – (May 31, 1994); Technical Education Manager & System Administrator (May 1998)

Wendy McAtee – (February 1994); Trade Show Manager

Laura Kunkle – (March 1998); Technology Communications Manager – Communication Specialist (May 1999)

David Savoia – (May 1998); Accounting Manager

Melinda Howells – (April 1998); Membership Manager
Melanie Wilt – (January 1999); Media Relations Manager – Assistant Communications Coordinator. Resigned August 2001
Libby Streamer – (March 2000); Office Support Assistant
Cheryl Cuthbert – (Re-hired October 2001); Media Relations Manager. Previously employed by OFA 1994-98.

Dennis M. Kirven – (January 1, 1993); Executive Director

The Association has been able to accomplish much with this staff, not just because of their background and experience, but because of their sincere interest, dedication, and devotion to OFA's educational effort and serving the membership in the manner that they would wish to be served themselves. This is a true teamwork approach, each being a true manager and financially carrying true line item profit and loss responsibility. In addition, each also carries either support or assistant responsibility for other duties, providing back-up and additional expertise to others on the staff.

As important as the paid staff's contribution has been to the Association's history of successes including its Short Course, all of our projects would be impossible without the support and participation of the member volunteers as well as industry and academic supporters. A prime example is the July 2001 Short Course. In addition to the facilitators and other volunteers, another 120 volunteers and seasonal workers helped the small staff to effectively conduct an event of the magnitude of the Short Course.

Other part-timers serving so capably in the OFA office and at the event included the familiar names of Mary Jane Weals, Emilie Miller, Jean Savoia, DeAnne Kirven, and Niki Howells.



Figure 1. The OFA office sign.



Figure 2. The front of the OFA office.

Each provided support, guidance, and dedication equivalent to the core staff. Destination Management and Marketing's (DM&M) principals, Woody and Linda King, successfully helped OFA handle parking and hotel shuttle transportation to the compliments of the hospitality and attendees alike.

This type of commitment by the "regulars," "part-timers," volunteers, and support vendors continues to make possible the record-breaking event we conduct each year.

Because of the Association's originating history with The Ohio State University, OFA continues to receive growing support from more OSU faculty each year. Notable faculty include Claudio Pasian, Peg McMahon, Jim Metzger, Steve Nameth, Richard Lindquist, Charles Behnke, Gary Anderson, Terry Lanker, and Bob McMahon as well as their respective department chairs and college administrators.

We should also note other related university and academic supporters such as Charles Powell with the Plant Health Advisory Services and Peter Konjoian with Konjoian's Floriculture Education Services. Other examples of partnering on related university floriculture educational efforts include the Floriculture Industry Roundtable of Ohio (FIROO), which is jointly funded by OFA and FIRST. This group of more than 20 Extension agents and specialists in a broad range of disciplines provide floriculture education and support to firms and individuals in Ohio and throughout the Midwest.

The OFA Executive Committee and the elected Board of Directors continue to give us the flexibility to accomplish our educational efforts. In addition, they provide the staff with large doses of support, understanding, and encouragement.

Volunteer assistance by our members and strong (volunteer) leadership continue to be the key to our educational success and record of service to members. Our OFA committee members and chairpersons continue to provide the staff with information, guidance, and actual assistance in filling the gaps to make OFA a true member- and committee-driven organization.

The foundation has been successfully laid for several years now. The names and faces of the volunteers, elected directors, and staff may change, but the foundation continues to help us accomplish our mission of providing superior educational services to the floriculture industry.

THE FUTURE

We continually strive to make our tag line "OFA, Making Floriculture Work for You" real for all we serve. Yet the key continues to be member involvement and the development and keeping of true partnerships. With this focus, we will most assuredly supply the products and services our industry and our members deserve and need.

OFA

OHIO FLORISTS' ASSOCIATION INC. AND O.F.A. SERVICES INC.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2001*

Revenue:	
Trade Show	\$1,270,371
Short Course	515,757
Dues	236,236
Publications and advertising	116,865
Short Course reception sponsorship	23,850
Workers' compensation program	19,913
Rent	19,236
Sponsorship Income	12,500
Investment Income	9,640
Miscellaneous	5,356
Schools, tours and other educational meetings	2,994
Total Revenue	\$2,232,718
Expenses:	
Short Course	\$709,849
Employee leasing	647,277
Trade Show	228,660
Contributions	83,967
Professional fees	83,557
Depreciation	54,081
<i>Bulletin</i>	47,549
Publication costs	46,287
Office equipment leases	37,887
Office maintenance	37,340
Building maintenance and taxes	34,415
Administrative meetings/functions	33,901
Public relations	32,353
Travel	27,407
Membership recruitment and correspondence	25,177
Credit card processing fees	24,747
Postage	15,228
Member newsletter	15,077
Miscellaneous	14,743
Office supplies	13,749
Telephone	10,117
Insurance	8,448
Dues and subscriptions	4,492
Membership Directory	2,793
Alex Laurie Award	2,308
Environmental Affairs	896
Hotline	652
Retail Extension	171
Total Expenses	\$2,243,128
Change In Net Assets	\$ (10,410)
Net Assets – Beginning of Year	\$1,042,772
Net Assets – End of Year	\$1,032,362

* Audited financial statements are available upon request. This document was transcribed from the Consolidated Financial Statements with the independent auditor's report of December 31, 2001.

OHIO FLORISTS' ASSOCIATION 2001-2002 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Association Category	Ohio	Out of State	Foreign	Total	
Active: Grower (B, C, D)	337	1,252	110	1,699	48%
Active: Non-grower (A)	267	649	128	1,044	29%
Associate (S)	194	547	39	780	21%
Honorary Members (H) & Affiliates (F)	35	46	4	85	2%
Total	833	2,494	281	3,608	

Domestic Members		
	Paid	Honorary & Affiliates
ALABAMA	18	0
ALASKA	5	0
ARIZONA	5	0
ARKANSAS	6	0
CALIFORNIA	159	4
COLORADO	52	0
CONNECTICUT	36	1
DELAWARE	10	0
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	3	0
FLORIDA	120	3
GEORGIA	40	2
HAWAII	12	1
IDAHO	7	0
ILLINOIS	189	3
INDIANA	111	2
IOWA	54	1
KANSAS	18	1
KENTUCKY	53	0
LOUISIANA	15	0
MAINE	10	0
MARYLAND	52	1
MASSACHUSETTS	66	1
MICHIGAN	268	4
MINNESOTA	86	1
MISSISSIPPI	10	0
MISSOURI	48	0
MONTANA	16	0
NEBRASKA	13	0
NEVADA	1	1
NEW HAMPSHIRE	26	0
NEW JERSEY	83	0
NEW MEXICO	4	0
NEW YORK	180	5
NORTH CAROLINA	55	3
NORTH DAKOTA	4	0
OHIO	798	35
OKLAHOMA	11	1
OREGON	50	0
PENNSYLVANIA	204	3
RHODE ISLAND	11	0
SOUTH CAROLINA	13	1
SOUTH DAKOTA	6	0
TENNESSEE	22	2
TEXAS	61	2
UTAH	9	0
VERMONT	8	0
VIRGINIA	53	2
WASHINGTON	49	0
WEST VIRGINIA	29	0
WISCONSIN	83	1
WYOMING	4	0
Total	3,246	81

	Year End 6/30/02
Paid Memberships	
Ohio	798
Out of State	2,448
Foreign	277
Total	3,523
Honorary Members and Affiliates	
Ohio	35
Out of State	46
Foreign	4
Total	85
Total Membership	
Ohio	833
Out of State	2,494
Foreign	281
Total	3,608

Foreign Members		
	Paid	Affiliates
ARGENTINA	1	0
AUSTRALIA	8	1
BELGIUM	1	0
CANADA	184	1
COLOMBIA	1	0
COSTA RICA	1	0
DENMARK	2	0
EGYPT	1	0
FRANCE	3	0
GERMANY	8	1
GREECE	1	0
INDIA	1	0
INDONESIA	1	1
ISRAEL	1	0
ITALY	6	0
JAPAN	11	0
KENYA	1	0
KOREA	3	0
MEXICO	3	0
NETHERLANDS	17	0
NEW ZEALAND	4	0
SINGAPORE	2	0
SOUTH AFRICA	3	0
SPAIN	1	0
TAIWAN	1	0
THAILAND	1	0
UNITED KINGDOM	11	0
Total	277	4

OVERWINTERING PERENNIALS OUTSIDE

Continued from page 1

Leucanthemum shasta daisies, *salvias*, *Coreopsis grandiflora* varieties, *dianthus*, and *physostegias* all need to be sheared early enough for the foliage to grow back slowly in the cool weather of October and November. This way the pots are full and the plants are compact and hardy.

Coreopsis verticillata cultivars 'Moonbeam American Dream' and 'Zagreb' all die back to total dormancy, so they can be cut back later just before covering. *Echinaceas*, *dicentras*, and *hostas* are also handled this way. By leaving old growth on plants, you increase chances of rot and *Botrytis*. This is why we spend a lot of time shearing and cleaning before we cover.

Sedums, such as 'Dragon Blood' and 'Golden Carpet,' *S. eleombianum* and *S. spurium* 'Variegata' will grow under the covers through the winter. *Sempervivums* will also fill out in the pot under foam. Some *hostas*, *astilbes*, *convallarias*, and *plumanarias* need no covering at all. These genera are typically grown in a shady area. Leaves from the shade trees combined

with foliage left on the plants, has proved to be enough coverage for these varieties to survive the winter without foam or plastic.

The date of covering varies from year to year. Weather determines the exact day! Some years we cover as early as November 15, while other years we could wait until December 15. We are in Zone 5, so plants need to be going into dormancy when covered. It is good to have had plenty of frosty nights and some snow in the weeks before covering. Ideally, a warmer, sunny day with the soil in the pots good and wet and the foliage dry is the best time to cover. We put out one last spread of bait blocks, spray *Daconil* weatherstick fungicide, and begin covering. Microfoam is rolled right on the plants and held down with 4-mil one-year white poly. The plastic is pulled tight, and the edges are buried with stone. It is a good feeling to have a healthy crop covered up tight and set for winter.

Our production then moves inside until spring.



The date of uncovering is more crucial than the date of covering. Weather must be monitored closely to determine when to uncover. The best scenario is to have a forecast calling for night temperatures near freezing with cloud cover, so the plants can get hardened off. If they become soft under the covers during winter, uncovering on a warm sunny day can cause sunburn damage to the foliage. A good rain or snow is ideal right after you uncover. Otherwise you need to water. Usually March 15 or so is a good date to aim for, but the weather is the determining factor.

Once all the beds are uncovered, you still have to watch the weather closely. Some years, there is a lot of cold weather at the end of March and early April. Most years, we find we have to re-cover when cold fronts are coming. If the forecast calls for lows below 20°F, we will re-cover.

Some years, we have covered and uncovered three to four times. If you leave foam and plastic on too late to avoid this covering and uncovering, your plants will get soft and begin to stretch and could be damaged by disease and frost.

If they are handled properly, and once the cold spells are over, the plants can take hard frosts and freezes overnight and by mid-day look as though they came out of a greenhouse.

By doing all we can to minimize loss, we have gone from losing 10 percent to 20 percent 20 years ago, to nearly zero loss over the past several years, under foam and plastic. The shearing, covering, and uncovering may be labor intensive, but with rising heat costs, if we can overwinter 200,000 containers with no heat or utilities, we'll stick with it! **OFA**

MEDIA MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Continued from page 1

Since consumers are sensitive toward and encompassed by the media, the bedding plant industry can benefit from a dialog with local media. Newspapers are a good place to start because the businesses are usually in the neighborhood and need information more often than a monthly magazine. Before contacting a newspaper editor, make a plan about the information you want to provide the media. Timely information is more newsworthy. Consider the subject of new plants and their origins as an exciting topic to begin a dialog.

Jennifer Stansberry, marketing manager for English Gardens, remarked, "We work with the media because we are one of the leading sources of gardening information in the metro Detroit area. We work closely with a major daily newspaper and the garden columnist. The columnist is invited to our stores to conduct seminars." Jennifer explained the benefits. When an English Gardens product is mentioned in the garden section of the newspaper, there is an immediate response from consumers. She noted, "Gardeners will call to learn if we still have the product in our stores, then drive to the store to

purchase it." The benefits seem obvious. With publicity in the newspaper, product sells.

Jennifer warned other retailers, "Be on your toes. Garden writers or journalists are very sophisticated." It is important to discuss a plant's garden performance in the yard or patio. If you are not very knowledgeable about a plant, avoid talking about it because the media will ask numerous questions about it. Stick to what you know.

She also offered great advice for people considering a dip into the media pool. Jennifer suggested, "Be accessible and responsive to all media. It is important to be aware of their deadlines and respond to them." She even recommended, "If necessary, drop everything and talk to the media when a contact wants to talk to you." This is the way you develop a trusting relationship and an ongoing dialog.

Jennifer explained that English Gardens has a broad-reaching publicity program. She works with a local television station and their very popular weatherman. They broadcast a weekly segment on gardening with English Gardens providing the expertise. It doesn't end there; the retailer also works with two radio stations and considers their website part of the publicity program too.

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MEDIA MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Continued from page 7

The purpose of all this publicity is to reach people who are not customers and encourage them to become buyers. It is an effective program to broaden their customer base and always find new customers. Jennifer has been working with the metro Detroit media for years and finds it a rewarding opportunity to use her horticultural knowledge.

Your own media publicity campaign can consist of press releases, a media advisory, an invitation to an event, or plants for a photo shoot. The best way to begin is with a media plan and the list of media you feel are the most important to your business.

On a national level, some consumer magazines often feature plants that are obscure at best. These plants are given a strong media push and frustrate gardeners because they are so difficult to find. Regretfully, there is no easy solution to this type of



plant publicity without plant availability. Consumer magazines usually do not publish a list of plants they will publicize. I suggest you write the magazine editor, explain which plants are not readily available, and send a list of plants that are in your store.

To become more familiar with garden media, I recommend becoming a member of the Garden Writers Association for a nominal fee of \$75. As a member, you will receive the membership directory, which lists notable or local garden media that you may wish to contact. Jim Wilson, keynote speaker at the 2002 OFA Short Course, is listed in the directory. For more information visit www.gwaa.org, call 703-257-1032, or write GWA, 10210 Leatherleaf Court, Manassas, VA 20111-4245.

OFA

A GOOD TIME FOR SAFETY

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With the recent slowdown in the economy, I am hearing more and more from our clients and prospective clients that they need to make cutbacks. I understand that when things get tight, everybody needs to reduce costs. These are always tough decisions, but necessary for a company to continue as a viable business.

Unfortunately, many times cost reductions occur in the area of safety. I know that everybody recognizes the value a good safety program brings to a company, but like everything else there is a cost. Sometimes the immediate costs can outweigh future savings and benefits.

It was not long ago that the situation was reversed for many companies. Business was booming and many did not always have the necessary time. It is hard to make time when orders are piling up and customers want their deliveries. Everybody is worked to the max and pushed to their limit. Safety takes a back seat until there is enough time.

Certain times of the year can also present their own problems; holidays and vacation time are always difficult times for safety. Employees are looking forward to their time off. Work loads need to be shuffled or rearranged. Work weeks are shortened during holidays, but there is a need to maintain a high level of productivity. Overtime is often required just to keep up.

Sometimes other projects or programs interfere or take away time that would have been used for safety. New products or services will be introduced, a new facility will be built or an old one sold. Even complying with other government regulations such as EPA requirements can take time away from safety.

Management changes or turnover can also interfere with a company's safety effort. The individual responsible for safety may be promoted, move to another position, or leave the company. A new individual must be assigned the responsibilities and given time to learn the job and new responsibilities. Other

key management positions change, new managers have to go through a new learning curve on their major job duties, and sometimes safety is not the top priority during this process. Attitudes and beliefs about safety change with these changes.

Add employee turnover to all of the above. It takes time to get new employees trained and integrated into the company culture. This can be even more difficult or time consuming if a company has a lot of turnover, has a significant increase in business, or is opening up a new operation. There is much each new employee needs to know in a short amount of time. Safety training may not be as thorough during these periods.

There certainly are a lot of things that can interfere with a company's safety program. Sometimes it can appear that there is no good time for safety; but accidents do not take a holiday, they do not stop because business is slow or busy, or because there are other programs or projects.

Accidents do not wait for new employees or managers to be trained. They do not stop because the individual responsible for safety is too busy or needs to learn the responsibilities and duties.

Safety is a never-ending pursuit to reduce and eliminate the causes that put people at risk. These exposures do not go away unless there is an aggressive, active effort by management and employees to eliminate them. That effort has to be everyday, ongoing, and never ending. When we reduce our safety effort, for whatever reason, the exposures that cause accidents always increase.

Don't let excuses interfere with your safety program. A yearly safety plan should be established. Time needs to be set aside during the year for managers, supervisors, and employee training. Safety needs integrated into every job, reinforced daily, and followed up on constantly.

WHEN IS A GOOD TIME FOR SAFETY?

- Before conditions that allow accidents to take place develop.
 - Before an employee has an accident.
 - Before you have to call the spouse.
 - Before worker's compensations costs increase.
 - Before all of the other pressures of business distract you.
- When is a good time for safety? Right now!

OFA

How to Face Products Correctly

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In relay merchandising, facing is the way the retailer presents the products on the shelf to the customer. The aim of merchandising is to maximize sales per linear meter of shelving; and, for this reason, how well products are faced has a significant impact on sales and stock turn.

FACE FORWARD

Most products have a front and a back. For a number of reasons, products should always be faced with labels to the front.

Firstly, the manufacturer has gone to a great deal of effort and research to make sure that the "face" of the product has "eye" appeal. It is this face that encourages the prospective buyer to pick up the product.

Secondly, many products have the user instructions on the back of the product. Prospective buyers need to look at these instructions while making a buying decision. If you face forward, they have to pick the product up and reverse it to read it. Once the product is in their hands they are more likely to put it in their basket or trolley rather than put it back on the shelf.

Finally, a uniform shelf looks more pleasing to the eye. A pleasing shelf is more likely to be shopped than a shelf that looks like it has been laid out with little thought.

And of course, facing forward improves your image.

GET THE MINIMUM LENGTH OF FACING CORRECT

If you wish to promote a product on a shelf, the width of facing on the shelf is critical; and, in this regard, two theories are currently in vogue:

Theory One

If you wish to sell a product you must, as a minimum facing, have the width of facing the same as the height of the product (Figure 1).

Theory Two

If you wish to sell a product you must, as a minimum facing, present three of the products if you wish the prospective buyer to select the product. Research in the United Kingdom has shown that once you drop the facing down to two products or even one product, then sales drop dramatically.

GET THE MAXIMUM LENGTH OF FACING CORRECT

Research in the United States and United Kingdom shows that with the majority of products, if the facing exceeds more than 11 identical products on the shelf, the prospective buyer becomes suspicious and suspects the product is not selling very well. The result is that sales drop off. You may think you are giving the impression that this is a bargain, while their perception is you have bought incorrectly or something is wrong with the product. This theory of 11 facings does not apply to products purchased every day (e.g. toilet paper) or very topical promotional items.

VARY FACING WHEN APPROPRIATE

Most retailers do not have enough shelf space to put every product at a minimum of three spacings. The

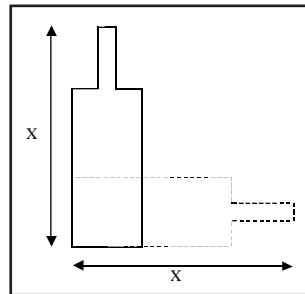


Figure 1. This is your minimum facing width on the shelf if you wish the customer to see this product.

practical reality is that you may have to utilize varied facings to maximize sales.

Face fewer than three of a product when:

- It is out of season.
- You are running down your stock levels of that item.
- You wish to promote another product over this product.

that it does not need a facing of three to catch a prospective buyer.

Face more than three of a product when:

- It is a trendy item.
- It is in season.
- It has recently been mentioned in the media.
- It is being promoted by your store.
- Suppliers wish to do a promotion special.

COMPILE PLANOGRAMS

In the early days of facing, it was very much trial and error to get it right. Once you have the correct ratio of facing, you can draw up a plan for your facing on a computer or paper. This is often called a planogram.

However, remember that in retailing, what is correct today will not be correct tomorrow, so you will have to keep changing your facing ratios to maximize sales.

Facing ratios will change when:

- You are in a seasonal industry sector like gardening.
- Consumer habits and fashions have changed.
- The media mentions products in a positive or negative way.
- Manufacturers and suppliers do promotional campaigns.
- You widen or narrow the range of products you have on offer to the consumer.
- The life of the product on the shelf matures in relation to its shelf life.

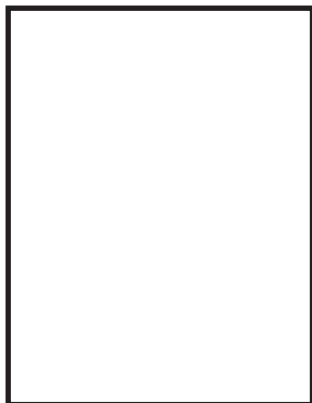
CONSIDER INDENTING

Indenting is the process where the retailer physically removes a product from the shelf to give the impression that a customer has already purchased a product from this range. The theory is that if the relay is spoiled, then customers are more confident to shop the range. In other words, indenting encourages shoppability. The practice involves removing one product, in a slow moving line, about every three meters along the length of the shelf.

MANAGEMENT MEMO

The key to facing is consistency. Adopt a facing system and keep to it. The worst thing you can do is confuse your customers. **OFA**

Where Have All the Profits Gone?



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This year's Seeley Conference was titled "Floriculture's Profit and Market Crisis: Charting a New Course." Last July's OFA Short Course program included a very well attended four-hour session on greenhouse profitability. This fall's OFA regional seminar tour is titled "Partnering for Profitability" and includes stops in Massachusetts, Michigan, and Virginia. Are we seeing a pattern here? Is there a problem in paradise? Any trend that's receiving attention from conference planners?

IS THE BOAT SINKING?

The U.S. floriculture industry is made up of roughly 10,000 growers, give or take a thousand depending on the decade. In an over-generalized sense, we're all in the same boat. There certainly are differences in our businesses based on whether we grow wholesale or retail, the region and state we call home, the affluence of our clientele, the crops we grow, and so on. Even so, let's agree for the next few minutes that we're all the same and

we're all different. That allows you a comfort zone to read on and say "Wow, that's *exactly* what's happening in my business" or "Phew, I'm sure glad I'm not in *that* boat."

Early in the Seeley Conference a speaker stated that floriculture is **not** in a state of crisis. Generally, I agree that we're not at that point yet. But tell that to the two family-run greenhouse operations that grew and sold retail for decades within a mile of my business. One is a fraction of the size it was five years ago, and the other went out of business completely this year.

The home front is not that rosy either. This fall, we are dismantling our second greenhouse in as many years – reducing our production area by 11 percent over the period. Lean and mean is our motto these days. Don't get me wrong, I'm not running up the white flag, just reacting to local conditions and having to work harder on business strategy than in the past. We'll return to this thought later and leave this introduction by asking the question "Has floriculture entered its 'mature industry' stage?"

WHAT ARE CONSUMERS THINKING?

A respected authority on the subject presented a snapshot of consumer behavior. There are some great opportunities here if we force ourselves to learn more about our customers' needs and desires. The decade of the '90s was defined by technology infiltrating our culture. Technology promised to free up time and give consumers their lives back. A decade later, we find that technology is both a blessing and a

curse. E-mail streamlines our lives, yet it complicates them; it links us together, yet it isolates us. Technology and the Internet have put *more* choices in our hands, yet many of us admit experiencing anxiety over making the *right* choice. In 1996, 51 percent answered yes to the question "Has technology freed up time for you?" In 2001, the response declined to 41 percent. Our speaker said that technology is like our refrigerators ... it's just there.

Coming out of the 1990s, 63 percent of consumers truly believe that their IQ is above average. We think highly of ourselves, don't we? While that statistic makes you chuckle, are you going to tell your customers they're not as smart as they think? Do a 180° and transform this amusing statistic into a profit generator for your business. How about satisfying their need to feel smart? Who doesn't experience that need regularly? What products, cultivars, signage, or services are you offering that cater to this need to feel intelligent? Do they feel smart when their plants die before the first of July?

On to another eye popper: 71 percent state that they want to reduce stress in their lives. We've finally learned that stress increases the risk of health problems. That's why parents imply that parenting carries a hidden backside fee of a shorter life expectancy due to high stress (just kidding). People are trying to reduce stress by slowing down, reassessing career paths, and redefining life goals. Suddenly, boredom is looking better, and spirituality is a priority. Kohler (plumbing fixtures) was used as an example of a

company that gets it. Kohler ads convey feelings of serenity and peace of mind, not of cast iron bathtubs and metallic faucets.

It was also suggested that consumers are just about maxed out on hype. That means that TV award shows and reality programming have reached saturation levels, great news for anyone older than 20 (did you know that this group is called "echo boomers"?). Instead of more hype and sensationalism, consumers are craving authenticity and intimacy through family and friends. Connecting with one's community is another way to satisfy these cravings. What a statement of approval for America in Bloom. The home has become a safe haven of late, more of a defensive cocoon. How's that for a vote of confidence for gardening? Are we capitalizing on the opportunity? Repeating, this is all good stuff for us to tune in to in our floriculture businesses.

DR. JECKLE, MR. HYDE

Now for the often-present double edge to the sword. All of the opportunity that's staring us in the face comes with a price. Consumers have also become quite belligerent and have no problem speaking their minds. Give them bad service and you're much more likely to hear about it than ever before. If you don't hear about their dissatisfaction in person, don't worry – a letter will arrive within days. Youngsters already register complaints online to the company they're displeased with.

Faced with poor service, affluent shoppers will simply walk out of a store. Online shoppers abandon their

shopping cart and surf on. Once displeased, these online shoppers regularly go out of their way to punish a company offline by not shopping the brick and mortar store. We were told that service expectations built during the last decade have not been met. While price provides a basis for shopping, service is the tie-breaker, your ace in the hole.

The case was made that this set of statistics is screaming out to us that consumer emotions are right for gardening. There should be no talk of crisis as long as we are able to get it right. However, there's not much room for error during our current cycle. It's time for floriculture to make a decision.

SUPPLY SIDE

Let's talk about the mass market, and then bring independents into the discussion. A national buyer from a leading big box retailer presented thoughts on where his company sees the floriculture market headed. First, these players view the market very optimistically. The big boxes see a lot of opportunity ahead in their garden departments. They are looking for growers to supply higher quality, although the jury seems to be out as to whether they are willing to pay higher prices if given the choice. They want new and different species and cultivars, fewer growers supplying each store to minimize product overlap, better signage, and more grower branding. They want pay-by-scan systems in place shortly and, by the way, the grower is going to be expected to care for the plants in the store.

An academic expert on agricultural economics later stated that the future will find the retail storeowner as not much more than a land-

lord, renting shelf space to suppliers who will stock, merchandise, and care for their own products. The future in retail will revolve around shelf space viewed as real estate to be bought and sold. Slotting allowances will become part of the equation as the retailer tries to get the supplier to do most of the work.

We were told of how economic power in agriculture has shifted during the past century. In the early 1900s, input suppliers ruled. These were the oil, railroad, fertilizer, and feed providers. Because they were much larger than the farmer and few in number, they enjoyed significant market power. During the mid-1900s, power shifted to the food processors and buyers. Brand names and advertising became the epicenter of power during this period. That too has changed, because now it's the retailer who controls the market. Shelf space and information about the consumer form the current power base.

Last December, I found myself in a conversation with one of our largest domestic growers about poinsettia prices and where the market is headed. While I respect his opinion and admire most of what he and other large growers have accomplished, I'm still reeling from his stated philosophy. In his words, "If Wal-Mart tells us they are going to pay \$2.75 for a 6-inch poinsettia, then it's up to us to learn how to grow it for \$2.75." What a perfect lead-in for the next subheading.

COMMODITY OR VALUE-ADDED?

We've heard about well-known marketing campaigns for beef, milk, and even watermelon. Anyone can rattle off "Beef ... it's what's for

OFA Marketing

dinner" or "Got milk?" Did you know that Promoflor's "Buzz the Bee" program, although halted soon after its introduction, was showing signs of effectiveness? Regardless, a dark cloud is rolling in on commodity promotion programs that may cast them to the back burner. All it takes is one cattleman, dairyman, or florist to take the mandatory checkoff program to court and claim that it's unconstitutional for the entire program to be doomed. Once several producers choose not to contribute and are not legally obliged to do so, free riding becomes the kiss of death for the program. Precedent is being set in the courts that is darkening the cloud.

So, where does this leave us in terms of profitability? Our economist provided some reality by telling us that floriculture's not that bad off. We were told to look at the apple, cranberry, sugar, and hog industries if we were feeling badly about our own condition, and then think again before complaining. He also suggested that we are definitely at a crossroads and need to decide whether we are going to choose the path that will encourage floriculture products to become commodity items and follow apples and cranberries or the path that will encourage value-added marketing and maintain healthier profit margins.

Return to the concept of a product or industry's life cycle for a moment. Growers are tuned into insect and disease life cycles everyday and have learned how important it is to understand an organism's cycle if

it is to be broken and controlled. In the past decade, we've said repeatedly that growers must learn more about marketing and business – just growing great plants is not enough. We've also agreed that years ago a new cultivar could be produced profitably for 10 years, but today, a cultivar life cycle can be as short as three years.

MORE TO COME

I'm going to hold off discussing floriculture's decision to either take the commodity path or value-added path until our next *Bulletin* issue. Truthfully, I believe we're going to do both. Today's value-added product will become tomorrow's commodity item. More on this next month.

Back to our original question ... is floriculture in crisis? The Seeley Conference turned the question inside and out for three days and concluded "No." While I agree with the conclusion, I am also experiencing a sense of urgency that I've never felt before about how profitable and healthy my business and our industry will be in the future. My belief is that we are indeed at a crossroad in our life cycle. And while I'm taking down a few greenhouses and playing the lean and mean card, I'm also quick to add that taking down houses is an excuse to modernize and improve efficiency as soon as the economy and business turn around a bit. Being an optimist has never let me down – why should a few uncomfortable bumps during the ride change one's outlook? **OFA**

POTTED ORCHIDS – POPULAR AND PROFITABLE

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Orchids used to be expensive and were enjoyed mostly by people with high income. Although there are large nurseries, such as Gallup and Stribling, the Rod McLellan Company, Orchids by Hausermann, etc., which specialize in orchids, most orchid nurseries were relatively small and catered mainly to the hobbyists. Since the early 1990s, the production of potted blooming orchids started to rise in the United States. Before 1996, the USDA National Agricultural Statistical Service considered orchids to be a minor crop and did not collect their annual gross value. USDA started tracking the value of potted orchids in 1997. The gross value of potted orchids was \$47 million in 1996. In 2000, this number jumped to more than \$100 million, making orchids the second most valued floral crop in the United States. There was an average annual increase of 23 percent during that period.

Many state-of-the-art greenhouses have been built solely for producing potted orchids. A good number of traditional floral and foliage greenhouse operations from coast to coast have added potted orchids to their product line. During the past four years, Andy Matsui of Matsui Nursery in Salinas, California, converted his entire operation from ground bed cut flowers to producing four million potted orchids annually. Despite the increased competition, the profit margin has been good for orchids. The wholesale price for a phalaenopsis orchid in a 6-inch pot is often between \$8 and \$12, with a retail price from \$15 to \$25 on the mass market.

Most of the potted, blooming orchids produced are the hybrid phalaenopsis orchids (the moth orchids), followed by dendrobium and the oncidium alliance orchids. The production of paphiopedilum (the subtropical slipper orchids) has been on the rise. Despite this drastically increased production of potted orchids, compared to other floral crops, little research has been conducted by U.S. universities during the last three decades. Since 1990, Texas A&M University has been the only land grant university with a research program that is dedicated to developing new information and technology for producing potted orchids.

The color of phalaenopsis flowers covers all colors of the rainbow, except the true blue. The individual flowers of phalaenopsis orchids last 60 to 120 days in the home environment. It is not uncommon to see flowers on a phalaenopsis staying for five to six months. The long-lasting flowers provide a wide marketing window. These orchids tolerate low light and stand dry media. When used indoors, watering every two weeks (weekly preferred) often maintains a blooming phalaenopsis in perfect condition under 50 to 100 footcandles.

Orchid seeds are microscopic and require tissue culture conditions to grow into plantlets. Seedlings require several years to reach blooming. Most phalaenopsis growers in the United States no longer breed or raise orchids from seed.



Instead, they purchase plants of various sizes from specialized orchid propagators. While large, mature plants can be forced to bloom immediately after potting and become salable in three to four months, the cheaper smaller plants may require one year or longer to become marketable. Many of these orchids are imported in a bare-root state from off-shore sources. Taiwan has been the single largest breeder and exporter of phalaenopsis seedling plants, while Holland raises many cloned orchids. Seedling plants are cheaper, but usually less uniform, than the clones.

The industry standard requires producing phalaenopsis in 6-inch pots with six or more flowers. However, phalaenopsis are often sold in 4- or 4.5-inch pots with fewer flowers and lower prices. Ten-inch and larger pots have also been used for producing specimen plants with numerous flowers for special needs.

Phalaenopsis orchids are epiphytic plants with succulent roots. These roots do not tolerate soggy medium for long and will rot under such conditions. The potting medium is usually made up of a selected combination of fir bark, perlite, peat, sphagnum moss, or volcanic rock for good drainage. Pure sphagnum moss has been used successfully for raising phalaenopsis orchids, but I do not recommend it to growers whose products are going to the end consumers. Sphagnum moss retains much water and salts and, when dry, has little weight to anchor plants from falling. A beginning grower should use no more than 20 percent peat to avoid possible root rot due to extended days of soggy medium. A "typical" medium may contain 60 percent to 70 percent medium grade fir bark, 20 percent large grade perlite, and 20 percent or less coarse or chunky peat. Do not mix the large grade bark with milled peat, as the fine peat will soon make its way to the bottom, creating a soggy zone.

Although phalaenopsis is a subtropical plant, it requires three to six weeks of exposure to temperatures ranging from 80 to 60°F to initiate the flowering process (called spiking). Usually a bud at the node of the upper third leaf would start to swell and protrude through the leaf base. It continues to elongate and start to initiate flower primordia before it has reached 2 inches in length. Plants are best kept below 80°F during the period of flower bud initiation as higher temperatures

either cause the growing tip to revert to vegetative or low flower count. The length of time from spiking to anthesis is a function of greenhouse temperature. Higher temperatures speed up flowering, whereas lower temperatures slow it down. Studies have shown that maintaining plants above 82°F at all times or having them exposed to cycles of five days in darkness followed by two days in light keeps them from spiking. Many nurseries have large air-conditioned greenhouses or rooms to trigger plants to spike during the normal off season. Using the above techniques, blooming phalaenopsis orchids can be produced year-round. It should be noted that phalaenopsis orchids need light above 300 footcandles to spike well. Mature plants do not spike when kept in a dark cooler that provides the proper temperatures for spiking.

Phalaenopsis grown in 6-inch pots need to be watered when the medium is nearly dry. That means watering every five to seven days in the summer and every 7 to 10 days or more during the cooler period of the year or in cool climates. Water with low salt levels is recommended. A study at Texas A&M University shows that as salt level increases, root injury becomes more severe. Many growers use reverse osmosis water to irrigate orchids and to avoid unsightly calcium residue on the foliage. My studies have demonstrated that, when media containing peat are used for forcing, there is little or no difference in flowering among water soluble fertilizers. Be sure adequate calcium and magnesium are provided.

Although mature bare-root plants may be exposed to appropriate temperatures to induce spiking immediately after potting, allowing them some time in a warm environment to establish new roots would increase flower quality (bud count and flower size). The best light for growing phalaenopsis is between 1,200 and 1,500 footcandles. However, light as low as 800 footcandles or as high as 2,000 footcandles has been used successfully. High light may be used under cool conditions. Newly planted bare-root phalaenopsis should be given a little extra shade to recover. Vegetative plants can be exposed to

OFA Grower

temperatures in the mid-90°Fs when well watered and grown in a greenhouse with good air movement.

Best temperatures for shipping are around 68°F. Chilling injury develops after exposing plants to 59°F. My studies show that, if plants grown under very warm conditions are suddenly exposed to cooler air, symptoms of chilling injury can develop after four days at 68°F or during long flights.

Orchid flowers are very susceptible to Botrytis. Keeping flowers dry, particularly at night, and having internal horizontal fans working during the blooming season are vital in producing marketable plants. Erwinia, Pseudomonas, Pythium, Phytophthora, and Rhizoctonia are the major diseases. The former two kill plants in a matter of a few days. Virus-infected plants may grow slowly and produce distorted flowers.

All orchid flowers are extremely sensitive to very low levels of ethylene gas. Ethylene at 0.05 ppm can cause flowers and buds to fall off completely within a few days. My studies have shown that EthylBloc is the only chemical on the market that protects flowers of potted orchids from ethylene. Exposing blooming orchid plants to 0.2 ppm 1-methylcyclopropene (1-MCP, the active ingredient in EthylBloc) for six hours at room temperature protects orchid flowers against 10 ppm ethylene. However, this protection only lasts for one week or less.

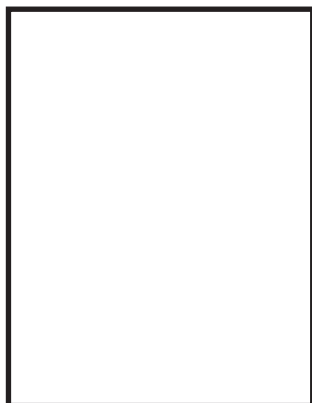
Potted blooming orchids collectively have been the second largest floral crop in the United States during the last two years, and there is still plenty of room for expansion. However, growers face many unsolved problems. Research on potted orchids in the United States is still in its infancy. Research funding is badly needed to support this expanding industry.

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SHORT
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2003**

Get into the Mix
JULY 12-16, 2003
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Columbus, Ohio USA

Kiplinger Chair Update



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Greetings. I thought I would take this opportunity to bring the membership of the Ohio Florists' Association (OFA) up-to-date on the progress of the D.C. Kiplinger Chair Advisory Committee. The 20-member D.C. Kiplinger Chair Advisory Committee consists of representatives of OFA, the floriculture industry, and floriculture faculty at The Ohio State University (OSU). The committee members are: from the industry, Dick Bostdorff, Jim Corfield, Roger Feist, Will Healy, Peter Konjoian, Walt Krueger, Justin Marotta, and Jack Schmidt, Jr.; from OFA, Steve Carver and John Holmes; and from OSU, Michelle Jones, Hal Kneen, Peter Ling, Bob McMahon, Peg McMahon, Jim Metzger, and Claudio Pasian. Stephen Myers, professor and chair of the OSU Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, is an ex-officio member, and Michael Knee and I are committee co-chairs.

The committee met for the first time in June 2002.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the committee's charge and to lay the groundwork for further discussions. At this first meeting, Myers charged the committee to "develop recommendations as to how the OSU College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) can utilize the (Kiplinger Chair) Endowment to enhance the OSU floriculture program in the most opportune and appropriate manner." The committee's recommendations will be forwarded to Myers, who will then forward them on to Bob Moser, dean of CFAES, and Steve Slack, director of The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center.

During this meeting, much of the discussion focused on how the Endowment could best serve the OSU floriculture program and the floriculture industry, both nationally and internationally. The committee agreed that we should start with a clean slate, and all options concerning the D.C. Kiplinger Endowment should be presented and discussed. The committee came to the conclusion that it would not be a good idea to bring someone in for a five-year term that would have the option of renewal. Other ideas were discussed, and the consensus was that it would be best to have a Kiplinger Endowment Visiting Chair Program similar to those at some other major universities. A motion was made to put together a Kiplinger Endowment Visiting Chair proposal invitation document that could be sent out to academia and the industry in an effort to recruit highly qualified people for this prestigious position.

The committee met for a second time in July during the OFA Short Course. At this meeting, the reworked Kiplinger Endowment proposal invitation was discussed in detail and finalized. Myers stated that the finalized invitation proposal for the D.C. Kiplinger Chair in Floriculture for the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at OSU will be forwarded to Dean Moser for his approval as soon as possible.

One of the key statements in the document reads, "The Visiting Chair will carry out a significant portion of his or her activities in collaboration with members of the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science as well as those in other units/departments located at or associated with OSU; and the Visiting Chair will have access to extensive physical facilities including labs, greenhouses, gardens, and arboreta. The Visiting Chair has the opportunity to work with members of the floriculture industry at the state and national level."

The proposal document will also be circulated to the faculty of the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science for their feedback. The objective is to get the invitation for proposals out so the first visiting chair could be in place as soon as possible. The meeting adjourned with everyone feeling quite good about the progress.

Also in July, I met with the faculty of the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science to discuss the proposal invitation document. There was some discussion by Horticulture and Crop Science faculty about some of the wording in the docu-



ment; however, overall it was given the stamp of approval.

Where do we go from here? If Dean Moser approves the proposal invitation document, it will be sent out to industry and academic institutions throughout the United States. The Kiplinger Chair Advisory Committee and the faculty of the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science will evaluate the submitted proposals. A suitable candidate will be selected, and a recommendation for approval will be made to Dean Moser.

That's where things stand at the moment. I personally think we have made significant progress toward the selection of the next D.C. Kiplinger Visiting Chair, and I have no doubt the person chosen will make a significant contribution to the floriculture program at The Ohio State University, which in turn will benefit industry both nationally and internationally.

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at nameth.2@osu.edu (phone: 614-292-8038), or Steve Carver at OFA at scarver@ofa.org (phone: 614-487-1117).

OFA

CAN YOUR BUSINESS SURVIVE A CRISIS?

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Editor's Note: Rosemarie was a speaker at the 2002 OFA Short Course.



What would your life be like if you faced a personal crisis? How soon would you recover? What would happen to your business? What procedures are in place to help you and your business survive and recover from a crisis?

On June 13, 1998, while riding my bicycle on a trail in Granville, Ohio, a 3.5-ton tree fell on me, leaving me paralyzed from the waist down. In an instant, my life changed.

No one likes to think that they will become disabled. I never expected to be permanently disabled on the day I was crushed by that tree. Things happen, unexpectedly. I rode with safety in mind that day and was wearing my helmet. My helmet saved me from brain injury. My husband, Mark Leder, was with me and helped save my life.

I owned two businesses – a speaking/training/consulting company and a publishing company. When you own a business and are the sole employee, earned income ceases when you become disabled. Your disability can result in a prolonged interruption of business activities.

Your biggest asset is your ability to earn a living, and when this ability is temporarily lost, you can become financially ruined. Disability income insurance is a way to safeguard your risk and provide a source of income to allow you to rebound from a crisis.

My disability income insurance was as valuable to me as my helmet. Business owners should limit their risks and have the proper insurance to protect their income, health, business, and other assets.

Americans are far better prepared to die than to become disabled. They have paid for life insurance, their casket, funeral plot, and head stone. They know death is inevitable. They do not realize that the odds are they are more likely to become disabled for more than 3 months in any given year than they are to die. One-third of all people between the ages of 30 and 64 will become disabled sometime in their lives. At age 32, the chance of being disabled 90 days is 6.5 times greater than the chance of death. Each year, one person in eight will suffer a disability. Before retirement age, one out of seven workers will be disabled for five or more years.

We must acknowledge the national statistics and take whatever actions we can to limit our risks and losses. Risk management should be a way of life.

If you become disabled, what would happen to your business? Would your income be jeopardized? Would your employees/spouse/partner know what to do to take over in your absence? Would your customers go elsewhere? Would you go into debt? Would your credit be ruined? Would your employees leave?

Too many people have not planned for their disability. Have a financial plan and stick to it. Look at insurance as a necessary overhead expense, not a luxury or something that someday you will be able to afford. Remember that you are your business and without you, your business is in serious jeopardy.

Sometimes a crisis affects the business more directly, such as through fire or theft. Imagine the tragedy and the impact that a loss of your files would have on your business. As you manage your business and organize your files and records, back up your data. Back-up computer files should be stored off-site.

Files should be easy to retrieve. Electronic databases of clients, invoices, and receivables should be organized. Client contact information will be needed so the company can communicate the nature of the crisis and the timeline for recovery. Daily planners of those affected by the crisis should be reviewed in order to identify appointments that need to be canceled and projects that must be rescheduled.

When something happens to the business owner, who will step in to temporarily run the company? Are people trained to know what to do? Are the procedures in place for people to smoothly make a leadership transition? Are the records easy to access? Are emergency files clearly marked with notes as to how to continue with the business operation on a day-to-day basis?

Spouses and partners should have frank discussions with the business owner to discuss what strategies and training are needed to take over the business operations in the event of a crisis. Personnel need to be cross-trained so that in emergency situations the transitions of leadership will be seamless. Succession plans should be in place, with personnel identified for each job responsibility. Employees should have opportunities to be mentored and job shadow their employers so their skills and knowledge will be an asset in a crisis.

Relationships should be established with people who deliver similar services to those you offer your clients. These friendly allies will need to be there for you in case of a crisis and deliver services on your behalf to your clients. You should be willing to fill in for them as well, during their crisis. Financial arrangements should be discussed in advance to ensure a fair payment for these services.

In the event of an emergency, someone at your company needs to contact your clients to let them know of the temporary situation. They should be asked if they can postpone the service. If the service must be performed when it was originally scheduled, let the clients know that a substitute has been selected to offer the service that was to be provided by your company. Clients should be reassured that their best interests are being considered.

Employees need to be notified of the crisis as soon as possible. Keep the lines of communication open regarding the nature of the crisis, the impact on the business and their particular job, and the predicted timeline when the business will be out of the crisis. Reassure the employees that leadership is intact and that business will be temporarily interrupted. Now is the time to utilize those latent talents and skills of each of the remaining employees.

By planning ahead for a crisis, you will have replacement income, bounce back faster, have less stress, and improve your business stability and your quality of life.

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OFA GROWER OUTREACH SEMINARS PARTNERING FOR PROFITABILITY

October 23, 2002 – Worcester, Massachusetts
*Offered in conjunction with the New England
Greenhouse Conference*

November 6, 2002 – Lansing, Michigan
Offered in conjunction with the Michigan Greenhouse Expo

November 15, 2002 – Richmond, Virginia
At Griffin Greenhouse and Nursery Supplies

OFA's fourth annual regional seminar tour will tackle the topic of profitability in the greenhouse. These all-day seminars will cover in detail three important areas: cost accounting, revenue calculation, and profit determination.

Growers will learn how to use these numbers to determine how to maximize profits in their production facilities. The central question for the day will be "How to determine what crops, sizes, and quality to produce in order to maximize the bottomline."

The speakers will be Jim Faust, Clemson University, and Peter Konjoian, The Ohio State University. Bridget Behe, Michigan State University will assist with the seminar at the Michigan Greenhouse Expo.

Complete details have been mailed to OFA members and are available through OFA. **OFA**

2003 OFA MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY WILL ARRIVE IN FEBRUARY

The 2003 *OFA Membership Directory* will be mailed to all OFA members early next year. If you are a current member of the Association as of October 30, 2002, your name and contact information will be listed in the 2003 Directory.

To make sure your contact information is correct, please doublecheck your *Bulletin* label below. The name and address listed here are printed as they appear in the OFA database. If you need to make a change, please contact OFA at 614-487-1117. Also, be sure to check out the OFA web site at: www.ofa.org. Use your member ID number and first initial, last name to access the member's only area of the web site. **OFA**



OFA – an Association of Floriculture Professionals
www.ofa.org

OFA EVENT CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2002

Grower Workshop – October 23
OFA Committee Meetings – October 25-27
OFA Board Meeting – October 28

NOVEMBER 2002

Grower Workshops – November 6, November 15

JANUARY 2003

Interior Plantscape Pest Control Seminar – January 31

FEBRUARY 2003

OFA Committee Meetings – February 21-22
OFA Board Meeting – February 23

JULY 2003

OFA Short Course – July 12-16
Greater Columbus Convention Center
Columbus, Ohio USA



2003 TRADE SHOW PROSPECTUS IS AVAILABLE

The 2003 Trade Show prospectus has been sent to the 2002 exhibitors. If you exhibited in 2002 and have not yet received your copy of the prospectus, please contact Wendy McAtee at OFA (wmcatee@ofa.org). Information will be sent to prospective exhibitors in the near future. Please contact OFA to add your name to the mailing list. **OFA**



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