



ofa Bulletin

an Association of Floriculture Professionals

Keeping Up With Disease Management

**Pull from
Jan/Feb 03
Bulletin
Page 11**

by *Stephen G.P. Nameth*

The basics of controlling/managing diseases in the greenhouse is something that changes little from season to season. Yes, new pathogens and diseases “pop up” here and there every year, and in some cases, the results of these “pop-ups” to an individual operation can be

devastating. However, if you view the industry as a whole, the disease management issues that you faced last season are going to be very similar to or exactly the same that you will face this season. Botrytis gray mold and Pythium root rot are still the most common diseases associated with greenhouse production of bedding and perennial plants, and whiteflies and thrips are still some of the most stubborn insects to try to control. If what I just said is true (and it is), why is it so important to “keep up with disease management?” It’s important because, as a grower of high quality bedding and perennial plants, you need to be constantly reminded that disease threats always

exist. You must be aware of what state-of-the-art technology is currently available, so that you allow yourself the highest level of disease protection.

The purpose of this article is to bring growers up-to-date on the latest information on disease control/management. Some of this information is not new, but bears repeating. Hopefully, you’ll find it useful.

Principals and Tools of Effective Disease Management

A few years ago, I put together a list of 10 ways or principles to effectively manage disease in the greenhouse. These principals are as relevant today as they

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Advertising Your Business on a Shoestring Budget

by *Melanie Wilt*

When times are tough, often the first line item hacked is the advertising budget. But don’t discontinue your advertising program for the sake of a few dollars. You may just have to work a little harder to keep your business in the limelight until business – and your budget – return to normal.

Advertising is “the activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, as by paid announcements in the print, broadcast, or electronic media.” Take away your ability to pay, and you’re left with an activity that can be accomplished through proactive media relations.

The Oath of the Media

Media outlets, including television, print, and radio, pride themselves on the fact that they don’t allow the advertising to drive the editorial. In other words, just because you pay to advertise in a particular publication, does not increase your odds of getting a full-fledged article written about you in that newspaper. Talk to any newspaper editor or television reporter, and they will tell you that they report on the news, not on who pays them.

When I visit a news station, there’s an invisible moat between the sales and

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OFA Mission Statement

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

OFA – an Association of Floriculture Professionals

2130 Stella Court
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1033 USA
614-487-1117 Fax: 614-487-1216
e-mail: ofa@ofa.org
home page: www.ofa.org

OFA Bulletin

March/April 2004
NUMBER 883

Editorial Staff

Stephen Carver

Cheryl Cuthbert

Michelle Gaston

John R. Holmes, CAE
Executive Director

Peter Konjoian
Technical Advisor

Contributors

Raymond A. Cloyd

Richard A. Criley

Maria del Pilar Paz

Paul Fisher

Rosanna Freyre

Barbara Helfman

Peter Konjoian

Jeff S. Kuehny

Stephen G.P. Nameth

Bob Negen

Lin Schmale

George Staby

John Stanley

Melanie Wilt

Barb Wingfield

Published Bimonthly

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University Breeding Programs ... A Dying Breed?

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Nov/Dec 03
Bulletin
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by Peter Konjoian

During February of 2003, the National Floriculture Forum met in Columbus, Ohio. Each year, floriculturists from the academic and industry arenas meet to discuss issues facing the industry. Last year's topic focused on breeding, germplasm, and floriculture's future.

One speaker on the program was Dr. Richard Craig from Penn State University. If you grow geraniums, you probably know that Dr. Craig is generally regarded as the father of the seed geranium in U.S. floriculture circles. If you go back in time far enough, you'll remember the seed geranium cultivar **Nittany Lion** Red...need I say more?

How Do You Learn?

Think about how many times as you grew up that your parents, teachers, and peers allowed you to attack a problem head-on by yourself, fall flat on your face, pick yourself up after the experience, and learn from the failure. Isn't it true that learning from mistakes is an excellent way to learn as long as we manage things sufficiently to keep the failures from being devastating? Repetition also provides us with excellent learning opportunities. If these two learning paths were not acceptable, a huge number of us would not be in business today.

Most graduate student programs are anchored more around learning how to

conduct experiments and thinking through research challenges than about the actual results. It's wonderful when research at the graduate student level immediately impacts how we grow crops. However, most graduate students benefit more from the experiences of learning how to do the research, and it certainly doesn't mean they failed if their results don't change the way plants are grown. Once they graduate and take on academic or industry jobs however, positive results will measure the success of their work.

Not Too Proud of This

What I'm going to say next is something I'm not particularly proud of but want to discuss nevertheless, because I believe that there's a good chance other growers may feel similarly. In these times of frantically paced plant breeding, where new cultivars and species of plants are being made available for us to grow, commercial breeding programs are on center stage. Floriculture has certainly gone global – introductions are coming from every corner of the world.

Think of the new cultivars you've incorporated into your production mix, and try to identify who bred them. If you're like me, it's usually not high on the list to know whether this seed cultivar came from Pan American Seed, that one from Goldsmith, and so on. My head is so full with production stuff that I focus more on broker level seed and cutting catalogs and rarely bother to trace cultivars back that extra step to the breeder. When the New Year calendars arrive from these firms, it usually elicits an "oh, I wasn't aware that so and so bred this line of marigolds or that line of impatiens."

Back to our universities and my confession of a bit of ignorance.

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Keeping Up With Insect Management

**Pull from
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Page 1**

by *Raymond A. Cloyd*

Greenhouse producers today are having a hard time “keeping up with the Joneses” due primarily to the overabundance of information and the rapid pace of technology, which makes it more difficult to stay current on all the issues related to greenhouse production. In addition to growing and selling a crop to make money (and profit) greenhouse producers must deal with labor issues, automation, regulations, crop culture, new cultivars and varieties, and last but not least ... insect and mite management. Keeping up with the latest information on insect management can be an arduous task. As a result, management of insect and mite pests often is dealt with on a reactive basis or when pests are very abundant in numbers. Having been a greenhouse manager myself, I can understand how the management of insects and mites could “slip through the cracks.” Regardless, greenhouse producers should consistently seek information associated with insect and mite management including what is new, what works, what pests do the pest control materials work best on, and which pest control materials should be rotated in order to avoid resistance.

First, it is important that greenhouse producers understand the principles of dealing with insect and mite pests effectively before using pest control materials. The first line of defense should always be implementing proper cultural practices including irrigation, fertility, sanitation, and weed management. Research conducted throughout the United States and Europe has demonstrated that greenhouse producers who focus on implementing proper cultural practices

have fewer pest problems than those who don't.

Proper watering practices such as allowing the top 1 to 2 inches of the growing medium to dry out reduces problems with fungus gnats and shoreflies. Problems with aphids, whiteflies, and spider mites can be alleviated by not overfertilizing plants, particularly with nitrogen-based fertilizers. For example, higher numbers of whitefly eggs are laid on poinsettias that are fertilized with ammonium nitrate than those fertilized with calcium nitrate. The removal of plant and soil debris, and eliminating weeds from within and around greenhouses minimizes problems with insect and mite pests including fungus gnats, thrips, whiteflies, aphids, and twospotted spider mite.

Greenhouse producers often request information on the availability and development of new pest control materials and how effective they are. It is interesting to historically evaluate pest management in greenhouses over the last 50 years (for those who can do that ... I for one cannot). What is quite evident is that the greenhouse pests (both insects and mites) have not really changed; in general, only the hierarchy of importance has changed. For example, a publication dating back to 1939 (Haseman, L., and E. T. Jones. 1939. Greenhouse pests and their control. University of Missouri College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 342) describes many of the same insect and mite pests (with the exception of fungus gnats and shoreflies) that are being dealt with today by greenhouse producers. The only item that really changes is what is used to control them. Following are brief discussions of the newest pest control materials that are or will be available (within the next two years) for use in greenhouses.

TetraSan

TetraSan is a miticide distributed by Valent USA Corporation that contains the active ingredient **etoxazole**. This miticide is a chitin synthesis inhibitor,

which means the material disrupts the normal molting process by preventing mites from forming a new skin (cuticle). This is interesting because it indicates that the product is an insect growth regulator for mites. TetraSan is labeled for twospotted spider mite and Lewis mite. It is active on egg, nymph, and larval stages. TetraSan generally doesn't kill adults. The material has translaminar properties similar to the miticides abamectin (Avid) and chlorfenapyr (Pylon), which means the material penetrates leaf tissues and forms a reservoir of active ingredient within the leaf. This provides extended residual activity, up to 21 days, which is similar to many of the newer mite control products. TetraSan has a 12-hour restricted-entry interval (REI).

Pedestal

Pedestal is an insect growth regulator, available through Crompton/Uniroyal Chemical Company, that contains the active ingredient **novaluron**. The product is labeled for whiteflies, thrips, leafminers, and armyworms. Pedestal works by interfering with cuticle formation (chitin synthesis inhibitor) and disrupting the normal molting process. This prevents nymphs or larvae (=immatures) from reaching adulthood. The product has no direct effect on the adult stages. Pedestal is slow-acting due to the mode of action, with population reduction in three to five days after application. Pedestal has a 12-hour REI.

Flagship

Flagship is a systemic insecticide (translocated throughout the plant) available from Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc., that contains the active ingredient **thiamethoxam**. The product has a similar mode of activity as imidacloprid (Marathon). The way it kills insects (mode of action) is by acting on the nicotinic acetylcholine receptors, stimulating nerve functions and causing paralysis. Flagship is labeled for whiteflies, aphids, and mealybugs. The product has a 12-hour REI.

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Keeping Up With Insect Management

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Tristar

Tristar is an insecticide, distributed by Cleary Chemical Company, that contains the active ingredient **acetamiprid**. The product is labeled for aphids, whiteflies, and mealybugs. Tristar is in the same chemical class as imidacloprid (Marathon) and thiamethoxam (Flagship). It has translaminar properties and ovicidal (egg-killing) activity. The product is applied as a foliar spray and has a 24-hour REI.

Talus

Talus is an insect growth regulator that is distributed by SePRO Corporation and contains the active ingredient **buprofezin**. This insect growth regulator inhibits chitin synthesis, which prevents the insect from forming a new skin (cuticle). Talus is labeled for whiteflies and is only directly active on the nymphal stages. It has a 12-hour REI.

Aria

Aria is a systemic insecticide from FMC Corporation that contains the active ingredient **flonicamid**. The product is labeled for aphids, whiteflies, thrips, mealybugs, and scales. Aria has translaminar properties and can be applied as a foliar spray or drench. The product has a 12-hour REI.

Ultiflora

This product is not currently available. Ultiflora will be distributed by the Gowan Company and will contain the active ingredient **milbemectin**. The product works as a GABA (gamma-amino butyric acid) blocker, which is similar to abamectin (Avid), inhibiting nerve transmission and paralyzing the target pest. Ultiflora will be labeled for mites including twospotted spider mite, eriophyid mites, and cyclamen and broad mite. The product has translaminar properties and is active on all life stages of mites, including eggs.

Dinotefuran

This product is not currently available. **Dinotefuran** is the active ingredient found in a product from

Valent USA Corporation that will be labeled for aphids, whiteflies, leafminers, mealybugs, and thrips. The material will be applied as a foliar spray or drench. The active ingredient is very water soluble. Dinotefuran is in the same chemical class as imidacloprid (Marathon), acetamiprid (Tristar), and thiamethoxam (Flagship).

There are now three insecticides in the chemical class **chloronicotinyl** (=neonicotinoid) and one more on the way, registered for use in greenhouses. These are imidacloprid (Marathon), acetamiprid (Tristar), and thiamethoxam (Flagship). Because all three commercially available chloronicotinyls have similar modes of activity, it is important to not rotate from one chloronicotinyl to the next, because this will increase the selection pressure on the target pest population and may potentially enhance the development of insecticide resistance. To avoid the issue of resistance, use an insecticide with a different mode of activity either before or after using a chloronicotinyl insecticide.

To determine how effective the "old" and "new" pest control materials are, greenhouse producers can contact their local county Extension entomologist (although I know budget cuts have reduced the number of county agents). Typically, state Extension entomologists conduct efficacy trials to determine what pest control materials are effective on certain insect and mite pests. In addition, there is a publication available through OFA (*Tips on Selecting Pest Management Strategies*, second edition, June 2001, O.F.A. Services, Inc., Columbus, OH) which contains efficacy trials conducted by researchers throughout the United States on the various greenhouse insect and mite pests.

Today, greenhouse producers should feel fortunate that they have a number of pest control materials (both insecticides and miticides) that are effective on many of the major insect and mite pests in greenhouses. For example, the phloem-

feeding insects such as aphids and whiteflies can still be controlled with a number of contact pest control materials and systemic products (i.e. imidacloprid or Marathon). When used accordingly (based on the label), greenhouse producers can still obtain excellent control of Western flower thrips with spinosad (Conserve), and there are a number of insect growth regulators including pyriproxyfen (Distance) and diflubenzuron (Adept) that are very effective in controlling fungus gnat larvae. Finally, there are a plethora of effective miticides for control of twospotted spider mite.

Another item that is important to greenhouse producers is what types of rotation schemes should be implemented to minimize the potential for insecticide resistance. More information is becoming available through handouts or brochures (i.e. Olympic Horticultural Products Chemical Class Chart Volume 5) and articles written in the trade magazines. I have written a number of articles primarily designed to assist greenhouse producers in selecting rotation programs that minimize the possibility of insect and mite populations developing resistance, and that preserve the longevity of currently available pest control materials. It is important that greenhouse producers "keep up" and understand how the different pest control materials kill target pests (mode of activity), so appropriate rotation programs can be implemented.

Greenhouse producers are also concerned about what pest control materials can be tank mixed. The advent and development of pest control materials with narrower pest spectrums compared to the "older" pest control materials has led to greenhouse producers tank mixing in order to achieve the same spectrum of pest activity as before. Tank mixing occurs when two or more pest control materials are combined into a single spray solution. Tank mixing lowers labor costs by reducing the number of applications needed. However, there is

minimal information available to greenhouse producers on how tank mixing impacts the effectiveness of pest control materials. Research being conducted at the University of Illinois by Dr. Daniel Warnock and myself is attempting to provide information to greenhouse producers on a number of issues related to tank mixing, including which tank mixes to avoid.

The use of biological control, which involves the release of parasitoids, predators, and pathogens (i.e. nematodes) in greenhouses is increasing, and many greenhouse producers throughout the United States have successfully implemented biological control programs for managing insect pests such as fungus gnats. For example, Mid-American Growers (Granville, Illinois), which is the largest greenhouse facility in Illinois, has been using beneficial nematodes to manage fungus gnats in their poinsettia crop for the last four years.

Although keeping up with insect management or “the Joneses” may appear overwhelming, it is important in producing a quality crop. There are a number of publications that are available and valuable resources that can assist greenhouse producers in dealing with pestiferous insects and mites in greenhouses. These are listed here with concise descriptions. Additionally, a brief listing of Web sites related to pest management is included at the end of this article. From these Web sites, you should be able to link to other Web sites that may be helpful. Be sure to utilize the publications and websites because they are specifically designed to help greenhouse producers “keep up” in managing insect and mite pests.

Publications

Blanchette, R. [ed.]. 2001. *GrowerTalks* on Pest Control. Ball Publishing, Batavia, IL. 298 pgs.

This book contains a compilation of articles that appeared in previous issues of *GrowerTalks* magazine. The book includes topics related to integrated pest management, biological controls, chemical controls, cultural management, general pest control, and strategies to deal with

specific pests including insects, mites, and diseases.

Dreistadt, S. H. 2001. Integrated pest management for floriculture and nurseries. University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Project, University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Publication 3402. 422 pgs.

This is a comprehensive publication that provides detailed information on pest biology and covers all aspects of pest management for insects, mites, diseases, weeds, and nematodes in floriculture and nurseries. There is an extensive crop table that provides symptom-based, crop-specific information for diagnosing problems in floriculture and nurseries.

Gaston, M. L., S. A. Carver, C. A. Cuthbert, and L. A. Kunkle [eds.]. 2002. *Tips on Managing Floriculture Crop Problems: Pests, Diseases, and Growth Control*. O.F.A. Services, Inc., Columbus, OH. 148 pgs.

This manual covers all the principles of integrated pest management with major topics focusing on pesticide use and safety, insect and mite management, disease management, scouting techniques, pesticide application techniques, plant growth regulators, and weed management. In addition to the text, there are easy-to-read charts on the pesticides (insecticides, miticides, fungicides, and bactericides), biological control agents, plant growth regulators, and herbicides that can be used in greenhouses.

Gill, S., and J. Sanderson. 1998. *Ball Identification Guide to Greenhouse Pests and Beneficials*. Ball Publishing, Batavia, IL.

This book briefly covers integrated pest management, but primarily deals with identifying the major insect and mite pests in greenhouses, with some discussion on beneficial organisms including parasitoids, predators, nematodes, and pathogens. There are detailed descriptions of the biology and monitoring techniques for each of the major pest groups along with photographs of each pest.

Hamrick, D. [ed.]. 2003. *Ball RedBook Crop Production Volume 2* [17th

edition]. Ball Publishing, Batavia, IL. 724 pgs.

This comprehensive book covers all aspects of crop production with a chapter on managing insects and mites that discusses cultural control, physical/mechanical control, scouting, chemical and nonchemical pesticides, biological control, and the major greenhouse insect and mite pests.

Lindquist, R. K. 1998. *Identification of Insects and Related Pests of Horticultural Plants*. O.F.A. Services, Inc. Columbus, OH. 43 pgs.

This pictorial guide is recognized for the clear, close-up photographs of the major insect, mite, and related organisms that may be encountered in greenhouses. Additionally, there are concise descriptions of the biological characteristics and habits of the pests covered. There is an appendix in the back that contains tables that list and briefly describe the insecticides/miticides registered for each pest.

Mahr, S. E. R., R. A. Cloyd, D. L. Mahr, and C. S. Sadof. 2001. *Biological Control of Insects and Other Pests of Greenhouse Pests*. North Central Regional Publication 581, University of Wisconsin, WI. 100 pgs.

This manual focuses on the use of biological control in greenhouses. There are concise descriptions of the major insect and mite pests (and any miscellaneous pests), along with detailed descriptions of each of the biological control agents including parasitoids, predators, nematodes, and pathogens. There is a final section that describes several examples of successes using biological control in greenhouses.

Nelson, P. V. 2003. *Greenhouse Operation and Management* [sixth edition]. Prentice Hall, Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ. 692 pgs.

This book details all the components of greenhouse operation and management with a chapter that deals with insect control covering integrated pest management, insects and other pests in the greenhouse, methods of pesticide application, pesticide safety, and

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Ornamental Ginger as Flowering Potted Plants

ofa Grower



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Page 4**

Jeff S. Kuehny Richard A. Criley

by Maria del Pilar Paz and
Jeff S. Kuehny, Louisiana State
University; Richard A. Criley,
University of Hawaii

Ornamental ginger encompasses a diverse and versatile group of plants that are gaining increased recognition in the flowering pot plant, landscape, and cut flower markets. Ginger is the common name given to members of the *Zingiberaceae* family, a group of tropical, rhizomatous, herbaceous perennials that have showy and attractive foliage and flowers – which makes them interesting ornamentals. The various sizes, flower colors, and postproduction longevity (up to four weeks or longer) are adding needed diversity to the greenhouse industry.

Ornamental ginger is most commonly propagated by rhizomes. The rhizome is an underground storage organ that serves as a major source of water and carbohydrates. Each rhizome has many lateral buds which grow out to produce a pseudostem above ground. In general, the outdoor growing period in zones 8 or greater is seven to eight months, and flowering takes place for two to three months. Flowering initiates new rhizome formation.

A majority of these ginger are native (indigenous) to Southeast Asia, with production occurring predominantly in Thailand and China. In their native habitat, most ginger grow during the rainy season and are dormant during the dry season. If rhizomes are kept dry, they will remain dormant for an extended period of

time. In contrast to their native habitat, rhizomes in temperate climates enter dormancy in winter in response to short days and/or low temperatures. Rhizomes in commercial production are harvested when dormant for storage and distribution. Postharvest handling of the rhizomes can have a significant effect on time to emergence and uniformity of emergence. Optimum storage time and temperatures will be discussed by species.

Ginger can also be purchased in plug trays from tissue culture companies; however, the *Kaempferia* spp. are the only ginger recommended for growing from a tissue-cultured plug if a finished plant is desired in a 60-day time period. Those ginger grown for flowering pot plants (Table 1, page 9) will flower more quickly and uniformly if grown from rhizomes. If tissue-cultured plants are purchased, a more full plant can be grown in the first season, then plants are allowed to go dormant in the fall by withholding water as the days grow shorter and temperatures become cooler. Many growers then remove the dead foliage and force the ginger rhizomes after February in the same container for spring.

Upon receipt of imported ginger rhizomes, they should be unpacked and inspected for damage or disease as one would any other bulbous crop. In general, rhizomes should be planted immediately after shipment, but some delay in planting is tolerated at proper

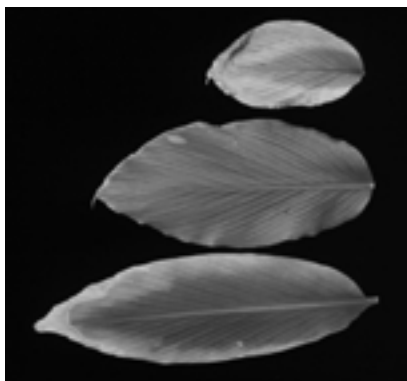


Figure 1. Boron toxicity of *Curcuma*.

storage temperatures. A substrate composed of peat/pine bark/perlite or a peat/perlite mixture is recommended. The soil pH of the native habitat of some of these ginger (*Kaempferia* spp. and *Curcuma* spp.) is neutral to basic so a pot media pH of 6 to 7 is recommended.

A “standard” container or deeper pot will provide for the best drainage and also provide space for placing the tuberous roots attached to the rhizome toward the bottom of the pot, while covering the top of the rhizome with approximately 1 inch of substrate. Breaking the tuberous roots from the rhizome may decrease flower number and will delay time to emergence. Thus, care should be taken to keep the entire tuberous root intact.

Three or more rhizomes per 6-inch pot will produce a marketable finished container. Some companies do grade the rhizomes by the number of tuberous roots per rhizome. The more tuberous roots present, the shorter the time to finish. After the initial irrigation, plants should be given a preventative fungicide treatment.

Greenhouse temperatures should be kept at 85 to 90°F until emergence of shoots to provide for a more uniform emergence. Emergence should occur 20 to 30 days after planting for most *Curcuma*, *Globba*, and *Kaempferia* species. *Curcuma cordata* and *C. roscoeana*, however, will emerge approximately 70 days after planting. After emergence, greenhouse temperatures should be lowered to less than 85°F. Some ginger are boron accumulators, which may lead to marginal foliar necrosis (Figure 1). Therefore plants should be fertilized with a 200 ppm water-soluble fertilizer low in boron or without boron, such as Scott's Tropical Foliage Fertilizer (24-8-16).

There are 90 genera of ginger in the *Zingiberaceae* family. This family contains at least 1,400 species and perhaps as many as 2,000 species. The

genera of flowering ginger include *Alpinia*, *Curcuma*, *Etilingera*, *Globba*, *Hedychium*, *Kaempferia*, and *Zingiber*. One of the most popular is *Curcuma alismatifolia*, which originates from northern Thailand and Cambodia.



Figure 2. *Curcuma* rhizome.

Curcumas comprise at least 65 species with different colors, forms, and sizes. The inflorescence is a compressed spike with colorful bracts that can develop from the shoot or develop directly from the rhizome (Figure 2). The curcumas have a succulent adventitious root system. Some of the species, like *C. alismatifolia*, develop swollen roots to store water and reserve food for plant growth. Thus, the underground part of the plant bears two types of storage organs. The first is a rhizome with buds that will produce next season's leaves and inflorescence; and the second is a swollen, egg-shaped root designated as a tuberous root (t-root). The rhizome should have at least four t-roots associated with it to ensure hastened emergence and flowering. Prior to planting, rhizomes of *C. alismatifolia* can be stored in dry peat moss for three weeks at 50°F followed by three weeks at 86 or 95°F. Under this treatment, shoot emergence will occur uniformly in 13 days, which is about 40 days less than rhizomes that receive no storage treatment.

Rhizomes of *C. cordata* should be stored for two weeks at 50°F followed by three weeks at 95°F for emergence in

48 days. With no storage, emergence will occur after 82 days. The most rapid emergence for *C. roscoeana* occurs when rhizomes are stored for 12 to 16 weeks at 77°F (56 days to emergence) and the slowest, when rhizomes are not stored (86 days to emergence).



Figure 3. *Curcuma cordata*.

For production of brightly colored bracts and deep green leaves, *Curcuma alismatifolia*, *Curcuma thorellii*, *Curcuma* hybrids, and *Curcuma* species should be grown in full sun. If these species are grown under shaded conditions, the flower stems and petioles tend to elongate and topple. The bracts of the inflorescence tend to fade and postproduction longevity is shortened. *Curcuma cordata* (Figure 3), *C. gracillima*, and *C. roscoeana* grow and flower best under 30 percent to 50 percent shade. *Curcuma alismatifolia* (Figure 4) and *C. thorellii* (Figure 5) will produce an inflorescence approximately 60 days after emergence and every 30 days thereafter during the summer months.



Figure 4. *Curcuma alismatifolia*.

Globba spp. have a pseudostem which is 5 to 7 inches tall, terminating with a pendent inflorescence of lavender,

pink, white, or yellow bracts accented by a slender, curved, yellow corolla (Table 1, page 9). Various rhizome storage treatments can decrease emergence to a minimum of 14 days after planting. Those treatments include storage for 12 or 16 weeks at 77°F and storage for three weeks at 59°F, followed by three weeks at 86°F. If rhizomes are not stored or are stored for as few as two weeks at 77°F, shoot emergence can take approximately 56 days. Most *Globba* species grow best and flower under 30 percent to 50 percent shade. *G. winittii*, commonly called "Mauve Dancing Ladies," will produce the first inflorescence approximately 60 days after emergence and will continue to bloom the remainder of the growing season (Figure 6, page 8).



Figure 5. *Curcuma thorellii*.

The 50 species of the genus *Kaempferia* and the one species of *Cornukaempferia* are nearly stemless herbs with thick, aromatic rhizomes (Table 1, page 9). They are grown primarily for their beautiful foliage. Most *Kaempferia* spp. have a silver to purple feather pattern in the middle of the upper side of the leaf radiating outward with various shades of green (Figure 7, page 8). Others, such as *Kaempferia gilbertii* '3 D' have a white margin on a deep green leaf (Figure 8, page 8). *Cornukaempferia aurantiflora* has a silver feather pattern on the outer edge of the leaf with a

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Ornamental Ginger as Flowering Potted Plants

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Figure 6. *Globba winittii*.

deep maroon underside. Most of the *Kaempferia* spp. produce small white, pink or orange flowers. On a flowering spike arising from the base of the plant, a solitary flower is borne each day to be replaced by another the following day. These gingers grow best under 30 percent to 50 percent shade. *Kaempferia rotunda* has proven to be one of the best *Kaempferia* for landscape planting (Figure 9). The plant has rounded leaves that grow close to the ground, producing a dense mound. The most rapid emergence of *Kaempferia* occurs when rhizomes are stored for 16 weeks at 77°F (eight days to emergence), and the slowest occurs when rhizomes are stored for two weeks at 77°F (58 days to emergence). Because the foliage of *Kaempferia* is the primary attribute of this plant, transplants from tissue culture will produce a very nice pot plant.

Temperature is the primary factor affecting sprouting and growth and is commonly used to hasten or delay development. For a species to be used as a potted plant, it must be possible for growers to provide flowering plants within a specific time interval. Because gingers go dormant in the winter, they are suitable for growing as summer flowering potted plants anywhere in the United States and/or landscape plants in USDA Zone 8. Most rhizomes are harvested from November to January in Thailand

and shipped to the United States in February through April for forcing. Because rhizomes are stored in sheds without temperature control, those rhizomes shipping in April emerge more quickly than those shipped in February. Gingers can be held in dry peat moss at about 50°F until space becomes available for forcing, fitting into the pattern of activity of many growing operations. Because gingers prefer warm growing conditions, they are good candidates for summer greenhouse or nursery production, fitting the lull between summer and fall production.



Figure 7. *Kaempferia* spp. 'Grande'

Plant growth retardants are recommended in order to use some of the more vigorous cut flower species such as *Curcuma cordata* and *Curcuma alismatifolia* 'Siam Tulip' as potted plants (Table 1). Since most of these gingers do not have a true stem, growth retardants should be applied as a drench when the shoot has emerged to about 5 inches above the substrate or when roots have grown to the sides of the container. Application of uniconazole



Figure 8. *Kaempferia gilbertii* '3-D'

at 10 mg a.i./container or 20 mg a.i. paclobutrazol is recommended.



Figure 9. *Kaempferia rotunda*.

All of the aforementioned gingers have been planted in the landscape at Burden Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (USDA Hardiness Zone 8). Three years of data indicate that all of these gingers are hardy to Zone 8 in the landscape. Overwintering survival is also linked to good mulching and to a well-drained soil to prevent rot. Thus, these plants can be marketed as a flowering potted plant for use in year-round interior landscapes, and as either perennials (USDA Zone 8 or greater) or summer annuals (similar to *Caladium*, *Colocasia* and *Alocasia*) in exterior landscapes, depending upon the climate.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Gloeckner Foundation and the American Floral Endowment for supporting this research. We would also like to thank The Scotts Co., Fafard, Uniroyal, Valent Corp., and Set Con Co. for providing materials for this research.

Jeff S. Kuehny & Maria del Pilar Paz
Louisiana State University
Dept of Horticulture
137 Julian C Miller Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-2120
225-578-1043
Fax: 225-578-1068
jkuehny@agcenter.lsu.edu

ofa

Richard Criley
University of Hawaii
Dept of Tropical Plant & Soil Science
3190 Maile Way, Room 102
Honolulu, HI 96822
808-956-8492
Fax: 808-956-3894
criley@hawaii.edu

Table 1. Description of Ornamental Gingers

Species	Average Height	Inflorescence/Foliage
<i>Cornukaempferia aurantiflora</i>	1 foot	Leaves with silver-feathered margins to dark maroon centers, small orange flowers. 40% to 60% shade.
<i>Curcuma alismatifolia</i>	2 feet	Tulip-shaped flowers, ~3 to 4 inches, pink or white. PGR required. Full sun.
<i>Curcuma alismatifolia</i> Hybrids	1 foot	Tulip-shaped flowers, ~3 to 4 inches, shades of deep purple to pink to white. PGR not required. Full sun.
<i>Curcuma cordata</i>	2 to 3 feet	Cone-shaped flowers, ~4 to 6 inches, pink. PGR required. Full sun to 50% shade.
<i>Curcuma roscoeana</i>	2 to 3 feet	Cone-shaped flowers, ~4 to 5 inches, bright orange. PGR required. 40% to 60% shade.
<i>Curcuma</i> sp. 'Precious Patuma'	1 foot	Tulip-shaped flowers, ~1 to 2 inches, pink, pink w/green tips. Full sun. No PGR.
<i>Curcuma petiolata</i> 'Emperor'	2 to 3 feet	Grown for variegated foliage. Full sun to 50% shade. No PGR.
<i>Curcuma thorellii</i> 'Chiang Mai Snow'	1 foot	Tulip-shaped flowers, ~2 to 3 inches, pure white. Grown from rhizome. No PGR required.
<i>Globba</i> spp. <i>G. bulbifera</i> <i>G. pendula</i> <i>G. winitii</i> <i>G. magnifica</i>	1 to 2 feet	Arching pendant inflorescences. 40% to 60% shade. Small yellow bracts with yellow flowers forming bulbils. 'Silver Comet,' 3 to 4 feet, silver variegation, yellow bracts. 'Mauve Dancing Ladies,' mauve bracts. 'White Dragon,' white bracts, requires a PGR drench.
<i>Kaempferia galanga</i>	lay flat	Foliage pale green with some variegation, small white flowers. 40% to 60% shade.
<i>K. gilbertii</i> '3-D'	6 inches	Foliage with white margin, deep green stripes in center of leaves, small white flowers. 40% to 60% shade.
<i>K.</i> spp. 'Grande'	2 to 3 feet	Foliage rounded and large with silver feather pattern upper and maroon back. 40% to 60% shade.
<i>K. pulchra</i> 'Bronze Peacock' 'Silver Spot' 'Raven'	1 foot	40% to 60% shade. Leaves lanceolate, purple/silver variegation with bronze back. Leaves lanceolate, silver variegation with small pink flowers. Leaves lanceolate, striking silver feather and maroon back.
<i>K. rotunda</i>	3 to 3.5 feet	Variable purple/silver variegation with purple to green back with large white and purple flowers. 40% to 60% shade.

Keeping Up with Disease Management

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were when they were first compiled. If you use these principles, I can guarantee you will experience less disease when compared to not using them. Reviewing these is a good place to start.

1. Always start with disease-free seed, cuttings, or propagation material. This is the first rule of growing a disease-free crop, and the most important. Be sure to purchase material from reputable producers who can guarantee that the material they are providing you is free of disease and insect pests.

2. Grow disease-resistant material, if possible. It is important to select crops that have disease and insect resistance, particularly if you have chronic disease problems such as powdery mildew and other common fungal diseases.

3. Quarantine incoming plant material. As you bring material into the greenhouse from various locations and producers, it is important to keep that material separated from the rest of the crop until you can be sure the new material is disease and insect-free.

4. Practice good sanitation techniques. I have said this before, and I will say it again, the cleaner the greenhouse the less disease and insects. Sanitation means the greenhouse floor is free of weeds and algae. The area surrounding the greenhouse is weed-free. The hose nozzles are not laying on the floor or in a pool of water; they are hung up off the floor. Trash cans are sealed tight with lids that fit. Dead and senesced plant tissue has been removed from plants; and that debris has been placed in a trash can, not on the floor. Pet plants have been removed from the greenhouse or at the least have been relegated to a remote part of the production facility.

5. Monitor and suppress insect and mite populations. To have a disease-free crop, you must keep the insect and mite populations to a minimum. Besides the direct feeding damage on the crop, insects and mites can vector viruses. Monitor sticky traps on a regular basis to estimate insect populations.

6. Modify the environment to suppress disease. The higher the humidity in the greenhouse, the greater the disease incidence. This is because most disease-causing organisms thrive in an environment where the humidity is high (85 percent or higher). Use fans to encourage air exchange around the crop, and use heating and venting to help reduce the humidity. Try to avoid having water on the surface of leaves for an extended period of time. If you must overhead water, do it in the morning so the plants will go into the evening with dry leaves and flowers. Avoid over-watering your plants. Overwatering will encourage root rot diseases. Use a growing medium that is well drained and does not allow for saturated conditions. Try not to use native soil in your growing medium unless you are very sure the soil is pathogen-free. Most native soils contain all of the major root rotting organisms. If you grow plants on the floor of the greenhouse, make sure the area under the plants is well drained and does not allow for standing water.

7. Avoid plant stress. The greater a plant is stressed, the more susceptible it is to pathogen infection. Keeping a plant stress-free means that you make sure the plant has adequate water, the salts are in balance, the pH is correct, the light and temperature requirements have been met, and the plant is supplied with the proper nutrients necessary for optimum growth and development.

8. Monitor the crop on a daily basis. This just means that you the grower are aware of what is going on with the production of your crop at every stage of its growth and development. This way there will not be any surprises; and if a disease or insect problem does arise, early detection of disease equals better control.

9. Keep unauthorized personnel traffic to a minimum. This is something that even the best growers don't do, although they should. Inexperienced employees walking through your greenhouse for unnecessary reasons is a good way to spread diseases. Unnecessary touching of plants either purposely or accidentally

can lead to the spread of pathogens, particularly viruses and bacteria. Also, if there is a disease outbreak, knowing which employees have been in a particular part of the greenhouse and when they were there will be important information to help pinpoint the cause and scope of the problem.

10. Use fungicides as a last resort. If you have incorporated all or many of the first nine steps and you are still having disease problems, it may be necessary to use a pesticide such as fungicide. However, if you have followed the preceding nine steps, you should have to use less fungicide when it is needed.

Even under the best of circumstances, chemical disease management will need to be employed; therefore it is important that growers "keep up" with the latest in disease control products. The following section will cover this.

2004 Disease Management Products (Old and New)

There are old and new disease management products. Some products continue to be very effective in controlling the target pathogen even though they have been on the market for more than a decade. Others are relatively new. Old or new, it is important for growers to be up-to-date on what's hot and what's not.

Oldies

The old standbys are still around and in most cases doing very well. Products that contain active ingredients (a.i.'s) such as chlorothalonil, mancozeb, iprodione, and copper continue to be very effective in controlling a wide variety of fungal- and bacterial-induced diseases. Some of these a.i.'s are mixed with other chemicals to produce a combination product, which allows the growers to attack the target organism with two modes of action. This in turn reduces the likelihood of the pathogen developing resistance to the a.i. These products should continue to be a staple of a grower's disease control program as long as there is no evidence the pathogen is becoming resistant.

Not So Old / Relatively New

Products which contain strobilurin are still relatively “new” and should be incorporated into an modern disease management program. Products such as Compass-O, Heritage, and Cynus have activity against a broad range of fungal pathogens. If you haven’t looked at these yet, now is the time.

New Stuff

There are some new products for 2004. One of the newest biologicals is a product called Rhapsody from AgraQuest. Rhapsody is the QST 713 strain of the bacterium *Bacillus subtilis* (similar to Companion). The product is labeled for a wide variety of foliar fungal and bacterial pathogens.

Two other new products which are not biologicals are BioPhos L and Alude. Both of these products are phosphate-based and have activity against the “water molds” (Pythium and Pythophthora).

The Best Resources

If you have relatively high-speed access to the World Wide Web, that is the way to go. The Web allows you access to a tremendous amount of information – more than all of the books

put together. If you have not utilized this resource, 2004 is the time to start. The following are some of the best resources for accessing information on disease management.

Every land grant university in the United States has a Web site, and the overwhelming majority of those have the information their faculty have written on greenhouse disease control on that Web site. For example, The Ohio State University has the OhioLine Web site (<http://ohioline.osu.edu/>). From this site, you can access “tons” of information on disease control. It will also link you to other university web sites such as Ohio Floriculture On-Line (<http://floriculture.osu.edu/>). Cornell University’s Department of Plant Pathology has a web site (<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/>) that has many links to all types of information on disease diagnostics and disease control. I could go on and on; however, I don’t have the space or the time to list all of the land grant Web sites here.

Besides university-based sites, there are a variety of excellent private sites. For example, *Greenhouse Product News*

magazine has www.gpn.com, and *GMPro* magazine has www.greenbeam.com. With just these two sites, you can access most of the information that has been published. In some cases, they also have information that has been developed only for the Web site. You can’t find it in the hard copy of the magazine.

Again, there are dozens of these types of Web sites, all of which you have access to via the Internet. Here is an interesting example. I typed the term “powdery mildew on verbena” into a web search engine and came up with 1,270 sites. The first two talked about chemical control. One was written by Dr. Mary Hausbeck, Michigan State University. Wow!

If you want the absolute latest information on greenhouse disease control, USE THE WEB!

Stephen G.P. Nameth
The Ohio State University
Dept of Plant Pathology
2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210
614-292-8038
Fax: 614-292-4455
nameth.2@osu.edu



Advertising Your Business on a Shoestring Budget

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news teams; they never cross paths. The only reason the sales crew knows the news crew is because they see them on television like the rest of us.

Build a Relationship with the Media

You may wonder how you can build a successful relationship with members of the media when you see a fresh face on the local TV station every other week. Turnover is high among journalists. A 2001 study by the Missouri School of Journalism showed that television news reporters in their 40s had changed jobs more than four times in their career. One television reporter surveyed had changed jobs 14 times!

Despite the high turnover rate, there are a few old standbys who aren’t going anywhere. These are the few whom it is worthwhile to befriend:

1. The weather person. This person is so familiar in your community, I bet you could name him or her right now. They get assignments to report on the news too, and they are more interested in reporting a story about your greenhouse, garden center, flower shop, or America in Bloom project than your average general assignment reporter.

2. The assignment editor. This is the person who sits at the assignment desk in the newsroom and receives all the incoming news tips. He or she can be found listening religiously to the police scanner. The assignment editor is also the one who gets a round of applause in the newsroom when his or her station is “first-on-the-scene.”

3. The gardening guru. Your friendly Saturday morning garden show host likes to give advice on everything from choosing a lawn fertilizer to selecting a plant that does well in shade. Make your product well-known to this guy or gal, and you will not believe how many times your product or garden center will receive a free mention. No advertisement is as credible as the one that comes directly from the mouth of the reporter. **Take action:** write a letter introducing yourself as a local expert and position yourself to be a future interview. Include a sample of your product or photos of your retail shop so the reporter knows what he or she is getting into before coming your way.

Build Brand Recognition Without Spending a Dime

Advertising – like good media relations – builds on name recognition and eventually develops a consumer

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understanding of the product or service you're peddling. The average consumer needs to hear or see a message 13 times before it becomes familiar. Once the message is familiar, it takes even longer to be understood and appreciated.

But don't be discouraged; it is possible to speed up the learning curve with media relations.

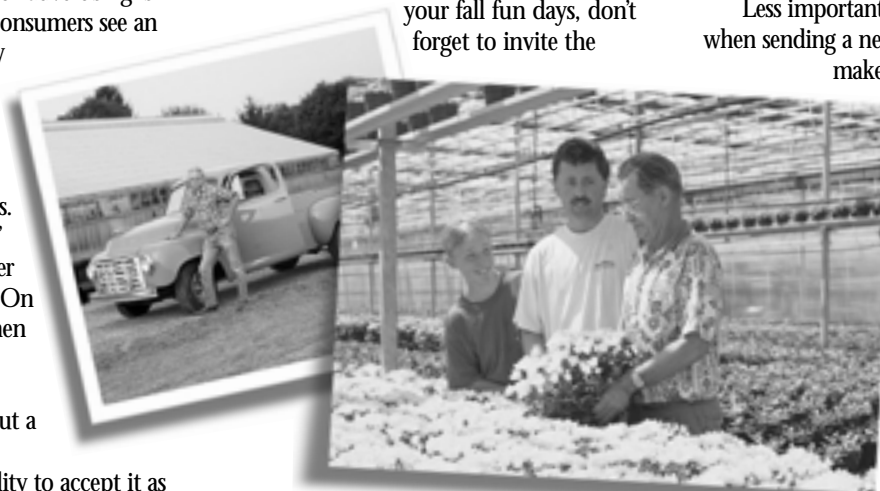
One element that you cannot add to your message with advertising is credibility. When consumers see an advertisement, they know that it's a paid message and that the company intends to profit from increased sales. It takes a few "hits" before the consumer accepts its validity. On the other hand, when consumers see a segment on the 5 o'clock news about a local product or company, their ability to accept it as legitimate is almost instantaneous.

So how do you get that news story written about your company? Here are a few things to try:

- 1. Ground-breakings ... grand openings ... anything new.** These things alone are news-worthy, but only on a slow news day. So, give it more meat by talking about the number of jobs your new retail greenhouse will add to the community, your projected sales, and any charity that might benefit from your existence or event. This is a perfect story to pitch to the business editor of your local paper.
- 2. People love free stuff.** Giving away a free packet of seeds won't get the news to cover your story, but they might show up if you plan to donate to the local children's home a flat of pansies for each one purchased.
- 3. Show off your great employees.** If you have an employee who has an

interesting story to tell, share it with the news media. What about that dedicated seasonal employee who has worked seeding flats every year since Eisenhower was president? Or, the four generations of one family who run the business? The story may not be about all the redeeming qualities of your business, but it will be about the redeeming qualities of your employees – and they are your company's image.

4. Create excitement through the media themselves. When you hold your fall fun days, don't forget to invite the



reporters from your local station to participate in the seasonal container garden design contest. The local television and radio news media may be the closest to a celebrity that your customers will ever come. (If you don't have these contacts, see the above section on "Building Relationships." It's easier to get friends to agree to this than to cold-call a reporter.) The media will be excited to participate, and it makes a great piece for the end of a newscast when they want to leave their viewers with a warm fuzzy.

The Golden Rule

There are only three letters that stand between "persistence" and "pest." Persistence pays off, but should not come at the expense of your reputation. To avoid crossing the line into the pest category, follow "Mel's Golden Rule of Media Relations:" **Only send news releases when there is news.**

Too many companies get in the habit of sending out weekly or monthly news releases regardless of whether or not there is anything of consequence to say. The assignment editor or the news editor will see your letterhead and file it in the recycling bin without reading it. If you only send news releases when you have something important to say, the editor will value your releases and look forward to directing it to someone who can turn it into a story.

Less important, but still imperative when sending a news release: Always make sure to include the date, contact name, and phone number where you can be reached. If you work in the field or under glass, give them your cell phone number. Opportunities to place a story are fleeting moments that will be dismissed if the reporter can't reach you.

Make the Most of Your Knowledge – Your Budget will Be Back in No Time

Now that you know what the media is looking for and you have friends in high places, you can increase brand recognition and influence your profitability without much of a financial commitment. A little sweat equity and careful planning will keep your company in the news until your advertising dollars are once again available. And, even when the dollars return, you can incorporate some fresh, new strategies to make the most of your advertising money.

Melanie Wilt
Ohio Department of Agriculture
8995 E Main St
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068-3399
614-752-9811
Fax: 614-688-7754
melanie_wilt@yahoo.com



Flower and Plant Postharvest Care Information – Chain of Life Network® Web Site

by George Staby

All perishable crops including fruits, vegetables, and flowers die prematurely if they are not managed properly, both before and after harvest. Of special importance is how perishables are handled after harvest, during the aptly named “postharvest” period.

Research has documented that approximately 15 percent to 50 percent of floral crops are ruined before being enjoyed by consumers due to improper postharvest care and handling. The floral crops in question include cut flowers, bedding plants, cut foliage, potted flowering plants, and foliage plants. Examples of improper postharvest treatments include poor temperature and/or humidity management, inadequate aeration, rough handling, improper packaging, transportation delays, ethylene exposures, unsuitable irrigation and/or fertilization practices, and excessive storage time.

The **Chain of Life Network®** provides information to address and solve these types of postharvest-related problems. It combines the educational and commercial experiences of its founder, Dr. George Staby, with significant input by floral industry veterans and university researchers to form the most comprehensive informational care, handling, and marketing program available. It also builds on previous and present floral industry, university, and association efforts that have addressed the same or similar postharvest subjects.

To understand better the potential opportunities that are associated with this program, one should become familiar with an earlier educational program named Chain of Life.

With the backing of OFA, floriculture faculty (D.C. Kiplinger, Jerry Robertson and George Staby, The Ohio State University, and Charles Conover, University of Florida) initiated an

educational program in 1976 that was eventually named Chain of Life. It was the purpose of that program to obtain, verify, and disseminate proper post-harvest care and handling information for flowering potted plants, foliage plants, and cut flowers.

By the early to mid-1980s, many of the Chain of Life promotional efforts were reduced or eliminated. Reasons included the perceived need for something “new” to be developed and a lack of adequate funding.

While Chain of Life-related topics seldom appear in industry trade publications today, its name and meaning still ring true to many industry members who were in business during its birth. In short, it was believed that many of the attributes of that program could be reinvigorated under a new name and logo to provide a platform from which proper and practical flower and plant care information could be disseminated.

To reflect its purposes in today's floral industry and yet still have ties to the old Chain of Life program, **Chain of Life Network®** was selected as the new name using the Internet domain name of <http://www.chainoflifeflora.org>. A new logo has been designed, and the service mark registration of the **Chain of Life Network®** name has been granted by the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The program, logo, and service mark are owned and managed by Perishables Research Organization.

Chain of Life Network® encompasses many more crops, promotional media, marketing channels, and customer types than were covered under the original Chain of Life program. For example, we are no longer just talking about cut flower, foliage plant and flowering potted plant care at the retail level. Today, flower and plant care information (including that specific for bedding plants, cut greens, cuttings, plugs, potted herbaceous perennials, cut annuals and perennials, etc.) has to be made

available in many forms and languages to reach growers, wholesalers, retailers, transportation companies, Internet purveyors and buyers, bouquet manufacturers, mass market merchandisers, and consumers among others.

Essential components of the **Chain of Life Network®** are to present all postharvest care and handling information in terms and forms that are easily understood, commercially practical, financially prudent, realistically achievable, and to provide this information at no cost. It includes detailed information on more than 445 floral crops, 180+ frequently asked questions and answers, links to 1,000+ companies that provide products that can help extend flower/plant longevity, links to breeding companies that provide flower/plant species and cultivars with good postharvest characteristics, 17,400+ postharvest care and marketing research articles, and links to 450+ universities, colleges, high schools, technical schools, and design schools that offer floral-related classes. The site can be easily browsed or searched.

This site is supported solely by contributions. Contributors are given special recognition in a number of ways including in the “Contributor Spotlight” section.

More than 2,800 individuals from 53 countries have joined since January 2003, with an additional 5 to 10 members joining daily. Please take a moment to tour this website at <http://www.chainoflifeflora.org> and sign up for your free subscription to explore the most comprehensive assembly of floral postharvest care, handling, and marketing information available in the world.

George Staby

Perishables Research Organization/ *ofa*
Chain of Life Network®
PO Box 669
Pioneer, CA 95666
209-295-1577
Fax: 209-295-1579
georgestaby@chainoflifeflora.org
www.chainoflifeflora.org

Adding on Adds Up to Bigger Sales and Better Service

by Bob Negen

A surefire way to increase your sales without spending one red cent on advertising is to get more from the customers already buying something from your store. One of the most effective ways to do this is to add-on to every sale.

Done properly, adding-on is great customer service – not a pushy sales pitch. In fact, most of the time you haven't given good customer service if you haven't suggested add-on items. Here's a perfect example from my own life...

I recently got my first pair of glasses from my local optometrist – getting older is a bummer! It is a beautiful store with friendly employees, and I got great advice from the doctor – so I was very satisfied with the experience. I had felt very good about our relationship.

I was pleased until... I had to go back two days later to get the special cleaning stuff for the fancy lenses they sold me. Until... I had to go back a week and a half after that to get the repair kit with the tiny screwdriver and replacement screws (and they were closed on Saturday afternoon). And until... I needed to go back yet again to get some of those clip-on sunglasses.

By my third trip, I was seriously annoyed and frustrated. Because they didn't sell me everything I needed the first time, I wasted a lot of time – time spent in better ways than driving to their store.

The bottom line is this – when customers leave your store with everything they need and WANT,

you've got a win-win situation. They're happy, and your sales are bigger!

You have two great opportunities to add-on with every customer. Take advantage of them both, and watch your sales and customer satisfaction soar.

First, you can and should add-on with the "main" sale. When I was in the kite business, I would add on string and a tail whenever a customer bought a kite. If you are in the vacuum business, you sell extra bags; the shoe business, you sell socks and extra laces...you get the idea. And although the technique seems obvious, you'd be amazed at how many of us small store owners miss this golden opportunity.

Your next opportunity occurs after the "main" sale is made and you bring your customer to the register. The area surrounding your cash register should generate enormous amounts of money for you. This is where you put your impulse items, those crazy items that nobody needs but lots of people will buy. I recently read that in independent hardware stores, the biggest selling item (units, not dollars) is no longer keys, but candy.

Make sure your register add-ons are fun to buy, easy to sell, and perhaps most importantly, have high profit margins. The favorite register add-on in my toy store was a whistling balloon helicopter – blow up a balloon, attach it to the wings, and let it fly with a silly whistling sound. We sold them by the thousands at about a 70 percent margin!

Everyone can find great register add-ons. One of our clients has a high-end gallery and wasn't sure this register add-on idea would work for her business, but she decided to give it a try. Their best add-on was a "Fizz Ball," a large bath salts ball in beautiful colors and delicious scents that fizzes when you drop it in the tub. They were presented in sophisticated wrap and piled high in a huge glass bowl – gorgeous. She estimates that adding on at the register increased her holiday sales by \$10,000. Wow!

Here are two tips for making register add-ons super sales generators:

1. Don't put too many items at the register as add-ons. If there are too many choices, your customers will frequently be overwhelmed and choose none. Rotate different items until you've found your best bet add-ons, and then keep 'em on the counter and keep 'em in stock!

2. Make sure everyone on your staff shows every customer an add-on at the cash register **before they give the total dollar amount for the sale**. A quick demonstration and an enthusiastic endorsement will persuade even more people to buy. The trick is to add-on constantly and consistently until it becomes a habit.

It can't be stated strongly enough that if you and everyone who works in your store attempt to add on to every single sale, you will see significant sales increases. It's the little things done well, and done all the time, by everyone in your organization that mean the difference between constant struggle and the type of success you deserve.

Want more great tips? Get FREE business building ideas delivered to your "inbox" every week. Sign up for your "WhizBang! Tip of the Week" at www.WhizBangTraining.com.

Bob Negen
WhizBang! Training
101 Washington #129
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616-842-4237
Fax: 616-842-2977
bob@WhizBangTraining.com



University Breeding Programs...A Dying Breed?

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Has anyone else out there looked at our handful of university breeding programs and concluded that, because commercial releases from the programs have occurred at a much slower rate than those from the private programs, the university programs are not keeping up with the rest of the industry? Has anyone else concluded that, because cultivar releases seem to be the yardstick by which we measure success in a breeding program, the university breeding programs have become dinosaurs that may not be keeping up with the rapid pace to which today's industry is marching? Has anyone else concluded that, because of this pace, university breeding programs have become an obsolete, dying breed in themselves?

Let's return to the premise above that most graduate student research does not end up contributing directly and immediately to how we grow plants. Why should university breeding programs be any different? If cultivars are not being released frequently, does that mean the program is a failure? How many times have you tried to grow a new crop and failed for one reason or another, but learned enough from the failure to do better the second time around?

Try This Perspective

Ignorance can be viewed as an opportunity to educate. My ignorance of plant breeding has turned into a blessing in disguise. Let me explain. Dick Craig has been very kind to me over the years. I look at him as a mentor, as do so many other floriculturists in this country. Someday I'm going to draw his family tree, a tree showing where all of the graduate and undergraduate students he touched over his stellar career have ended up. Then I'm going to track them all down and list every commercial cultivar they have released while working for various private companies or universities. Are you getting a feel for where this is heading?

Dick recruited both my son and daughter to Penn State. Much to this father's concern, my home in Massachusetts is no longer 100 percent Buckeye scarlet and gray as some Nittany Lion blue and white has crept into the picture. My daughter called me last fall during her first semester excited with the following news: "Dad, Dr. Craig showed me how to breed Regal Geraniums today! I made my first cross, and I'm going to help with the Regal program!" For me, this news allowed me to join another chapter of the parent club...the one made up of parents who have witnessed a significant light bulb lighting for the first time in their child's mind. It's a delightful thing to witness, a really nice club to join.

Back to Dr. Craig's family tree. I started thinking differently while Dick was speaking to the National Floriculture Forum group. Proving that it's never too late to learn, this time the light bulb that lit was in **my** mind.



Instead of measuring his program by the number of cultivar releases, shouldn't we instead measure its success by the number of breeders graduated? In other words, and I'll steal a literary trick from HBO's you know what and the City...in a day when traditional breeding programs are under fire...who's breeding our breeders?

Traditional Breeding Isn't Cool

Anyone in the academic world will tell you that today's college administrators have forced the plant breeding pendulum so far toward the side of genetic engineering and molecular genetics that traditional breeding programs have been put at risk. Today, we are in danger of losing Dr. Craig's position at Penn State unless industry can convince administrators of the importance of training traditional breeders to complement the genetic engineers. I use Penn State as one example; there are other programs that have already been lost or will be in trouble if a key individual retires.

It's probably true that we shouldn't expect to hold onto every program that's out there just because it exists. Certainly times change and areas of research must change to keep pace with evolving industry needs. Molecular geneticists are accomplishing things we've only been able to dream about in the past. But when I have a chance to generate that list of cultivar introductions that are a direct result of Dr. Craig's breeder breeding tree, how long do you think the list will be? Given that new introductions will fuel our greenhouse businesses for years to come, are you worried about how we're going to breed enough breeders to breed enough plants? I am. I'm planning to do whatever I can to help us hold on to Dr. Craig's traditional breeding program in rural State College, Pennsylvania.

Peter Konjoian
Konjoian's Floriculture
Education Services
48 Brundrett Ave
Andover, MA 01810
978-683-0692
Fax: 978-683-6962
peterkfes@aol.com

ofa

Keeping Up With Insect Management

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pesticide recommendations and considerations. There is a detailed table or chart that briefly describes the insecticides and miticides labeled for control of insects and related pests in greenhouses.

Powell, C. C., and R. K. Lindquist. 1997. *Ball Pest and Disease Manual* [second edition]. Ball Publishing, Batavia, IL. 426 pgs.

This book provides information related to pesticide use and safety, cultural, and environmental control issues and emphasizes a "holistic" approach for managing plant health, with easy-to-reference chapters for quick diagnosis of insect, mite, and disease problems encountered in greenhouses.

Web Sites

<http://ipm.ncsu.edu/ornamentals> (North Carolina State University's Ornamentals and Turf Insect Pest Management)

<http://ipm.ncsu.edu/agchem/agchem.html> (North Carolina Agricultural Chemical Manual)

www.ecke.com/html/fastfax/pdfs/FF%20insect.pdf (Paul Ecke Ranch Insect and Mite Control Chart)

www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/greenhouse-ipmnotes/ (Northeast Greenhouse IPM Notes)

www.entomology.wisc.edu/mbcn/mbcn.html (Midwest Biological Control News)

www.plantprotection.org/irac (Insecticide Resistance Action Committee or IRAC Mode of Action Classification Document)

Raymond A. Cloyd
University of Illinois
Dept of Natural Resources &
Environmental Sciences
384 National Soybean Research Lab
1101 W Peabody Dr
Urbana, IL 61801
217-244-7218
Fax: 217-244-3469
rcloyd@uiuc.edu



The Short Course is Coming, The Short Course is Coming



by Barbara Helfman

This July 10 to 14, Columbus, Ohio will be inundated with OFA members here for the **75th OFA Short Course**. Growers, garden center retailers, florists, and interiorscapers will meet old friends, make new ones, walk the trade show aisles, and attend some of the most cutting-edge educational sessions available. If you fall into one of those attendee categories, it's an opportunity you definitely shouldn't miss. Just one or two new suppliers and two or three great ideas can make a world of difference in your business life.

Let's face it. The past couple of years have been challenging to business to say the least. Many companies have cut back, severely, on costly travel; and its related costs for lodging are under heavy scrutiny. Because of this, you might be tempted to forego this year's Short Course. Big mistake! The opportunities for new sources and new ideas are few and far between, and you're not going to find them within the four walls of your office.

My suggestion? Don't miss out completely 'cause dollars are tight; instead put some creativity into your plan and have the best of all worlds – Short Course attendance plus dollar savings.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Double and Triple Up – Two of the biggest bargains around are the Saturday workshops and Sunday general sessions for interiorscapers. You'd have to spend weeks compiling this knowledge by yourself, and you'd probably never do it as well. If you're within driving

distance of Columbus (Cincinnati, Dayton, Cleveland, Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana), make it a company road trip. Come up the night before, stay over, and take advantage of this unique opportunity. By placing three to a room and frequenting moderately priced restaurants, you can really stretch those dollars.

Road Trip – One creative company I know uses events like these to solidify the team concept. They hire a charter vehicle, load up employees, bring along a fun, gourmet picnic lunch to be eaten on the bus, and off they go. Once at the show, they attend a full day of classes, walk the trade show, and either stay the night or head home. During the drive, they have "mini seminars" about how to work a trade show, better practices, or whatever, and then they sing songs. The time goes by quickly, and the driving is left to others.

Splurge on One Great Event – There is nothing more unifying and uplifting for employees than to be treated to a great, fun dining experience. Columbus is full of great restaurants; many of them moderately priced. To keep the lid on, get menus in advance and pick several entrees that make up "your" menu. Employees can choose from a variety of offerings that won't beat up your wallet – definitely a win/win meal.

Lodging – The OFA room block provides reduced rates at the downtown Columbus hotels and a shuttle service between those hotels and the convention center. This hotel information will be provided in the Short Course promotional program mailed to all OFA members and recent Short Course attendees in mid-April.

Staying at the major hotels near the Convention Center is always a treat, but be sure to check out all hotels on the shuttle route and others nearby. Columbus has a variety of hotel options available.

Also, if you're an interiorscaper, I'll bet you've got hotels in your city as



Interior Plantscape

clients, and I'll bet they have sister properties in Columbus. Check out the map of downtown Columbus and then go visit your friendly local hotel manager. See if he can get you comp'd, do a barter, or at the least give a "friend of the hotel" discount at a sister property in Columbus.

Check out hotels that have a free breakfast opportunity and use this as a deciding factor when comparing hotels of the same rate.

How 'Bout Them Miles? – If you are traveling from a distance, see if you have miles stashed somewhere in one of your credit card or frequent flyer accounts that you can use for a free ticket or two. The rule of thumb is that frequent flyer miles are "worth" about 2 cents so if your flight would cost you over \$500, you might be better off using miles for a free ticket.

On-line Services – On-line travel services really can deliver some lower-than-you'd-expect air fares. Check them out, and see if any also offer car rental and hotel partner discounts.

Before You Get to Short Course

Review the Program – To maximize your dollars, review the Short Course program ahead of time. Each topic has a different icon identifying which segment of the industry the session is most focused toward, although you're welcome at all general sessions. Some topics do have several icons or a general icon listed.

Don't just go by the Title – Check out all the topics and thoroughly read the description of each session to see if it may be applicable for you and your business. Homework done in advance will give you the most bang for your buck. If you bring several employees, split up the group between several sessions and request that they all bring back information to share with the others.

The Trade Show is a Classroom – Not only is it beneficial to see vendor friends and search out new products, but often you can learn about a product meant for a different target market that would serve you as well. The trade show is full of ideas. If you are a catalog "nut,"

pull-along cases like the ones you travel with are great to alleviate strain on the shoulder and back. If you just want information and there's no urgency, carry business cards. Vendors will be happy to mail information to you rather than have it left in hotel rooms.

With a little pre-planning and creativity, your trip to the 75th OFA Short Course promises to be an exciting, educational, and fun event. And, just think, it can be cost-effective too. See you there!

Note: Helfman has attended the OFA Short Course and served as an OFA committee member for a number of years. She is the CEO of TOPsiders Inc. and inventor of the TOPsider planter and the new TOProcks.

Barb Helfman
TOPsiders Inc
PO Box 428640
Cincinnati, OH 45242
800-533-7661
Fax: 513-745-8201
barb@topsidersinc.com



How to Maintain Standards in Your Store

by John Stanley

Success in today's retail world is not about achieving excellence; it is about achieving consistency.

This may seem a revolutionary statement, but think about it ... in our shopping world we accept that not everyone will be excellent; what we will not accept is that a retailer is inconsistent.

The aim of running a successful business is to ensure that one achieves consistency in customer service, hygiene, merchandising, and general safety.

Walk the Floor

Management needs to be seen as being involved in retailing and

maintaining retail standards. This cannot be achieved by staying in the office. You must walk the floor once a day and be seen walking the floor.

I believe the best time of day to walk the floor is first thing in the morning prior to the shop opening. During that walk, you should have a checklist and you should use it to prioritize tasks that need to be carried out during the day.

Walk in Your Customers' Shoes

When walking the store, you must walk the store as if you were a customer. Start outside the front door to the shop and take the route your average customer would take.

Go to the checkout and leave the store. If you do not, you will miss the obvious. Never assume anything.

Remember Retail is Detail

Retail is detail – that's what retailing is all about. Detailed stores are admired by their customers; the detail is what many people call common sense, but it is rare.

Always check:

- Fingerprints on the front door (especially if it is glass)
- The condition of the floor
- Toilet paper in the bathrooms

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Academic Update: The University of New Hampshire



by Paul Fisher

Set in a beautiful rural location in coastal New Hampshire, the University of New Hampshire (UNH) is a small but dynamic university in teaching, research, and Extension for the green industry. Environmental horticulture (greenhouse, nursery, turf, and landscaping) is the fastest growing and largest agricultural sector in New Hampshire. Annual environmental horticulture industry value is around \$438 million, with \$152 million of that coming from plant production (pss.uvm.edu/ppp/nesurvey/index.htm). Pleasant View Gardens and D.S. Cole Growers are two innovative greenhouse businesses with a national profile. Most other growers are small retail or wholesale/retail operations, often as part of a mixed farm.



Successful research programs are based on people, partnerships, and funding. UNH is fortunate to have a \$1.1 million endowment donated by Raymond Tuttle, a recently deceased landscaper in New Hampshire; and the Anna and Raymond Tuttle



and Rosanna Freyre

Environmental Horticulture Fund is supporting a horticulture research scientist and outreach programs. Our greenhouse and nursery industry is represented by the New Hampshire Plant Growers Association, a professional and effective organization that recently established an endowment of nearly \$100,000 to support research, teaching, and outreach. Other major supporters of our program (thank you!) have included Blackmore Co., FIRST, the Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation, Greencare, Paul Ecke Ranch, P.L. Light Systems, Proven Winners, Scotts Co., Sun Gro Horticulture, and the UNH Agricultural Experiment Station.



Undergraduate Education

A two-year (associate degree) horticultural technology program with an ornamental plant focus is offered through the UNH Thompson School of Applied Science, with 50 students. There are an additional 30 bachelor's degree students in environmental horticulture and plant biology. Floriculture graduate students over the past six years have worked in plant nutrition, greenhouse lighting, and flower breeding.

Our primary strength in teaching is to provide hands-on research and production skills. All undergraduate students are required to complete an internship, and most bachelor's students become involved in undergraduate research.

Glenn Harrison provides an excellent example. His B.S. included an internship with a New Hampshire landscaping firm; two years of part-time greenhouse research; his own design of a computerized irrigation system where drip irrigation was controlled with tensiometers; and hands-on growing of poinsettia and bedding plant crops in class. This provided Glenn with a strong background to join Cavicchio Greenhouses in Massachusetts as a grower.



Outreach

Examples of outreach projects initiated by UNH Extension and the Tuttle Fund:

- "Growing a Green Generation" provides horticulture activities aimed at kindergarten and pre-K children. This project is a collaboration between horticulture and Extension staff, including Rosanna Freyre and Dot Perkins, undergraduate students, and the UNH Child Study and Development Center – a model day care, kindergarten, and teacher training facility. See horticulture.unh.edu/elementary.html

ofa Academic Update

for information. A new "Growing A Green Generation" book and video will be released in 2004.

- We have formed a grower school series which rolled out its first training modules in February 2004 (introductory and advanced nutrition for soilless media). These modules are in-depth one-day sessions on different topics and involve collaboration with Michigan State University's College of Knowledge. See ceinfo.unh.edu/Agriculture/Documents/Aghome.htm for education programs.



- We have run a Poinsettia Breakfast series for three years where 10 to 20 New Hampshire and Massachusetts growers gather at greenhouses around the state every two weeks. Growers bring along their own plants to answer the question "Am I on track?" and discuss crop issues over doughnuts and bagels. This Extension series has been very well received, with the biggest benefit being the interaction between growers. In 2004, we may shift focus to surrounding states – our New Hampshire growers have learnt it all by now!
- New Hampshire Public Television has run an award-winning series of short pieces that highlight horticultural firms, which are being packaged as case studies for use in New Hampshire schools. See "Growing in New Hampshire" under <http://www.nhptv.org/outlook/#>.
- We put flower power to work by installing 12-foot poinsettia trees and informational displays about horticulture in our state legislative building and campus sports arena, in collaboration with industry.

- If you retail plants, check out the *Garden Center Critique and Merchandising Guide* developed by David Seavey and UNH Extension to evaluate your own business; it is a great investment (<http://ceinfo.unh.edu/agpubs.htm>).

Research

We have three strengths in floriculture research: flower breeding, plant nutrition, and greenhouse management software.

Flower breeding. Dr. Rosanna Freyre is a plant breeder at UNH working on ornamentals, with two new releases in 2003 through the Proven Selections brand, *Anagallis* 'Wildcat Blue' and 'Wildcat Orange.' Rosanna has collaborations with Dr. Robert Griesbach at the USDA, Dr. Michael Dillon at the Chicago Field Museum, and Peruvian researchers studying genetics of flower color (*Anagallis monelli*) and also phylogenetics of Peruvian flower genera, notably *Nolana*. The project is interesting for its joint venture nature, since practical plant breeding now has very limited support at most universities. Dr. Freyre has a joint project funded through the UNH Agricultural Experiment Station, the New Hampshire Industrial Research Center (a state provider of seed money for innovative business ventures), and the Proven Winners group.

Plant nutrition. Our research focus is on nutritional needs of new cultivars, pH management, and micronutrient nutrition. Dr. Bill Argo from Blackmore Co. has been a key collaborator, and we recently published a book on *Understanding pH Management for Container-Grown Crops* that packages both research and practical management guidelines (www.meisterpro.com/mpn/). The FIRST grower endowment supported research on pH management for geraniums and marigolds that led to an Iron-Out nutrition program (see www.firstinfloriculture.org/research_reports.htm). FIRST, Blackmore, and Proven Winners supported research that helps you group bedding plants with

similar needs and improve iron nutrition to these crops – check for upcoming articles in the *OFA Bulletin*.

Computer decision-support systems. We have developed several programs for graphical tracking of plant height (UNH FloraTrack), nutrient levels (FloraSoil), and pest counts (FloraPest). Graphical tracking is available for free for poinsettia growers through support from the Paul Ecke Ranch (www.ecke.com/new1/poin_techhelp.asp). Other software is available through UNH (ceinfo.unh.edu/agriculture/documents/flora.htm).



New Directions

We are upgrading our greenhouses and bringing together a research team to focus on the young plant industry. A research scientist, Jinsheng Huang, has just joined our program to develop a model to explain how pH changes in a container medium over time, which is an opportunity to pull together new and existing research and develop new technologies. On the Extension side, look for new Internet training modules from UNH in collaboration with industry partners, especially in the areas of plant nutrition, poinsettia production, and horticulture for young children.

Paul Fisher & Rosanna Freyre
University of New Hampshire
Dept of Plant Biology
928 Spaulding Hall
Durham, NH 03824
603-862-4525 (Paul)
603-862-1912 (Rosanna)
Fax: 603-862-4757
Paul.Fisher@unh.edu
rf@unh.edu



Staff Training is Important



by Barb Wingfield

Are you trying to find productive, competent, knowledgeable employees? Looking for the secret? Train your employees!

Many employers use the “sink or swim” method and wonder why their employees make mistakes or don’t know how to handle situations with customers.

Whether you are training a new employee, providing a current employee with more training, or needing to bring the entire staff up to speed on new procedures or equipment, training is an important part of your company’s success.

Cultivating employees to be knowledgeable and productive takes a little planning ahead of time. Here are seven steps to help you design a stronger training program for your employees.

1. Plan ahead.

For new employees, don’t wait until they show up for their first day of work to decide how they are going to be trained. Before their first day, make a list of the skills and tasks that you want the employee to learn. Think about the *how* and *who* of the training process.

Now write beside each item the person who would do a great job of teaching that skill or task to the new employee. One way to track progress is to give the new employee the list of who will provide what training for each skill. The employee can check off each task and report back to you what has been accomplished.

When instructing your staff on new procedures or equipment, choose a time when most people will be able to attend. Take into account people who cannot make it, those who are on vacation, or any who might be ill. How will these people receive the information they miss?

Too often employees are criticized for doing something incorrectly only to find out that the new procedure was

explained while they were on vacation. Determine a method that fits with your work environment to make sure all employees are kept in the loop.

2. Use your resources.

As new employees begin, determine the first skill you would like them to learn. Who would be the best teacher for that skill? The varied tasks that a new employee needs to learn can be handled by a variety of people. One supervisor might be very good at showing someone the correct way to water all the plants, and maybe a veteran employee can demonstrate the correct way to dead-head the flowers.

Too often, employers think that only one person must conduct training. Different people have their own set of gifts and talents at which they excel. Choose individuals based on their strengths to train the employee on a particular task.

Using this method has many added benefits. It shows you have confidence in your current staff that they are competent in the skill and able to train another person, and it provides an opportunity for employees to get better acquainted.

Don’t overlook opportunities for vendors to provide training to your staff on new products. Most salespeople are a wealth of knowledge on their products, and they love to hear comments and questions from the “trenches” about their product.

3. Practice the skill or task.

When training employees, it is very important to have them do the task along with you or do it after you have demonstrated the correct way. This allows them to put into practice what they have just learned and ensures they have understood the correct procedure.

4. Explain the why.

Today’s employees don’t just want to be robots performing the tasks that have been assigned to them. They want to understand the reasoning behind a certain procedure being done a certain way. Be

willing to explain. The result: a more knowledgeable and willing employee.

5. Lessen fear of failure.

Be aware that in training, many employees fear they will not be able to remember everything that has been told or shown to them. The employee who has never used heavy equipment and is now responsible for loading mulch may be more scared than you realize. Be willing to go over and re-explain each step and why it is important to the success of the job and the business.

6. Provide encouragement.

Don’t forget to provide praise and encouragement as the employee learns new skills or tasks. Be specific in providing encouraging words. Rather than saying “You did a great job today,” be more specific. “You did a great job today of rearranging the annual display by the cash register. It looks much more colorful.” Employees are looking for owners and supervisors who are supportive and are willing to help them learn and grow. Employees who feel as if they are supported and nurtured will bloom and blossom.

7. Review the process.

Set up a time with the employees in training to discuss the training process. Review what is going well and what they need to spend more time learning. Be willing to keep an open mind and work together to build a stronger training program.

Good training is the backbone of any successful business. Employees want to succeed at their jobs. The question is, will you give them the tools they need to do the best they can at their jobs? Or will you resort to the “sink or swim” method? The choice is yours!

Barb Wingfield
 The Workplace Expert
 Green Thumb Management
 16388 Lindsey Dr
 Kenton, OH 43326
 419-674-4926
 Fax: 419-675-7247
 barb@greenthumbmanagement.com



Why Be Political?

by Lin Schmale

In this era and climate, the floral industry can't afford not to be political.

At the beginning of 2004, everyone is deluged with a barrage of political precursors to the 2004 presidential and congressional elections – the Iowa primary, the New Hampshire primary, the frontrunners, the pundits, the talk shows, the media. So who needs another “Letter from Washington?”

Floriculture and nursery crops are a special industry with a great product – a product proven to improve people's emotional well-being, to give senior citizens an emotional lift, to beautify cities while building civic pride and community involvement, and to improve our interiorscapes, the places where we work and live. Flowers and plants are, we all know, an industry coming into its own as baby boomers turn to gardening. Lobbying on behalf of the floral industry in Washington is a joy, because flowers and plants just tend to make people happy, and people (read “senators and representatives”) are interested in the industry. Talking about anemones, roses, geraniums, chrysanthemums, poinsettias, impatiens, and petunias is a lot easier sell than talking about widgets, car parts, airlines, or postal carriers' unions.

I'm not downgrading any of those industries – they are all important, just as the green industry is important to its millions of participants and beneficiaries. The green industry has, however, a great and relatively untapped opportunity. That opportunity is on the grassroots political front – members of the floral industry getting involved with, getting to know their Congressional representatives and senators.

So, what kinds of things can you do? Many members of the industry have reached out to take the initiative in helping their elected representatives understand the importance, value, and

joy of their businesses. Perhaps the easiest way is to call your elected representative's local office, make an appointment, and stop by to meet with him or her. Extend an invitation to visit your business. It doesn't have to be an elaborate event – just touring a greenhouse or a flower shop is an interesting and new experience for most people, including elected officials. If you want, their press secretary can help get local press there. If you feel unsure, call SAF's Government Relations department, and we'll help you strategize and plan! The most important thing is to get that first meeting and handshake accomplished. Once you've begun to establish a relationship with your representative (and hopefully one or both of your senators), you put a “face” on the industry – and that can help not just you, but your industry and our efforts in Washington, D.C. on the industry's behalf. Providing flowers or plants for local political events is another easy thing to do.

In the meantime, what's going on in Washington?

Here are some of the issues that SAF is working on; and YOU stepping forward to establish a rapport and a relationship with your Congressional representatives might make a difference with these issues.

Compensation for Geranium Quarantine Losses. SAF and the American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA) worked hard last year to get language included in the 2004 Department of Agriculture budget which, with some further pressure from individual members of Congress, should push USDA into paying a portion of the losses incurred during last year's quarantines. Whether or not this year's quarantines will be included is, at this writing, an unknown – but if you are a grower who has suffered losses, it is important that you contact your elected representatives and let them know how

the quarantines affected your business, your customers, and your employees. It's very important to let us know that you have made that contact, because then I can follow up here in Washington. If I don't know that you've made the contact, obviously, I can't use that information in my efforts!

Permanent Repeal of the Estate Tax. The estate tax continues to move toward its 2010 full repeal – but unless Congress acts, the tax will be reinstated in 2011 at a maximum rate of 55 percent with an exemption level of \$1 million. This so-called “sunset provision” makes it difficult for industry members to plan for their businesses' and families' futures. SAF continues to work with the Family Business Estate Tax Coalition to take the issue to Capitol Hill again. That makes input especially important from small-business owners who could be hurt by the tax. To access a pre-written letter to your senators, go to www.safnow.org and click on “Write to Congress.”

Health Care Reform. SAF is continuing to work to advance association health plan (AHP) legislation, the “Small Business Health Fairness Act,” which would allow businesses to pool together and purchase health insurance through AHPs. In addition, SAF is working to advance a bill that eliminates the requirement that sole proprietors, partners, and corporation shareholders pay 15.3 percent self-employment tax on health insurance premiums.

Immigration Reform. This is one of the most important issues facing agriculture today. More than 70 percent of the U.S. agricultural work force is estimated (by USDA) to be illegal. The Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform (ACIR), including SAF and ANLA, is working hard for passage this year of the AgJOBS bill. Many years of negotiations and effort have gone into

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Complying with Labor Laws: Defining the Target



Mid American Ag and Hort Services (MAAHS) was founded on the principle that the vast majority of employers desire to comply with labor laws/regulations. Compliance begins with knowing and understanding laws/regulations and which ones apply to any given business. This is why education is the most important function of this relatively new organization. Each law/regulation includes some reference to applicability. Applicability may be related to gross sales, number of employees, inter- or intrastate commerce, nature of the business, the state in which the business operates, etc.

Employers utilizing the proper knowledge, understanding, commitment, and resources can comply with numerous regulations. Some regulations are open to different interpretations by different people. The relationships of state regulations to federal regulations vary from state to state. MAAHS can help clarify these issues. In fact, such clarification earlier this year helped one member save \$160,000.

Some employers exceed compliance with regulations in order to compete for the best employees. Some employers exceed compliance when overzealous regulators exceed their authority and compel employers to do so. Regulators are also responsible to comply with regulations and should be just as accountable as employers. MAAHS plays a role in this accountability and has worked accordingly with several regulators to keep enforcement limited to the written regulations.

MAAHS is the result of the leaders of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Indiana Farm Bureau, Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association, OFA – an Association of Floriculture Professionals, Ohio Fruit Growers Society, Ohio Vegetable and Potato Growers Association, and Ohio Landscapers Association committing to labor education, regulatory compliance, and recruiting. This is done through newsletters, manuals, seminars, telephone consulting, and other services. MAAHS is already international in scope via its foreign labor advisory services that have helped place workers from South Africa and Mexico for its members.

MAAHS will soon launch a new web site that will comprehensively present the myriad of state and federal laws/regulations, along with how to comply, valuable services, management tools, and more. The site will assist employers in their desires to manage the human resource risks of their businesses while allowing their employees to enjoy positive working and earnings environments.

MAAHS and its sponsor members invite employers in Ohio and Indiana to join this commitment to defining the compliance target. Contact MAAHS at 614-246-8286 or labor@ofbf.org to learn more.

Mid American Ag & Hort Services Inc
 John Wargowsky
 Executive Director
 PO Box 182383
 Columbus, OH 43218-2383
 614-246-8286
 Fax: 614-246-8686
 labor@ofbf.org
 www.midamservices.org



WHY BE POLITICAL?

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this bipartisan legislation, which is supported by groups as divergent as the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Hotel and restaurant industries, among others, are closely watching the bill's progress, and President Bush has announced a plan to extend immigration reform to other industries as well. As the only bill ready for passage this year, AgJOBS has a great head start – but Congress **must** hear from the industry on this issue. For more information, and an easy-to-send letter to Congress, go to

www.safnow.org and click on "Write to Congress." It will take about five minutes, and you will greatly help the chances of the bill passing this year. The bill has more than 50 Senate co-sponsors and nearly 100 House co-sponsors, so we are almost at a "tip-over" point – your letter could make the difference!

These and many other issues can, and will, make a difference in your business' bottom line – but your involvement is needed! Of course, to really get involved and make a difference, you may want to attend SAF's Congressional Action Days each

year in Washington, D.C. (CAD 2004 is scheduled for March 15-16.) Join your business colleagues and friends in visits to the Hill, hear speeches from notables like former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and political columnist George Will, and experience Washington firsthand. It's easy, and believe it or not, it can be fun!

Lin Schmale
 Society of American Florists
 1601 Duke Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314
 703-838-5232
 fax: 703-836-8705
 lschmale@safnow.org



How to Maintain Standards in Your Store

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- Cleanliness of worktops and the checkout
- Out-of-date or ripped posters
- Cobwebs
- Dead flies in the store window

Sound obvious? A survey of small stores carried out in Illinois by Arthur Anderson found:

- 97 percent emptied litter bins daily.
- 66 percent washed windows daily.
- 52 percent cleaned the toilets daily.
- 49 percent mopped floors daily.
- 21 percent waxed the floors daily.

Write an Evaluation Checklist

The checklist is critical in maintaining consistency, and its aim must be to ensure you have an image that is consistent in your consumers' eyes.

Some thoughts for your checklist are:

- Is your storefront clean and inviting to the customer?
- As you enter your store, where does the customer's eye focus? Is this what you want them to focus on?

- Are the key locations in the store supporting the correct product? Is this product at the correct stocking level, and is the signage clearly visible?
- From the entrance, is it easy to locate all the departments in the store?
- Can you see strong promotional signage related to the specific products you are promoting in the store?
- Is the racetrack easy for the customer to follow? Is it uncluttered, clean, and safe?
- Is the store inviting to the customer when he or she takes the first five steps into the store?
- Are all the lights working? Are they all on and located in the correct locations and at the correct angles?
- Do products on display make a strong statement to your customer, and are they inviting the customer to buy those products?
- Does the merchandise reflect the image of your store?
- Does your store reflect a personality to your customers? Does it reflect the name on the outside of the store?

- Are the familiar brands that customers ask for in the correct locations around the store?
- Do the shop fittings and fixtures for promotions reflect the image you are trying to create?
- Do you have "lifestyle" statements around the store that your customers can relate to?
- Are you using the upper walls correctly? Are the consumers' eyes brought down onto products, or are you encouraging them to look at the ceiling due to misplaced signs and products?
- Is the cross merchandising in the store relevant to your customers?
- Do you have the correct ratio of signs in the store, and are these signs relevant to your customers and the products next to them?

Ref: Rod Pickworth, Home Owners Warehouse

Check Your Overall Image

The following is an example of a checklist which you could adopt for your store:

YOUR WEEKLY CHECKLIST – How good are you?								
		Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neither One Nor the Other	Slightly	Quite	Extremely
Physical Appearance	Dirty							Clean
	Unattractive decor							Attractive decor
	Difficult to shop							Easy to shop
	Slow checkout							Fast checkout
Products Offered	Narrow selection							Wide selection
	Depleted stock							Fully stocked
Pricing	Low prices compared to others							High prices compared to others
	Average dollar spending low							Average dollar spending high
	Large number of specials							Low number of specials
Staff	Discourteous							Courteous
	Cold							Warm
	Unhelpful							Helpful
	Inadequate number							Adequate number
Advertising	Uninformative							Informative
	Unappealing							Appealing
	Unbelievable							Believable
	Unhelpful							Helpful

OFA Event Calendar

July 10-14	OFA Short Course – Columbus, OH
October 22-25	OFA Board & Committee Meetings

2004 OFA Short Course – 75th Anniversary

The 2004 OFA Short Course will celebrate “75 years of planting the seeds of knowledge” this July 10 to 14 in Columbus, Ohio. For 75 years, the OFA Short Course has been THE place for floriculture industry professionals to meet, network, learn, and conduct business with their peers from around the world. Attendees from all segments of floriculture – greenhouse growers, garden center operators, interior plantscapers, retail and wholesale florists, and mass marketers – can get a worldwide perspective on what’s happening in the industry. In 2004, the event will feature nearly 130 educational sessions and a 1,300-booth trade show.

Archie Griffin, an Ohio State University (OSU) alumnus and one of college football’s greatest players, will be the keynote speaker on Sunday, July 11. Griffin’s presentation will be titled “The 3 D’s of Success” – desire, dedication, and determination. Griffin recently became president of the OSU Alumni Association, after many years as OSU’s associate director of athletics.

Special celebrations are being planned for the 75th anniversary. Historical items will be featured during OFA Short Course reception, as well as in decorations throughout the convention center. If you would like to loan OFA any photos, previous Short Course programs, or stories of interest that could be shared at the Short Course, please contact Mary Jane Weals at the OFA office (614-487-1117; mweals@ofa.org).

OFA TIPS for your Bookshelf

Is your library up to date? OFA has several TIPS publications in stock that are great reference tools. Visit the OFA Web site (www.ofa.org) for a complete description about *Tips on Growing Vegetative Annuals*, *Tips on Designing, Growing, and Marketing Mixed Baskets and Containers*, *Tips on Managing Problems in the Interior Plantscape*, *Identification of Insects and Related Pests of Horticultural Plants*, and many more books. Stock up now!

Retail Florists are Invited to “Euro-Meeting 2004”

“Euro-Meeting 2004,” an international florist meeting, will be held August 2-7, 2004, in Grunberg. Per Benjamin, world champion of florists 2002, and Wally Klett, international teacher and wedding design expert, will present seminars. For more information, contact the German Association of Florists (Fachverband Deutscher Floristen e.V.) at phone: 49 (0) 209 95877-0, e-mail: info@fed.de, or www.fdf.de.

Future OFA Short Courses

July 9-13, 2005	Columbus, OH
July 8-12, 2006	Columbus, OH
2007-2010	Columbus, OH

www.ofa.org



2130 Stella Court
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1033 USA

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