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Grower News

Issue number 4-19

Editor John Esser

December, 2019

Fall Conference 2019 Evaluation

62 people registered for the CFGW's 2019 Fall Greenhouse Conference down ten from the 2018 conference. Although attendance has declined a little the meeting gained one trade show vendor booth making 11. The CFGW appreciates the support of Wisconsin's allied trade firms.

Our main speaker, Texas A&M's Dr. Charlie Hall rated a 4.8 on the Evaluation forms turned in after the meeting. I frequently tease our speakers about receiving a better evaluation number than lunch and Dr. Hall did. Lunch was rated 4.6 though there were several comments about it being an "excellent lunch" and "The best lunch ever!" AAS/National Garden Bureau's Diane Blazek was rated a 4.5 and American Hort's Craig Regelbrugge rated 4.6. This compares to last year's speaker ratings of 4.8 and 3.8. The presentations this year rated an

evaluation from 4.7 to 4.3. Those of you who are rated by their customers realize how difficult it is to receive a rating of 4.8 or better!

The topic rated highest in the section of the Evaluation sheet asking for Possible Topics future topics for 2020 Fall Conference was New Varieties Annuals, followed by Improved Marketing, then New Varieties Perennials, the following tied for second place: Selling More to each customer, Best Annuals for 2021 and What new products will the consumer want. Under Other topic requests were listed Finding Labor/Seasonal Help, Poly Recycling, Buying Habits/demographics studies. your board and I will try to find two or three speakers to fill these topic preferences for our 2020 Fall Conference.

On the evaluation sheet under "Additional Comments" there were several comments. One asked that the screen be raised for better visibility. Another said, "More Diet soda." I will

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A member of the Wisconsin Nursery & Landscape Association (WNLA)

ask Dana and Joe Mikulsky at Natural Beauty to make those changes. Several said, "Great Food," "Food was fantastic." Two comments about the program said "Best ever," Excellent conference," "One of the best ones we have had in a number of years." Another comment said that the "Format becoming stale." I'll consult with our president Brian Karthaus and the board to see if they have suggestions on changing the format.

In addition, for several years, a person or persons has asked that we change the location of the meeting. That has been discussed by the board for many years and was tried prior to my becoming Executive Secretary. I asked my predecessor, Dick Schneider about his experience with changing locations. Dick said when it was tried in the past attendance dropped dramatically. There is a more practical reason for staying at the Natural Beauty Growers location and that is cost and space. Natural Beauty does not charge us rent for the space. Few other greenhouse members would have room for eleven trade show booths, chairs and tables for 70+ attendees and a place to serve food. That means we would need to rent a location that could house our meeting which would increase registration costs dramatically. It is my intention to keep registration costs as low as possible to allow all to attend. I don't want to exclude even the smallest greenhouse owners and growers from attending because of the cost yet still bring in nationally known speakers.

Editor

Obituary for Edward John "Ed" Knapton

COTTAGE GROVE - Edward "Ed" John Knapton, age 70, of Cottage Grove, passed away surrounded by his wife and daughter on Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2019, at Agrace Hospice Care. He was born in Madison, the son of Edward and

Gertrude Knapton.

Ed proudly served in the U.S. Coast Guard for four years. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Horticulture at UW-Madison. Ed married his wife, Carol, on May 30, 1970, in Sun Prairie. Together they owned America's Best Flowers, where he enjoyed making lifelong friends and sharing the joy that flowers can bring to people.

Ed was a member and past president of Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin, an active member of the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation, and belonged to the Garden Center Group and Perennial Plant Association. He was also a member of St. Dennis Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus and Gilda's Club.

Ed enjoyed flowers and traveling. He loved to drive and tour garden centers around the country. He also loved to share his faith and knowledge with people.

Ed is survived by his wife, Carol; daughter, Jenny (Russell) Lautzenhiser; grandchildren, Mara, Anna, and Edward; brothers, Dale (Lynda) Knapton and Isaac (Sheri) Knapton; brothers-in-law, Robert Webber and Richard (Ruth) Webber; sister-in-law, Mary (Ron) Wagner; several nieces and nephews; and his America's Best Flowers family. He was preceded in death by his parents.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held at ST. DENNIS CATHOLIC CHURCH, 505 Dempsey Rd, Madison, at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019.

Editors Note:

Some may have read this obituary when I emailed it just after Ed's passing but I am reposting it for those who missed it the first time around and for those that only receive CFGW notices by U.S. mail.

Ed was on the CFGW board for 20 years, president for 10 of those years leading our organization into the late afternoon membership meetings that have dramatically increased our meeting attendance. He kept a steady but not overbearing hand on running the CFGW.

He was closely involved with the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation (WGIF) until it ended operation. Ed was presented their Hall of Fame Award in 2018.



Tom Halter WGIF Hall of Fame Chair presents the 2018 Hall of Fame award to Ed Knapton.

He was a religious man and not afraid to declare his love of God in his business and personal life. I respected that in him.

Being President of the CFGW, Ed was my supervisor when I became Executive Secretary in 2008. We had many interesting conversations on the running of the CFGW as well as what species to trial for our annual Field trial and what topics and who to invite for our Fall Greenhouse Conference. In addition, he traveled with me to CFGW membership meetings where I often missed turns because of our involved conversations. Ed was a very close personal friend and always willing to listen and offer advice when asked. He was a kind and

intelligent and generous soul. I will miss him and his advice and guidance.

With Ed's passing, his wife, Carol, has lost her drive to run their business and closed the greenhouse and garden center on December 24. My wife Joann and I will help her as much we can.

Editor

PANTONE

Pantone has selected 19-4052 Classic Blue. As their 2020 color of the year. Pantone “watches” worldwide color trends among consumers looking for colors that are becoming popular. Fashion designers, florists, and other producers and sellers of consumer products, where color is important, look to Pantone to help them determine what color(s) will be important to consumers in the future.

Why should Classic Blue be important to you a greenhouse owner, grower or florist? Because you need to be looking ahead to determine what flower and container colors your customer will be looking for next spring. Increasing production of “true blue” flowers will not be easy since there are few of species that have flowers that are Classic Blue in color but you could grow more flowers that are as close to that as possible plus you could purchase more containers, retail products and accent pieces in that are Classic Blue.

Editor

I Say

Only two people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2, but the last signature wasn't added until 5 years later. The last person to sign was Thomas McKean a representative of New Castle County Pennsylvania.

Editor

Two Herbaceous Perennial Varieties Earn AAS Winner Designation

All-America Selections, North America's oldest and most well-known non-profit plant trialing organization is thrilled to announce the first winners from their three-winter Herbaceous Perennial Trial.

This trial, in partnership with the Perennial Plant Association (PPA), was launched in 2016 with five entries grown against 10 similar comparisons. PPA's input and assistance was instrumental in creating a multi-year trial where the proper plant characteristics were evaluated and rated.

Each of the following new AAS Winners was trialed throughout North America by twenty-four professional, independent, [volunteer judges](#) (many of whom came from the PPA membership roster) who grew them next to comparisons that are considered best-in-class. Only those entries that performed better than the comparisons are granted the AAS award designation.

And now, the first two AAS Herbaceous Perennial Winners are:

-Echinacea Sombrero® Baja Burgundy and

-Rudbeckia x American Gold Rush

Unlike the traditional seed trials, entries in the very first Herbaceous Perennial Trial could be recent introductions so many will notice these varieties have been on the market for a few years. Now these two varieties can be designated and marketed as AAS Winners, a boon to their already good popularity.

Growers, retailers and consumers will find these AAS Winners for sale now or as supply becomes available through the distribution chain. Buyers can click on the breeding company link to order

inputs. Garden communicators are free to begin writing about these varieties now to build demand.

Each AAS Winner is marketed through social media, public relations and trade shows and are proudly grown in 190 AAS Display Gardens across North America.

- AAS Display gardens can be found [here](#).
- Retailers [can request](#) an All-America Selections Point-of-Purchase package from the AAS office.
- PowerPoint presentations are available on [SlideShare](#) or on the [AAS website](#).
- Bench cards and variety markers can be downloaded from the [AAS website](#).

Echinacea Sombrero® Baja Burgundy **AAS 2020 Herbaceous Perennial Winner** **National Winner**



Sombrero® Baja Burgundy will add a bold accent to sunny gardens with its vibrant, deep violet-red blossoms. The beautiful flower color is without equal among coneflowers and is perfect for cut flowers. After being trialed over three tough winters, the AAS Judges noted this standout's hardiness, sturdy branching, and floriferous blooming

habit. Birds and pollinators certainly flock to this deer-resistant beauty making it a dual-purpose plant. Gardeners will enjoy prolific blooms from mid-summer until first frost.

Growers can enjoy a naturally well-branched plant that ships easily and has excellent retail presentation.

Bred by Darwin Perennials

(Click link for wholesale sources)

<http://www.darwinperennials.com>

AAS® Winner Data

- **Genus species:** *Echinacea hybrida*
- **Common name:** Coneflower
- **Flower size:** 3 inches
- **Color:** Burgundy
- **Plant height:** 18-20 inches
- **Plant habit:** Upright
- **Garden location:** Full sun
- **Garden spacing:** 18-24 inches
- **Hardiness zone:** 4-9
- **Closest comparisons on market:** PowWow Wild Berry, Purple Emperor

Rudbeckia x American Gold Rush

AAS 2020 Herbaceous Perennial Winner National Winner

American Gold Rush's bright, golden-yellow flowers with black centers and arched petals is a gorgeous addition to any garden. This compact, upright domed-shaped beauty has narrow 2-inch wide hairy foliage bred for its resistance



to Septoria leaf spot. This hybrid shows no signs of the fungus even in wet, humid conditions. Blooming from July to September, with some color up until frost, this cultivar has smaller foliage and shorter height compared to other rudbeckia varieties. Incredibly easy to grow and pollinators love it. Destined to be the new rudbeckia staple for gardens and landscapes!

Bred by Intrinsic Perennial Gardens, Inc.

(Click link for ordering)

<http://www.intrinsicperennialgardens.com/>

AAS® Winner Data

- **Genus species:** *Rudbeckia x*
- **Common name:** Black Eyed Susan
- **Flower size:** 2-3 inches
- **Color:** Golden yellow
- **Plant height:** 22-24 inches
- **Plant habit:** Upright mounding
- **Garden location:** Full sun
- **Garden spacing:** 18-24 inches
- **Hardiness zone:** 4-9
- **Closest comparisons on market:** Little Goldstar, Goldsturm

By the Courtesy of All American Selections

Marketing, Charlie Hall Speaks

Speaking at the October 16 CFGW Fall Greenhouse Conference Dr. Charlie Hall said a greenhouse owner needs to know the value of his products, who his customer is to know how to sell his products to them.

Is your customer a box store, an independent garden center, end consumer (a homeowner or commercial business owner), landscaper, municipal buyer such as a city, another grower such as a young plant buyer or finished plant buyer? Once you determine who your basic customer is you need to determine what that customer is looking for. Is quality most requested or is it price, variety, size, shape, etc.? Though

they may say quality is the most important requirement, price is always a consideration. Dr. Hall said you need to determine how to differ from yourself from competitors but also remember “Quality is Always Important.”

Dr. Hall says the greenhouse/garden center industry is currently a mature industry. During the 1970s and 1980s our industry grew in double digits but now that the industry is growing very slowly so you must know the trifecta of staying in business: Value, Authenticity and Compete! Personal consumption of flowers, seeds and potted plants dropped during the 2007-08 recession and did not return to the 2008-dollar mark until 2016. He says that our industry is now doing better but not all that well.

Sales of Pet products did not decline during the 2007-07 recession. Why did plant sales decline a lot during the 2007-08 economic recession, but pet products did not? Pets have a positive effect on people’s health and well-being and people want things that affect their life quality. People find money to spend on things that affect the quality of their lives. For example, people think mobile phones affect their quality life, so many gladly spend more than a thousand dollars on a new cell phone.

Plants do affect the quality of people’s lives so we should sell what they do for our mental and physical well-being! Charlie related the positive effects on his father who was suffering from dementia and was combative except when he was outside, working and planting in his garden. Scientific surveys indicate people willing pay more for a well landscaped house, inside landscaping reduce sickness by 14%. There is a 12% lower mortality in areas with more vegetation than living areas with little. For every \$1.00 spent for landscaping \$1.09 will be returned to a home seller but for every \$1.00 spent on remodeling only \$0.93 is returned. Plants and trees reduce run-off, reduce CO₂ levels, the

shade from trees reduces air conditioning costs and wind shelter reduce heating costs. Green spaces increase mental health and increases creativity. Healing gardens help reduce staff turnover in hospitals and help patients in memory care units plus they improve people’s sleep.

Rather than selling just plants we need to sell the power of plants in people’s lives. What we grow has a positive effect on people. Sell the Power of Plants and what they do in people’s lives!

Editor. Summarized from Dr. Hall’s October, 2019 Fall Conference presentation.

I Say

All mushrooms are edible. Some only once!

2020 Meeting Schedule

- February To be determined.
- March: To be determined.
- April: To be determined.
- June: To be determined
- August 6 – U.W. West Madison Ag. Research Station.
- September: To be determined.
- October 14 (tentative)– Fall Greenhouse Conference at Floral Plant Growers, Denmark, WI.
- November: To be determined