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Grower News

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Editor John Esser

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Reserve The Following Dates & Attend These Two Meetings

August 1, 2019 CFGW's Field Day

will again be held at the University of Wisconsin West Maison Agriculture Field Station in Verona (Madison), Wisconsin and will feature 235 varieties of vegetatively propagated Geraniums and 118 varieties of vegetative Potted Dahlias varieties from the major suppliers to the U.S. greenhouse industry. It is likely the largest trial of these two species in the U.S. Speakers for the Field Day will feature Syngenta's Harvey Lang. I've known Mr. Lang for many years, he spoke at our Fall Greenhouse Conference several years ago and is one of the most knowledgeable persons on Geraniums in the U.S. In addition we will hear presentations from University of Wisconsin's Plant Pathology Lab's Dr. Brian Hudleson and Entomology lab director PJ Liesch.

When you see them thank CFGW board member Tom Hartman, Hartman's Town & Country Greenhouse who coordinated the

collection of these Geranium and Dahlia cuttings and is rooting them in his greenhouse, Fred C. Gloeckner's Matt Miller and Ball Horticultural's John Steinlege for obtaining the unrooted cuttings as well as field station director Janet Hedtcke and her staff for growing the plants in the trial beds.

The rooted cuttings will deliver them to the University of Wisconsin Horticulture greenhouses in Arlington, WI where they will be planted and grown in 4 ½" pots then planted in the outdoor beds at the West Madison Ag. Research Station in early June.

For those who cannot attend the August 1 Field Day, the trial gardens are open seven days a week from dawn to dusk. Visit when you have time.

Attend, Listen and Learn!

October 16, 2019 Fall Greenhouse Conference

is the second event to mark on your calendar and attend. It is scheduled to be held at the Natural Beauty Growers greenhouse in Denmark, Wisconsin. I am proud to announce we have much sought

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A member of the Wisconsin Nursery Landscape Association (WNLA)

speaker Dr. Charlie Hall from Texas A&M as a speaker at this meeting. Charlie will join Senior Vice President of American Hort's Craig Regelbrugger. The two are scheduled for a 90 minute discussion on the state of the U.S. greenhouse industry. Dr. Hall will also give an hour presentation on topic to be determined. They will be joined by National Garden Bureau's and All American Selections Executive Director Diane Blazek who will give a program discussing the Best New Plants for 2020.

Dr. Hall is renowned world wide for his knowledge of economics of the United States Horticulture industry. He and Craig Regelbrugger have given this lecture on the status of the greenhouse industry earlier. It was highly recommended. Maybe like me you are receiving frequent emails from the National Garden Bureau and All American Selections' Diane Blazek recommendations each year. Their research helps guide growers toward the best of the new varieties each year.

Attend, listen and learn!

Editor

A bit of History

"To assemble at meetings those individuals who are interested in increasing their knowledge and skills in commercial floriculture and for their mutual economic benefit" These are the words used in the first charter by the founders of the Commercial Flower Growers of Milwaukee (the predecessor to the Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin). These "Articles of Incorporation" were signed by Clem Manke, Secretary of the CFGM, on February 23, 1954.

This continues to be your board's goal 65 years later and are not out of date! As our industry changes rapidly the CFGW

continues to provide an education to Wisconsin and neighboring state's greenhouse owners and growers. When you attend CFGW meetings you will hear about what pesticides you should have in your inventory. With many consumers asking that we not use the neonic pesticides you have learned more about the use of predatory insects to control pests as well as which Geraniums and Dahlias perform the best in Wisconsin gardens and much more. Some of this is information that was once provided by Commercial Horticulture Extension agents but are now very few. Our industry needs a continuing education more now than ever.

Editor

Dr. Lou Berninger

The following is an obituary for the University of Wisconsin Horticulture Department's Dr. Lou Berninger: *"May 3, 1929 - Feb 14, 2019. Lou Berninger, 89 years young, died on February 14 in Sarasota, FL. He was the oldest of two sons born to Louis and Louise in the Bronx, NY. Lou graduated from [Michigan State University](#) with a bachelors and masters in horticulture. In between he served in the Marine Corps stationed at Quantico. Lou then received a PhD from the [University of Wisconsin](#) Madison, where he served in the Horticulture Dept. for 30 years. Lou was honored with many industry awards, served in professional organizations and was notably the national president of Pi Alpha Xi. He published extensively, spoke frequently at conferences and hosted the Garden Almanac TV show. Following retirement, he was the head of marketing for the ornamental division of Speedling, Inc."*

I first met Lou in 1973 when I returned to Wisconsin to work as a salesman for the Gloeckner Company. He was my mentored

as well as for many of Wisconsin's greenhouses during the thirty years he worked in extension for the University of Wisconsin Horticulture Department in Madison. For many years he led the Commercial Flower Growers of Milwaukee the predecessor to the CFGW until his retirement.

Lou was honored with the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation's Hall of Fame award in 2010. Lou also started the Fall Greenhouse Conference almost 40 years ago.

I asked former, Horticulture Extension Agent and CFGW Executive Secretary Dick Schneider to write a bit about Lou. Below are Dick's remembrances.

Editor

Memories of Dr Lou Berninger

Our association really began in 1968 when I assumed the position of Summer Horticulture Agent under my mentor Lee Hansen. I knew of him primarily through his association with the Milwaukee County UW Extension office. We really became colleagues when I assumed Lee's position after Lee joined Hawks Garden Center.

Lou Berninger orchestrated the attendance of Gayle Worf, Chuck Koval, and myself at the BPI (Bedding Plants Incorporated) annual meeting in 1975. As the 4 of us drove to Hershey PA, Gayle and Chuck asked the question What are bedding plants? They really didn't know and this was Lou's way of getting two strong disciplines to aide the growers of Wisconsin. Lou proceeded to have us meet and greet the industry "movers" at this one of a kind conference. He was nationally known.

As the UW Extension Horticulture Agent with the largest home horticulture audience, I was overwhelmed to say the least. Lou

was very aware of this and suggested the introduction of the Master Gardener program, which began here in Milwaukee.

Lou included Terry Humfeld, my associate in the office, and me in the planning of BPI meetings, Greenhouse conferences, Garden Center meetings, florist meetings and just about every other horticulture educational sessions so that we knew what was going on and who our hort people were in the state. At his retirement, his mantle fell on me for these state meetings and he did a great job of preparing me for this.

When we established the Milwaukee experimental gardens, he was instrumental in getting the cooperation of all those pros needed to make it a success. This included getting plants and people.

If he was in town to attempt to solve a problem at a grower's, florist's, or garden center's establishment, I was invited along to further my education and get my input. For many years, all Hort soil tests came to his desk so that the proper recommendations could be made.

When a Wis. Horticulture tax problem evolved, Lou was heavily involved to resolve it, benefiting most of the growers in the state.

Lou was instrumental in developing a strong bond among the Hort. agents in the state and getting educational materials published and distributed. In this dairy state, Hort. was at a disadvantage, but thanks to Lou we could hold our own.

On a personal note, Lou and Miriam served as hosts for travelers on horticulture tours. They chose not to continue and invited Jan and me to take their place. So now I can add my appreciation to Lou for encouraging foreign travels as well as industry and association annual meetings.

Our association did not stop at his UW retirement since he continued to serve the industry. We were fortunate to involve him at a growers conference in Denmark WI where he could renew his acquaintance with the growers he served for so many years.

If I attained any success in my pursuits in Horticulture, I can truthfully say it was Lou's efforts that made it possible.

Dick Schneider
UW Extension (ret)
Executive Secretary of the CFGW (ret)

Broad and Cyclamen Mites, A Stealthy Pest

Stealthy is my description of the Broad and Cyclamen mite as greenhouse pests because I frequently saw the damage they caused found during my many years "walking" Wisconsin greenhouses yet they are seldom seen by greenhouse the owners and growers.

They are not seen for two reasons, first because they are so tiny that it is impossible to see them without a microscope and secondly because the damage they cause is seldom identified as mite damage. The damage is not what one would expect from a mite but was there. The damage that I use to ID these mites is curled, slightly stunted leaf growth with thickened leaves on or near the tip of the plant. Most growers would diagnose this as just a bit of mechanical damage to the growing tip or maybe even spray damage. The damage is subtle and not always obvious unless one is looking closely and knows what to look for. The other problem is that to confirm the ID one must use a microscope.

If they are so hard to ID why does a grower need to worry about them? They do reduce plant growth and often the plant becomes unsightly reducing it's value and saleability.

The damage being subtle is one of the reasons it is so common but not identified and also the reason it is so common. It can be easily spread in a greenhouse reproducing and damaging a number of different species of plants without the grower knowing.

Since they do not overwinter outdoors in Wisconsin how do they become so wide spread in Wisconsin greenhouses? Growers frequently trade cuttings or plants back and forth plus, because they are often not IDed, they can be shipped in on unrooted cuttings or cell paks.

Scouting is important in identifying these mites before they become wide spread. Check the tip growth for stunting, thickened leaves and misshapen growth. If suspicious send plant samples to PJ Liesch at the University of Wisconsin Entomology Lab. He can identify them and help select a pesticide that will help control them. Control is best accomplished by careful and complete spray coverage of a miticide. Sanmite, Avid, Pylon, Judo are a number of the miticides that have been recommended but check with your supplier or PJ Liesch for current recommendations.

Editor

Added Board Bios

Here are two bios I received after the December, 2018 Grower News was published:

Dann Handel: I was born and raised in Mequon, Wisconsin. I married my wife Shellee in 1980. We purchased my Grandfather's house in 1983 and raised three children there.

I started my passion for flowers when I was in high school working for Ed Heyden at Heyden's Greenhouse. In May of 1981, I went to work for Carlin Sales and have been

here ever since. I have enjoyed working in the "Green Industry" my whole life and meeting new customers and developing new friendships.

I have served on many industry boards during my career and have been on the CFGW board for 15 years.

Shellee and I have seven grandchildren that keep us busy all of the time.

When I am not working, my hobbies are spending time at the family cottage in Fremont, golfing, and snowmobiling.

Kyle Tillmann: grew up in the Green Bay area working in the green industry in many capacities for Tillmann Landscape & Nursery, a company started by his Great Grandfather in 1942. He worked for the retail, landscape and production/wholesale divisions of the company before starting a bachelor's program at UW-Madison in Botany and Biology in 2007. From there, he became a grower for North Parish Gardens in 2010, where he continued until the end of 2018. Currently, he is starting out as a sales representative for Eason Horticultural Resources for the majority of Wisconsin and surrounding areas. His background in growing and pursuit of strengthening the small-business portion of our industry have given him an opportunity to contribute resources and insight to this organization.

I Say

A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

Winston Churchill



Using Succulents, another idea

Meet Your Neighbor: Groth's Country Gardens

On the cool early spring evening of March 19, 2019 over 30 CFGW members, visitors and guests met at Groth's Country Gardens in Cedarburg, Wisconsin to attend the March membership meeting. Brian Karthaus asked Paul Sadowski to tell a bit about their business. Paul said he and his sister as co-owners and are the fourth generation owning the business (the fifth generation is in high school and attended the meeting that evening). The business was started in 1928. They are mostly retail growers of bedding plants with 85,000 square feet of greenhouse and a retail flower shop. They do wholesale a few plants few plants to landscapers. Groth's grows most of the plants they retail except for perennials which are brought in finished.

In the last several years they have been holding customer planting classes which start in Mid-April. This has become a very large boost in their annual sales. In the classes customers come to the greenhouse to plant their own containers with the assistance of Groth's staff. After being planted the containers are grown on in Groth's greenhouses until the customer picks them up in May. Groth's will water,

fertilize and pinch them until the customer picks them up.

A total of 1,300 customers come to these planting classes each year. This year 250 of those are new customers. The average age of those planting is in the mid 40's but sometimes there are multiple generations coming to plant containers. These classes are announced by Facebook & email. This year they had 600 sign up the first day after the announcement was made.

Groth's charges \$30.00 for each registration plus they charge for cost of any containers the customer picks up from Groth's plus the cost of the plants. The average total cost per customer for plants and containers is \$164. Paul said they used 75 three cu/foot bags of media for the first class.

Paul said they have very few complaints and once a customer comes in to plant their own containers they will come back and pick them up.

When asked by an attendee, Paul said they tried a similar class in the fall but had only 12 people sign up. They have not tried to do a class for the winter decorating season.

Many thanks to Groth's Country Gardens for hosting our March membership meeting as well as Jim Crocket for telling us what pesticides should be in our greenhouse storage cabinets.

It is always an education to walk through a member greenhouse plus our speakers give informative presentations.

Editor



A sign of the times?

I Say

Before you speak, let your words pass through three gates: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?

Buddha

Program Schedule, 2019 (some dates and locations are tentative)

-April: K&W Greenery, Janesville speaker and topic to be determined.

-June @ Boerner Botanical Garden, Hales Corners, WI. Annual round table discussion of the spring, 2019 Bedding plant sales season.

-August 1: U.W. West Madison Ag. Research Station Field Trial of Zonal Geraniums and Dahlias.

-September: Site/speaker to be determined.

-October 16 – Fall Greenhouse Greenhouse Conference at Floral Plant Growers, Denmark, WI.

-November: @Karthaus & Son's, Germantown, WI. Speaker to be determined.