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Grower News

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Editor John Esser

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Selling Color

Save the date, CFGW's August 6th Field Day

Mistakenly, many greenhouse owners and growers think we sell plants but I say they are wrong. We sell color, visions of a colorful garden and bountiful vegetables. The plant only facilitates that vision. We need to realize what a customer imagines when she enters our business. It is a dream of a colorful garden that is showy throughout the growing season, a garden that will be attractive for the owner to enjoy but probably more likely for their guests and those passing by. To keep your customer coming back year after year we need to aid their success and grow their dream, a colorful garden, one they are proud to show off.

Although we cannot guarantee a colorful garden, we can make it easier for our customers to be successful. How? By producing and selling plants that are vigorous and healthy and produce a high

success rate. Coleus is one plant that can do that. For the gardener they are tough plants rooting well into garden beds and growing easily, they have few insect or animal pests plus whether in flower or not they are always in color. There are varieties that grow well in full sun and those that are suitable for shade. Coleus come in a large number of different plant shapes, leaf forms and more colors and color combinations than I can count. What better plant to add color to a garden and make your customer successful?



Field Trial Bed with Coleus taken June 29

The Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin (CFGW) and the University

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of Wisconsin West Madison Agriculture Research Station are teaming up to grow the Mid West's largest field trial of Coleus this summer and you are invited to attend the 2015 CFGW Field Day to show off those trials. The meeting will start at 9:00 AM Thursday August 6, 2015 at the agriculture field station located at 8502 Mineral Point Road just south of Madison's South Beltline Highway (U.S. 12), Verona, Wisconsin 53593, phone 608-262-2257. There will be 100 varieties of Coleus growing in the full sun and another 20 varieties in shade beds. This is your opportunity to see many varieties growing side by side. You will be able to check out their growth habits, leaf color and shapes making it easier to choose the best varieties to grow in your greenhouse next spring.

This year's speakers will be the University of Wisconsin's Plant Pathologist Brian Hudelson, entomologist P.J. Liesch talking about current insect and disease problems in Wisconsin's greenhouses plus Pan American's Mark Gross will discuss Coleus breeding and what you can expect in the future of this increasingly important plant. After a free lunch you will be able to walk the trials with Mark Gross as well as the West Madison Assistant Director Janet Hedtcke and the interns who are working with the Coleus every day.

The West Madison Research Ag Station is also an All American Selections garden and a University of Wisconsin research facility so there are many other plants being growing here from table grape trials, Marigolds, Zinnias, Dahlias, Portulaca and there will be an extensive consumer vegetable trial including many new Tomato, Pepper, Melons and much more growing in these gardens.

Have more questions? Contact a CFGW board member or John Esser at jresser@charter.net or 608-244-3088.

If you cannot make the August 6th Field Day, the trial gardens are open from dawn to dusk every day. It is a pleasant stop any day.

The trials will be colorful, bring your camera.

Editor

Don't Forget!

Save October 7, 2015

The date for CFGW's annual Fall Greenhouse Conference held at the Floral Plant Growers greenhouse in Denmark, Wisconsin. This year's featured speaker will be Kansas State University's Dr. Ray Cloyd, a highly sought speaker on insect and mite control in greenhouses. Dr. Cloyd will discuss the issues surrounding the highly controversial use of Neonicotinoid insecticides. I suspect many of you have been asked if you are using this chemical family for insect control in your greenhouse. This spring I have been carrying on a conversation with a CFGW member who was trying to find a grower who is producing his plants without using this chemical. Is she the first and will others demand no Neonics? Come and listen to Dr. Cloyd and find out why this pesticide has become so controversial. He will also discuss Managing Insects and Mites Without Pesticides. Learn what you can use if you choose, or your customers demand, that you not use Neonics. Dr. Cloyd spoke at a Fall Conference several years ago and was rated well so we are looking forward to hearing him speak again.

In addition four broker sales people have been asked to invite a speaker to give a 25 minute presentation. Gary Lee has invited a speaker from GGS Pro to discuss their technical services which includes insect and disease control as well as growth regulators, etc. Ball's Greg Bogart will bring Bill Calkins to discuss new Ball varieties for 2016.

Michell's John Steinlage will introduce Randy Uhl from Green Fuse Botanicals who will also discuss new varieties for 2016 and Gloeckner's Matt Miller will bring Plant Marvel's Joe Slater to give a quick program on nursery/greenhouse fertilization. This will be fast paced and educational segment.

The program will start at 9:00 AM and end at 3:35 PM. The registration fees will stay at \$55 for the first person from a CFGW member company and \$35 for each additional member, \$70.00 for non CFGW members and \$30.00 for students (with a student ID).

Mark your calendar and be there on October 7.

Editor

In Lieu

This is a copy of a letter concerning the continued use of In Lieu of flowers in many obituaries these days. It's interesting who is putting the "In Lieu" statement in their obituaries. Check the obituary for Dr. Beck in the next article.

Editor

Good morning,

Interesting article about stores who speak negatively about sending flowers for special occasions and holidays which occur a few times throughout the year. I, however, am more concerned with the "in lieu of flowers" sentiment that occurs in our obituaries every single day. I'm sure you are aware that in the retail flowers business these days, funeral orders are the backbone of our cash flow between holidays so with a direct jab at sending flowers we are very disturbed. Being a funeral and an emotional time for families, we can't go to them, and trying to work thru the funeral directors is often a closed door as well – after all, less flowers, less work.

I think about this issue every single day as I read the obituaries and look for that ugly phrase.

I know you're on top of this issue, but is there anything more we can do to turn this around. I tell my tale to all my friends and anyone else who'll listen when the subject comes up. When I explain the damage it can do to our business and give them options when they wish to direct memorials, they are amazed. They had never thought about how it affects us. And, there are so many options to requesting memorials without using "in lieu of flowers" first.

Any suggestions? Thanks for your work on this issue.

Claire Olson

Are You Ready to Gather the Next Generation as a Customer?

As a mostly retired senior citizen (or as my children say an old person) I use my "smart" phone all the time. When looking for a business I often check out their website before deciding to go there. I can check a restaurant's menu before going as well as the hours they are open. Are they closed on Monday's as are many? My cell phone tells me. I have a GPS app installed on my phone so business's website and address can help me find the location even in a town where I don't know the streets or a garden center I've never visited before.

Can I find your business on the internet? Is it a mobile friendly site?

If I as at over 70 years old use my phone often just think how the younger generations relies on theirs. How do you expect to attract younger customers without a mobile friendly web site?

It's important that businesses start realizing mobile-friendly sites aren't optional anymore.

Editor

In Memory of GAIL E. BECK

Gail Edwin Beck was born on July 25, 1923 in Dunn County, Wisconsin to his parents Carl E. and Alta Genevieve (Harshman) Beck. He passed away on May 12, 2015 in Fort Myers, Florida.

Gail is survived by his children Paul L. Beck, Juelene (Johnny) Beck, and Genevieve (Art) Magnuson; grandchildren Nathan (Sarah) Magnuson, Julie (Jay) Gindlesberger, and Wesley Magnuson; great grandchild Jude A. Magnuson; sisters Vonnie Morscheck, Edna Mae (Richard) Williams and many family and friends who will miss him dearly. He is preceded in death by his wife Lois Beck and his parents. Gail grew up on a dairy farm in central Wisconsin and his education derived from a one room school house until the 9th grade. After graduating from high school he volunteered with the US Army and served proudly during [WWII](#). During that time he became wounded and was awarded the [Purple Heart](#) Medal. Following WWII he attended Michigan State and obtained his undergraduate and master degrees in horticulture. He was then hired by the [University of Wisconsin](#)-Madison to build their floriculture program where he simultaneously obtained his Ph.D. in Floriculture. Gail spent 36 years as a university professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1985 Gail retired and with his wife Lois moved to Fort Myers, FL and have enjoyed many years with the Shell Point Retirement Community. Gail was committed to volunteering many hours of his leadership to the 1st Church of the Nazarene in Madison and Fort Myers. He was a devout servant of the Lord and remained always faithful throughout his life. Gail's passions in life were his faith, family and especially his grandchildren.

A graveside service will be held on May 13, 2015 at Fort Myers Memorial Gardens Cemetery beginning at 2:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers you may make a donation to a charity [of your choice](#) in memory of Gail. Please visit www.harvey-engelhardt.com to leave a condolence to the family.

Tricia Check
U.W. Madison Horticulture Department

Editor's Comments

For those who do not know Dr. Beck, he was a key member of the University of Wisconsin's Floriculture program and taught many greenhouse growers over his 36 years teaching in Madison. In my early years working for the Fred C. Gloeckner Company in Wisconsin he was a valuable resource and always ready to answer my questions. Dr. Beck was a "Class Act."

WGIF Auction

I am proud to announce that our first-ever WGIF Online Auction was a success as we raised about \$9,000! Although our goal was a little higher than this, any money generated through this auction was money the WGIF didn't have- so overall I think this was quite an accomplishment. The dollars raised will no doubt make a positive impact on the WGIF's mission and the future looks bright as we are already looking forward to next year's auction. A special thanks to all of our members and associations that have contributed to the success, especially those who served on the Auction Committee. A lot of time and diligence went into this auction, and without them we couldn't have done it. Being chair of the first ever WGIF online auction was a very rewarding experience and I was extremely honored to have been chosen to oversee this endeavor. Although we fell a little short of our goal (depending on how you look at it), I am very encouraged about the future potential of this auction. Based on the responses I received from donors and bidders alike, there is no doubt in my mind that this auction has a very bright

future and will not only be a tradition that both the public and businesses will look forward to each season, but a reliable form of income for the WGIF. This has been a very inspiring experience as well. Coming from a "rookie"- I cannot express how impressed and encouraged I was to see so many of our members come together for 1 common cause. It was refreshing to see so many set aside their own business needs and interests in order to help out an organization that is so vital to the health of our industry. For all of the doubters out there- I must say that the WGIF and it's members are alive and well. So many of our members rallied together and rose to the occasion, and I'm proud to say that we gave it 110% , putting our best foot forward with great results. I am super excited for the future of our industry and I look forward to the opportunity to work on future WGIF auctions.

John Lewandowski
CFGW Board and WGIF Rep. for
CFGW

Board News

Your CFGW board held a teleconference meeting on June 9, 2015.

Treasurer, Paul Ruskiewicz reported that the CFGW account balance was \$16,659.55.

BFG and Carlin will again be donating lunch for the August 6 CFGW Field Day which starts at 9:00 AM at the U.W. West Madison Agriculture Research Station in Verona. John Esser reported that the Coleus were all planted into the field from 4" pots and are looking great. Pan Am's Mark Gross, U.W. Madison's plant Pathologist Brian Hudelson and entomologist P.J. Liesch will be this year's Field day speakers.

Kansas State University's Dr. Ray Cloyd will be the lead speaker at CFGW's October 7, 2015 Fall Greenhouse

Conference at Floral Plant Grower's in Denmark, Wisconsin. He will talk about the issues with Neonicotinoide insecticides as well as Managing insects and mites without pesticides. Also there will be four other speakers giving half hour presentations on fertilization, insect and disease diagnosis and new varieties.

Jason Wenninger, BFG, invited to replace Dave Slater on the CFGW board. Dave is retiring from the board at the end of 2015.

If you have questions or comments please contact a board member.

Editor

How Were Your Spring Season Sales?

The June 23rd Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin (CFGW) membership meeting was held at Roorbach Flowers in Manitowoc, Wisconsin with 18 CFGW members and Roorbach employees in attendance. CFGW vice president Chris Williams moderated the meeting and first asked about Roorbach Flowers. Claire Olson, co-owner with Jim Olson, said Roorbach Flowers has been in business 65 years but built a new office, store and greenhouses in 1999. They are a retail flower shop selling cut flowers and potted plants, green plants, bedding plants in the spring as well as gift items. They also have a greenhouse range in the country.

How were your spring sales was the prime question discussed at this membership meeting. Those attending had a free and open conversation about the spring season sales, what sold and how each business advertised. I say again, this is the most interesting and valuable meeting of the CFGW year.

Chris's first asked about sales trends for the spring sales season. Although comments ranged from great to only

OK, I think that most of the attendees said business was up from last year. A wholesale grower attending said April sales were “Gang busters” but dropped off that high in May although he thought he was still ahead for the whole season. Several commented about May having one weekend with two good sales days. Otherwise one day was warm the other was cold or one was dry and sunny the other was rainy and cloudy, conditions not conducive to great selling season. Claire said Manitowoc had a frost in early June, also not conducive to good sales. A Milwaukee area grower said his sales were up substantially from 2014. Claire also said their spring 2015 sales were about week behind last years.

The conversation turned to what sold well and what did not and the responses were varied. The consensus of the attendees was that Ivy Geranium baskets are not selling well but the new interspecies crosses, such as Calliope were still selling. Chris Williams said he did not think they would grow any Ivy Geranium baskets for 2016 but the Calliope series sold quite well. Calliope Crimson Flame was a hit at least one greenhouse. Also, Zonal Geranium sales were a bit soft with a number of growers still having more plants remaining than they would like.

Chris asked what plants sold out first. The responses were Sanvitalia, Easy Wave Red Velour, Salvia Glitz, Supercal Petunias, Sunpatiens, lime colored sweet potato vines, Euphorbia, MiniSupertunias, a Double Purple Petunia from Selecta, salmon flowered Petunias and other plants with orange and salmon flowers. What did not sell well were New Guinea Impatiens, and New Guinea Impatiens baskets, Bacopa, black leaf sweet potato vines, Supertunia Black Cherry, and plants grown in terra cotta pots (black pots seemed to be preferred).

To attract customers no one was using newspapers but radio ads seemed to

work well as well as advertising on a website, Facebook and emails to customers. A Milwaukee area grower said that growing a “decent plant and selling at a decent price” brings in customers by word of mouth. Chris Williams said they upgraded their sign adding a color video screen which he said helped bring in more customers. Another grower advertised in the Wisconsin Gardener Magazine as well as Northwest Quarterly with good results. Several offered classes during the late winter and spring with good results.

The topic of return policies was discussed. Chris said they will replace plants brought in that have been poorly treated by a customer. He said they use it as an educational tool. It produces good will. Others said they do not accept returns.

This is only an outline of a more than two hour round table conversation. Many more topics and items were discussed than I can write in this article. Plan to attend next June, come, listen and learn.

Editor

I Say

If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind an empty desk is a sign of...

Program for 2015

-August 6, 9:00 AM. CFGW Field Day at the U.W. West Madison Ag. Research Station, Verona (Madison), WI

-September 22, 5 PM Site and topic are pending.

-October 7, 9:00 AM. Fall Greenhouse Conference at Floral Plant Growers, Denmark, WI.

-November 10, 5 PM K&W Greenhouse, Janesville, WI. Topic: Painting Poinsettias.