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Grower News

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Editor John Esser

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Save The Dates!

There are two dates you must add to your calendars. First is the **CFGW's annual Field day scheduled for August 4, 2016** at the University of Wisconsin West Madison Agriculture Research Station 8502 Mineral Point Road, Verona (Madison), Wisconsin 53593. This year's trials feature more than 160 new plant releases for 2017, 2016 and 2015 grown in the Field Stations flower beds. This is your best chance to see these new varieties grown side by side in Wisconsin growing conditions. Plus there are vegetable and table grape trials being held at the same site. Come at 8:30 AM for coffee and treats. The meeting begins at 9.

In the morning you will hear Dummer Orange's Andrew Konicki, the Director of Allen Centennial Gardens Ben Futa and U.W. Plant Pathologist Dr. Brian Hudelson. Andrew will discuss products in the landscape and the direction of plant breeding that can help commercial flower growers. Ben intends to talk about "plant blindness and the value of public gardens while Brian will discuss

current issues with plant diseases that he has seen in Wisconsin greenhouses in 2016.

A free lunch will be served compliments of BFG and Carlin Sales then you will be invited to view the trials growing in West Madison's field beds. Andrew will be there to answer questions as well as West Madison's Assistant Director Janet Hedtcke and her interns.

No preregistration is needed for the Field Day. Just come, learn and visit with other growers!

The second must attend event is **CFGW's Fall Greenhouse Conference scheduled for October 19, 2016** and will again be held at Floral Plant Growers greenhouses in Denmark, Wisconsin. This year's featured speaker is Cornell's plant pathologist Margery Daughtrey. Margery is a much sought speaker and well known in the greenhouse industry for her work on plant disease issues. Registration begins at 8:00 AM with coffee and rolls and a chance to check out the vendor booths with the program starting at 9.

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

Registration and trade show fees have been kept the same for another year. A trade show booth will cost \$125 (although some companies are donating \$300 to help cover additional speaker costs). Registration fees will be \$55.00 for the first employee of a CFGW member company, \$35 for each additional employee and \$70 for each employee of a non member company.

Fall Conference preregistration is requested to help estimate how much food we need but registration is accepted the day of the meeting.

In addition at both the Fall Conference and Field Day meetings the Wisconsin Green Industry Hall of Fame Award for Shelley Ryan will be presented to her husband Dennis Ryan and son Kably.

Editor

I say

Wouldn't it be great if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes; come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller!

The Dramm Corporation Celebrates 75 Years



Dramm Corporation has announced the passing of the 'Rain Wand' to the next generation. Receiving the Rain Wand from Kurt and Marlene Dramm (pictured right) are Hans Dramm and Heidi Dramm Becker (pictured left).

Manitowoc, WI – June 2, 2016 – The Dramm Corporation, a leading manufacturer and distributor of professional greenhouse tools and equipment, is celebrating its milestone 75th anniversary.

In 1941, Manitowoc florist John G. Dramm designed a product that was to become the cornerstone of the Dramm Corporation.

A watering nozzle with 400 tiny holes that turns high velocity water into a soft-flowing shower that is gentle on plants. He called it the 400 Water Breaker® Nozzle and it has become the standard in hand watering tools across the world.

“There’s excitement in the dynamics of seeing a company move from a basement operation to a multimillion dollar global corporation,” said Chairman Kurt Dramm. “We are very excited to be celebrating the 75th anniversary of Dramm Corporation with the company entering its third generation of family leadership.”

Today the company has expanded into four business segments: Retail, Fertilizer, Commercial, and DRAMMwater. The spirit of innovation and commitment to a solution continues today and throughout Dramm’s history. Dramm Corporation revolutionized the horticulture industry by introducing the Pulsfog™ and Autofog™ for chemical applications.

Dramm improved the automatic irrigation systems of dribble tube and compensated irrigation systems to promote even watering and reducing overall water use. Most recently, Dramm provides an innovated approach to design and development of water treatment systems for greenhouses with DRAMMwater.

With every product Dramm produces, the intent is to provide the best solution to our customers.

“We are proud to be celebrating 75 years of providing the highest quality products and exemplary service to professional growers and consumer gardeners alike,” said CEO Hans Dramm.

Family involvement has been an integral part of the growth and success of the company and is still a vital ingredient today. The Dramm Corporation is honored to reach the 75th anniversary milestone.

“My father’s vision, conservativeness, and wherewithal are the formula that has enabled the business to be where it is today. His role paired with a group of really good, dedicated employees is what has contributed to the success of The Dramm Corporation,” said Heidi Dramm Becker, Director of Corporate Relations. “Our family sincerely thanks all of our customers, supporters, and employees.”

To learn more visit us online at

www.dramm.com.

Dramm Corporation

What Has WGIF Done for Me?

I’ve asked frequently asked this question at CFGW board meetings concerning our membership in the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation (WGIF). WGIF’s Executive Director sent this letter to me following our June Membership meeting in Janesville and I think it is worth sharing with our members since a portion of each of your CFGW dues pays for membership in WGIF.

Editor

Good Morning,

Join one of the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation’s (WGIF) member associations and engage! Your life will improve financially, socially, and professionally. We are your “Prosperity Partners.” You’ll be helping create a better industry for the future! Our business is enhancing your life and your business.

We invite you to join an active and engaged association and federation of associations, recognized as representing the industry with legislators and

regulatory agencies in Madison. On national issues, the WGIF partners with PLANET and AmericanHort, which are both national green industry associations.

WGIF employs a professional association management company led by a former green industry professional with over 38 years of industry experience.

Over the years, WGIF and our member associations have been there for your business and the Green industry on numerous important issues of our time. The following are just of some the issues that WNLA WGIF has been involved with or has staff or member representatives serving currently or this past year:

- Unemployment Insurance Waiver Changes for Seasonal Employees
- Advisory Council to DATCP’s State Pollinator Plan Development
- Technical Committee and Advisory to WDNR’s Jumping Worm BMP Development
- Species Assessment Group for DNR’s NR 40 Rule-Invasive Species
- Revision of DATCP and WDNR regulations (e.g ATCP 21, 29, 40, NR 40 including
 - pesticide and fertilizer regulations)
 - DATCP ACM Bureau’s Stakeholder Group on Fees, Revenue and Expenditures
 - Promotion to consumers: State Fair, website, media, on line auction
 - Agrifuture Summit and Ag Workforce Development-(including landscape industry)
 - Unemployment insurance reform measures for lawn applicators
 - Member association of Wisconsin’s Ag Coalition
 - Plastics recycling assessment and needs of the green industry

In recent years we have been the point group for the industry on:

- Phosphate fertilizer ban
- Green industry Economic Survey
- and Day on the Hill events
- Land use assessment for nurseries
- Nursery- inspections and regulations, stop sale and plant disposal protocol
- Sales tax for landscaping retaining walls
- Ag Jobs Bill
- Landscape Architect Licensure
- “Practice Law
- Seed Law
- City of Milwaukee Sick Pay Bill
- Downspout connections requiring a licensed plumber issue...and much more....

WGIF offers its members a wealth of information, services, benefits, and opportunities. WGIF is represented and administered by elected, volunteer Boards of Directors who are professionals and representing a broad range of sectors within the Green industry.

WGIF partners with the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA) in producing the i-Landscape Show in Schaumburg annually. Our member associations produce trade shows, educational programs, tours, and networking opportunities with other members and professionals, like you.

Founded in 1972, WGIF has long-standing founding members, and a firm belief and commitment to member companies in the Green industry. You will receive an annual print directory of members, including suppliers, of our WGIF member associations. Our bi-monthly print magazine *Green Side Up*, will be mailed to your business. E-mail alerts and communications chocked full of important events and information to

help you protect and improve your business.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Again, we want you to have every opportunity to make the most of your investment in your time and membership.

Federation Member Associations

Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin
“Gardens Beautiful” Garden Centers
Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association
Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association
Wisconsin Sod Producers Association

Wisconsin Green Industry Federation
Brian Swingle, Executive Director

Plastic Recycling 2016

Winterland Nursery, 5655 Lincoln Road, Oregon, Wisconsin 53575, 608-455-0006 is again accepting plastic pots, flats and containers for recycling. They cannot accept loose items but would like them on pallets or packed into the bulk soil bags or something similar for ease of handling. Jay says the more the better since it is better for the company picking up.

The best delivery dates are from early to mid August, 2016. Contact Jay at 608-455-0006 if you have questions.

Editor

Thoughts About Exceptional Customer Service

I recently read an article by Carol Miller printed in a spring issue of the Greenhouse Grower magazine titled “Slow Down For Customers Even In the Madness of Spring.” Maybe you’ve already read the article but in case not or want a refresher, Carol writes about stopping at a Dunkin’ Donuts drive through for a cup of coffee and told about not only receiving the coffee but a

t-shirt (part of a random acts of kindness promotion) but the “gal” who served her made eye contact and gave her a smile. Since then she has observed that the staff, no matter the age, make an effort to make eye contact and smile even if it’s at a drive-thru window. Carol also says that “Not one of those kids come across as insincere” and she wonders who is doing the staff training.

Greeting your customer with a smile, meeting their eye and wishing them a good day is part of exceptional service. All of us who have been in the greenhouse business for any time understands how hectic business is at times but a customer receiving exceptional service comes back.

Let me relate three personal customer service experiences that happened to me this spring and let you tell me where you would shop. First at Madison’s Garden Expo, a garden show held each February, I purchased a pruning shears from a vendor. When I started using the shears I found that the lock that holds the shears closed did not work properly. It would not easily catch so the shears opened in my pocket. I returned it to the merchant and explained what was happening and why it was being returned. He promptly sent it back to me saying that if one squeezed with two hands it would lock. I had already determined that this was the case but when pruning, one has little time to put both hands on the handles to close them. I then sent him another letter to explain why this way of closing the shears was not acceptable and complained about his customer service but I also thank him for giving me a great example of poor customer service to write about.

The second experience happened when I went to a local garden center, I had some spaces to fill with perennials. Mostly I knew what I wanted to buy. It was a quite humid, warm, and sunny afternoon so there were few customers shopping. I grabbed a wagon and started walking

through the greenhouses picking up more plants than I came for (obviously a true gardener). There were employees drifting around the greenhouses but none ever stopped and asked me if I needed help nor did any smile or make eye contact. If they had stopped, I might have asked where some items were so I would not have to walk all the greenhouses but otherwise I did not need help. Still those employees could use the training Dunkin Donuts provides theirs.

After leaving that greenhouse I stopped at Kopke’s Garden Center in Stoughton. It was late June so their inventory was down but I was greeted as I walked in and had a brief conversation with an employee who immediately asked if he could help me. I picked up some plants then had another pleasant conversation with the same employee as I checked out.

I won’t purchase another pruning shears from this company and will tell others of my problems and will think twice before I return to that first garden center but with the greeting I had at Kopke’s and the conversation I left with a positive feeling about that shopping experience.

Where would you go back to shop? How does the shopping experience at your facilities rate? Do your employees provide an exceptional shopping experience? Do they greet your customers when they enter your business? You spend a lot of money bringing customers into our greenhouses and garden centers with advertising and promotions why not spend some time training your employees on how to keep those customers coming back?

Editor

CFGW Board News

Your CFGW board met on June 30 by conference call.

Brian Karthaus reported that all the state fair pots had been distributed to growers who will produce finished containers to decorate this year's Wisconsin State Fair Grounds. Brian has received free fair entry tickets which he will distribute to those growing finished planters.

Tom Hartman reported that there are over 160 plants of 2017, 16 and 15 new releases planted in the U.W. West Madison Ag. Research Station for this year's trials. John Esser said he has visited the trial gardens in June and the plants were growing well.

Registration and Trade show booth rentals for the October 19 Fall Greenhouse Conference have been kept the same for another year. Rental for a booth will again cost \$125 (although some companies are donating \$300 to help bring speakers). Registrants will pay \$55 for the first person from a company and \$35 for any additional person. Non CFGW members will pay \$70 per person and Horticulture students \$30.

BFG's Megan Lambert was invited to join the CFGW board. She will help current member Dann Handel set meeting sites and find speakers for membership meetings. Jason Wenninger who left BFG to return to Ebert's Greenhouse Village will continue on the board

Editor

Finding Seasonal Employees

An interesting discussion occurred at the June 28, 2015 CFGW membership meeting when an attendee asked how others were finding employees. He said he has a stable crew but needed extra help this spring so hired several people but they did not work out well for him. Although he did not go into much detail I'm sure all of you have had the same difficulties in finding responsible,

interested and industrious temporary employees.

One attendee posted job openings on his Facebook page. Green-Teks Paul Jacobson says he has been hiring high school athletes. He said they are not afraid of work, getting dirty, heat and cold but moderator John Lewandowski came up with the best solution to finding employees that I've heard. He hires his customers.

John says I can teach someone how to run the cash register but it is more difficult to find someone who is interested in plants, knows how to grow them, the products you sell and can help your customer with ideas and solve gardening problems is almost impossible. Your good customers know plants you just need to find one that is a "people person" then ask them if they are interested in working a few hours a week during the busy time of the year. He gives them discounts on purchasing plants so most are happy to work and are pleased to be asked. These employees will often bring in their gardening friends to work if more employees are needed.

John says the final upside to hiring your employees is that they spend most of the money they earn at his greenhouse.

Editor

Program for 2016

- August 4 - CFGW Field Day at the West Madison Ag. Research Station, Verona (Madison)
- September ?? Pending.
- October 19 – Fall Greenhouse Conference at Floral Plant Growers, Denmark, WI
- November ?? – Hartman's Town and Country, Manitowoc.