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Grower News

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Editor John Esser

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Save the Date!

August 7 CFGW Field Day & October 7, 2015 Fall Greenhouse Conference

Save Thursday, August 6, 2015 for the Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin's (CFGW) Field Day to be held at the University of Wisconsin West Madison Agriculture Research Station in Verona (Madison), Wisconsin.

Your CFGW board has chosen Coleus for this year's Field Trials, great timing since the National Garden Bureau has chosen 2015 as "The Year of the Coleus." Coleus is an increasingly important bedding plant crop now grown as a potted crop in addition to the flat and pack only production of a few years ago. It's a versatile plant which can be grown in either sun or shade, pots or ground beds and has many new colorful varieties. It's a plant that has caught the attention of both young and old consumers. As I told my greenhouse customers for many years, "It does not matter if your Coleus plants are in

flower or not, they are always in color." And colorful they are!

Check out the field trials on August 6 and see how the different varieties perform in a Wisconsin garden.

CFGW board member Tom Hartman has obtained samples, through broker salesman, of over 75 sun Coleus varieties and 24 shade varieties for trialing during this summer. Both cutting and seed types will be planted in the trial beds from 4 1/2" pots to making a uniform trial.

The Field Day will include a speaker on the topic of Coleus breeding, selection and production as well as PJ Liesch director of the University of Wisconsin Insect Diagnostic Clinic and Brian Hudelson director of the U.W.'s Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic speaking on topics of emerging plant diseases and insects affecting Wisconsin's greenhouse industry in 2015. A free lunch will be served followed by time to view the trials with the West Madison staff and speaker.

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A member of the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation (WGIF).

Save Wednesday October 7, 2015 for the CFGW's 31 (+ or -) Fall Greenhouse Conference to be held at the Floral Plant Growers greenhouse in Denmark, Wisconsin.

Kansas State University's Dr. Ray Cloyd has been selected as this year's key speaker for the Fall Greenhouse Conference. Dr. Cloyd is nationally known for his knowledge of Neonicotinoid insecticide use, in and out of the greenhouse, and its effects on bees and butterflies. He is scheduled for two 45-50 minute presentations with time for questions. His first topic will be titled "Effects of Neonicotinoides" an important topic with the current discussions in the press about bee losses. Dr. Cloyd's will also talk about "Managing Insects and Mites without Pesticides." Also an important topic if you choose to stop spraying with Neonicotinoid pesticides.

Also for the Fall Conference four plant broker salesmen were asked to invite a speaker to give a half hour presentation at the October 7 Fall Greenhouse Conference. SHS Griffin's Gary Lee has invited Tami Van Gaal from GGS Pro to discuss their technical services which include insect and disease control, growth regulators, crop nutrition and much more advice. John Steinlage, from Michell's has invited Randy Uhl from Green Fuse Botanicals to discuss new plant varieties for spring, 2016. Matthew Miller from the Fred C. Gloeckner Company will bring Plant Marvel's Joe Slater whose topic will be "Advanced Nursery (greenhouse) Fertilization." Ball's Greg Bogart has invited Bill Calkins to discuss new Ball varieties for spring, 2016. Can these speakers fit an hour presentation into 25 minutes? You'll need to attend to find out. Cheer them if they do and jeer if they cannot!

The board's decision to invite speakers to give half hour presentations is the most exciting change in the Fall Conference format in its 31 year history! Half hour talks will, by necessity, be quick paced, to the point and allow the Fall Conference to cover more topics of importance.

Editor

Cfgw.org... A Site to See!

The CFGW is always looking for ways to build increased value to their members, and it has been determined that one of the key components to building that value moving into 2015 was to develop a website that members could truly use as a relevant resource. The new website, created by board member John Lewandowski of Bluemel's Garden & Landscape Center, offers many new exciting features.

For starters, visitors (current and prospective members alike) are treated to an eye-catching landing page that's bursting with colorful snapshots that represent the floriculture industry. As an added touch, John has created a fun slideshow utilizing the clever slogan: "Grow with us." Because this slogan really fits our organization, don't be surprised to see it poppin'-up like daffodils in future promotional pieces. It's already being used on the new CFGW Facebook page! (Search *Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin*).

Aside from the usual membership list and vendor listing which was also on the old site, the new site has some added, cool features that John thought our members would find useful. Links to the **USDA Plant Database, Plant-resources.biz**- created by UW-Horticulture's Eileen Nelson, the CFGW Facebook page, as well as links to digital versions of the popular

publications **GrowerTalks** and **Green Profit** are just some of the handy resources our members will enjoy. That's not to mention the updated 'Greenhouse Management' page that's loaded with useful information related to growing plant material. There's even a 'Gallery' page that captures some of the moments experienced by our members at various functions through-out the year.

John, as well as the rest of the CFGW Board, would like to stress that this site is for our members, and encourages all to take advantage of the free opportunities to promote their business. The CFGW invites all of their members to post job openings as well as post any upcoming events your business may be hosting. Contact johnl@bluemels.com to enter any listings you may have. We'd also like to encourage you to direct other prospective members to our site so that they can get a better idea of what the CFGW is about and why it will add value to their business.

So take some time and explore the new CFGW website. After all, It was designed with you, our member, in mind.

John Lewandowski
Bluemels Garden Center,
CFGW Board

CFGW West Madison Bedding Plant Trials 2014 Growing Season Summary May-Aug

The winter of 2013-14 was exceptionally cold. WMARS experienced lows around -25F. We did see quite a bit of damage on perennial flowers and fruit. Soil temps were very cool well into May as evidenced by the ice found in in the wood mulch pile during the third week of May.

Most of the annual flower and vegetable selections this year were planted from Jun2-5. In June we experienced relatively warm weather with the average temp 3 degrees F above normal. It was also very wet and the station received about 9.7in of precipitation for the month. This is about 4.5in above normal. Though the rain was welcome after planting, it came at a price. We noticed slow growth on transplants probably as a result of leaching of nitrogen out of the shallow root zone. Also the intensity of some of the rains washed and buried portions of the direct seeded crops, such as carrots and beets, and made it necessary to replant.

The rains of June led to intense weed pressure late in the month and into early July. Grasses and pigweed seemed to be a common problem and ultimately led to competition issues in the direct seeded carrots and onions.

In July we experienced slightly cooler weather when compared to the average. We had two nights where the temperature dipped to 50F. Precipitation was low at only 1.9inches for July.

Dry conditions continued into the 3rd week of August with seasonally low to normal temperatures.

In general the season was marked with cool temperatures and slow vegetative growth. Fungal incidence was moderate during the wet period in June, but subsided with the dry weather later in the season. Insect pressure was also low due to the extreme low temperatures in the winter of 2013-14.

Editor's Note: The charts from these trails are included at the end of this newsletter.

Janet Hedtke
Assistant Director
U.W. West Madison Ag. Research
Station

I Say

“Complaining about a problem without proposing a solution is called whining.”

President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt

Recycling Agriculture Plastics

From an email sent to John Esser in December, 2014. I thought I would pass along some of the results from an ag plastic film collection effort in Green County November 3-14. Farmers were able to drop off bale wrap, bunker covers, and silo bags at the Green County landfill site where it was stored and baled prior to shipping to Delta Plastics. The effort resulted in the collection of over 61,000 pounds of plastic film over the course of the two week program. The average load delivered to the drop-off location was just under 4,000 pounds with the smallest amount being 80 pounds and the largest amount 23,300 pounds.

A survey distributed to participants indicated 71% of the farmers traveled less than 20 miles, 21% traveled 20-30 miles and 7% traveled 30-40 miles to drop off materials. Herd size of participants ranged from 20 to 350 cows.

Mark Mayer the UW-Extension Agricultural Agent in Green County served as the primary contact for the program. Green County is still evaluating this effort but hopes to hold future programs next year.

Joe Van Rossum
Recycling Specialist & Director
UW-Extension - Solid & Hazardous
Waste Education Center

www.uwex.edu/shwec

Miss a Membership Meeting?

Here is What You Missed

February 17, 2015 CFGW Membership meeting held at Carlin Sales, Inc. heard Syngenta's Matt Connell discussing the use of Neonicotinoid insecticides in the greenhouse. It's a topic which has been controversial because some say it's partly at fault for killing bees and colony collapse. Matt said that the Neonics are insecticides and will kill bees as well as the insect pests. Matt contends that, if it is used according to its label it is not a major threat to the bee population. Matt said that the incident that caused such a large bee kill was the result of the pesticide not being used according to the label. It was sprayed on a tree that was in flower. The flowers attracted bees and contacting the pesticide many were killed.

To quote Matt, “Yes, Neonics will kill bees but so do almost all pesticides being used. If it's applied according to the label it's safe but we need to live in the real world and those protesting Neonics use can influence the market. It's not science but we need to work with our consumer's hearts and minds.”

Matt reported some, such as Home Depot and others, are requesting that Neonicotinoids not be used on the plants that they sell. I have been contacted by a CFGW member who told me she would be looking for a bedding plant supplier who does not spray Neonics on their crops. Also, of little direct affect on Wisconsin growers, the European Union has banned the use of Neonicotinoids in their producing countries.

Matt said that if we choose to no longer spray with Neonics for insect control, we would need to revert to pesticides which are more toxic. He then went through a

list of insects that are controlled with Neonics and listed options to control those insects. Rotational spraying of different insecticides will also be necessary for good pest control.

Editor's note: I know of at least one CFGW member greenhouse that has been using biological insecticides for several years with success so I don't agree with Matt's comments that the alternatives are necessarily more toxic.

The March 17, 2015 CFGW Membership meeting was held at 3-D greenhouse, Mukwonago, Wisconsin where owner Doug DeBack gave a short history of their business. They started as a diary but his wife, Debbie, ask him to built a small greenhouse to grow a few plants for their garden. That was in 1993 and now the greenhouse is now their sole business, he is no longer farming.

CFGW and WGIF Board member and website designer John Lewindowski, projected the www.cfgw.org website on to a screen to show those attending how the site looks and what it looks like. He said the board's decision to update an old, outdated site was to make one to show the greenhouse industry and your customers that the CFGW and Wisconsin's greenhouse industry is vibrant and up to date as well as to add energy to CFGW. Remember, the internet is where young people find their information not the yellow pages or newspapers.

The site contains a current list of CFGW members. An attendee suggested an interactive map of Wisconsin showing the location of each of our members so they can be found by potential customers. It was also suggested that the business be listed be as wholesale or retail. There is also CFGW board contact information as well as a

reference to CFGW's membership in the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation.

The site displays the CFGW annual trial results for the field testing at the University of Wisconsin West Madison Agriculture Research Station. There is a place on the site where one can list job opportunities in his business. Someone suggested there be information about the issues with Neonic insecticides. The site also has a brief description of the CFGW and its history.

Also John placed a large list of potential suppliers on the site but asked if members thought they should be CFGW members to be listed. There was no answer to this question.

Editor

I Say

Be thankful for the bad things in life. They open your eyes to the good things you weren't paying attention to before.

2015 CFGW meeting dates and sites

- April 7** at Groth's Country Gardens, Cedarburg, WI
- June 23** at Roorbach Flowers, Manitowoc, WI
- August 6** CFGW Field Day at the U.W. West Madison Ag. Research Station, Verona (Madison), WI
- September 15** Site pending (Dann will ask Karl at Shady Lane Greenhouse, Menomonee Falls, WI
- October 7** Fall Greenhouse Conference at Floral Plant Growers, Denmark, WI.
- November 10** K&W Greenhouse, Janesville, WI.