

President's Message: Beware of Box Blight

Summer greetings to all!

There has been a significant development in our knowledge about *Cylindrocladium buxicola*, or box blight, in West Virginia since my last president's message, and I



WVNLA President
Norman Cole

would like to share and discuss that with you. Box blight is a fungus that causes severe defoliation on boxwood plants. Europe and Australia have been living with the fungus

since the 1990s, and it has been known to be in the United States since 2011. You can find pictures and descriptions of the disease easily online.

There is no cure for box blight, only tools for prevention. Daconil has proven effective in stopping the spread of box blight to clean plants, and ZeroTol and bleach will kill spores on shoes, tools, and trucks.

We have learned that box blight has been found in plants sold in some large chain retailers in West Virginia and other states throughout the East and Mid-Atlantic areas. The infected plants were shipped in large quantities from Oregon and have been here since April of this year. They are most likely in many home landscapes at this point.

(Continued on page 2)

Boxwood blight prevention protocol

Landscapers should follow the steps below to minimize the impact and spread of boxwood blight:

- Inspect boxwoods on all properties. Look for symptomatic plants. As weather patterns become conducive (wet, humid, warm), disease symptoms may become noticeable and spread rapidly.
- Train employees and clients on how to identify boxwood blight. Educate them on how easily the disease spreads.
- Only purchase plants from nurseries that have a boxwood blight compliance agreement through their state's department of agriculture. Many plants are brokered, so ask where plants were grown. Keep new plants in isolation and monitor for symptoms prior to installation.
- Never install, prune, or work in boxwoods when plants are wet.
- Always visit noninfected landscape sites first. Move from healthy to suspected diseased areas, never the other way



The blight begins with dark or light brown spots or lesions on the leaves. The leaves turn brown and fall off, while the stems develop brown or black lesions.

- around.
- Disinfect pruners and other tools frequently within and between different blocks of plants in the same landscape, and especially when moving to different landscapes.
- Lysol Concentrate Disinfectant (containing 5.5 percent O-benzyl-p-chlorophenol) is an effective cleanser. Mix 2.5 tablespoons per gallon of water. This can be made and kept in spray bottles. To kill spores, tools need to be wet for at least 10

seconds and allowed to air dry.

- A 10 percent bleach solution (1 part Clorox to 9 parts water or 1 part Chlorox Concentrate to 14 parts water) for at least a 10-second soak can also be used, but this will oxidize tools. Soak and then let dry.
- When leaving a site suspected or known to have boxwood blight, all tools, shoes, and clothing must be disinfected.
- Get in the habit of wearing clean disposable booties or washing off debris and dirt entirely from soles of shoes between landscapes. Changing and laundering clothes between sites would be ideal, but it's impractical. Wearing disposable paper pants is an option.

Source: Excerpted from an article by Jean L. Williams-Woodward, University of Georgia Extension Plant Pathologist.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 1)

This affects our industry in many ways. If, say, a landscaper installs plants in a yard where there are infected plants, the landscaper can become a vector and transmit box blight spores to other homes or nurseries. Or, if a delivery truck from an infected nursery is unloaded at a retail center, and then a delivery truck from a noninfected nursery is unloaded by the same staff or in the same area, there is the potential for spores to be transmitted to the second delivery truck and then transported back to the uninfected nursery.

Pests, pathogens, and diseases are nothing new in this industry, but it is our responsibility to do all we can to keep others in our industry as clean as possible. This means that tools, trucks, and shoes should be disinfected with bleach or ZeroTol between jobs and nurseries, and that thought should be taken to consider any vector that we may create between these points. It is also very important to report infected plants and



Blighted boxwoods lose their leaves. The blight may kill the plant outright, or the plant may put out new leaves. If it does, those leaves will die too.

keep them quarantined.

As many of you know, Cole Nurseries is primarily a boxwood operation. We have instituted protocols to prevent the introduction of box blight to any aspect of our operation. If you would like information on how to institute your own protocols, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or the West Virginia Department of Plant Industries.

We need to remember that all pathogens, pests, and diseases can cause severe trouble for others in our industry. We must take measures to help protect not only ourselves, but also each other.

Mother Nature is a temperamental business partner, but we must continue to adjust to her changing conditions and adopt new ways to deal with them.

Norman Cole
WVNLA President

Renew membership at WVNLA's new website

Thank you to all WVNLA members who have sent in their dues for the 2015-16 year. We appreciate your prompt response. If you haven't returned your renewal in the envelope you should have received in the mail, you can renew online at WVNLA's newly redesigned website. You will soon receive an e-mail with a link and instructions on how to renew online. Or, feel free to mail a check as usual.

Visit wvnla.org to see our fresh look! Other new features include online event registration and social media links.

We're still working on the development of a member editing feature through which WVNLA members will be able to update their company listings online, if they so choose.

After perusing the site, take a minute to give us thoughts or suggestions in the "Contact Us" window, located under "More Information" on the home page top ribbon.

Mark your calendar for Sept. 19 regional Designers' Choice Garden Tour

Invitations will soon arrive in WVNLA members' mailboxes for a unique tour of Charleston-area gardens featuring insights from their designers: Kathie Faulknier, Tim Forren, and Lynne Schwartz-Barker. On September 19, WVNLA members and their guests (staff members or other industry professionals) will gather at 1 p.m. for private tours led by the designers. Included are an award-winning sloping residential property with distinct garden areas, a small riverfront property enhanced with hardscapes, a butterfly/hummingbird perennial garden and outdoor living space, a semiformal garden with a large selection of plant material and a unique hardscape, and a formal memorial garden in the shadow of a stately downtown church.

The free event will conclude with light refreshments and a relaxing opportunity to catch up and visit. For more information or to make a reservation, contact Julie Robinson at 304-553-1234 or wvnlassoc@gmail.com.

Three Trees Design creates spaces for outdoor living

What's a nice man with an English literature degree doing designing and installing landscapes and hardscapes?

David Hill, owner of Three Trees Design and Landscaping in South Charleston, worked for landscapers when he took some time off from college and then decided he'd found a career. He learned about design and horticulture on the job, working for 10 years for firms in Huntington, Richmond, and Kentucky before he decided to open his own firm in 2010.

"It was a leap of faith," said David. "I had a one-year-old son. Times were hard at first, but it fell into place when it really needed to."

David's first client was the daycare center his son attended. It was a hardscape job for which David hauled the heavy materials in his SUV and a borrowed trailer. As soon as he could, he purchased a used truck, which he still uses today.

Although he didn't have many contacts in the Kanawha Valley, David's initial clients soon spread the word of their satisfaction with his work,



The Three Trees crew of Mat McCulley, Barry Dailey, owner David Hill, and Jason Young takes a break after installing a hardscape.

especially in hardscaping, garden design and installation, and outdoor lighting.

David and his three-man crew are especially adept at creating outdoor rooms, complete with fireplaces, kitchens and bars. Communication with customers and working with the existing environment have been key components of Three Trees' success, David said. He and Barry Dailey meet with clients on site and listen closely to their plans and wishes for the space. At the next meeting, they present a design drawing by either David or Barry.

If a client chooses not to implement the Tree Trees design, David will sell the client the drawing, but that doesn't happen very often. The project



usually moves ahead.

A Certified Professional Horticulturist, David considers his in-depth knowledge of plants and design a strength. He faced his biggest challenges as he waded into the administrative side of owning his own business.

"Coming from a creative background, it was hard to learn the business element. I'm still learning it. There are long days, and then it's back to the office to do paperwork," he said.

Recently David added another niche to his business. His wife, Laura Dice, is coordinator of KEYS 4 HealthyKids program in Charleston. KEYS 4 HealthyKids focuses on increasing children's physical activity; promoting healthy eating habits, including growing their own food; and playing in nature. Laura told David about natural playgrounds and outdoor classrooms.

The natural playground concept appealed to David, who now designs spaces for the program. The term *playground* with its connotations of bulky plastic play structures, doesn't draw a true picture of these outdoor playspaces.

"Kids climb on boulders and logs. It's a way to get kids active *and* back into nature. It's a return to natural elements—the way kids used to play," said David. The spaces often include butterfly, sensory, and edibles gardens; outdoor chalkboards; music centers; tightropes; and teepees made from bamboo. They don't include plastic.

"Designing outdoor classrooms is really fun. I'm passionate about it and about getting kids healthy," David added.

Outdoor classrooms at Charleston's Martin Luther King Center and Weston City Park have been constructed and are well used by the children there. David has drawn plans at the request of other schools, early education centers, and parks, where officials are working on funding them.

For more information on outdoor classrooms, visit naturalearning.org. For more information on Three Trees, visit threetreeslandscapes.com.

State nursery official seeks solutions for market woes

When West Virginia officials established Clements State Tree Nursery in 1961, it was tasked with providing reforestation seedlings. Demand for seedlings grown at the nursery took off in 1967, when West Virginia passed its first strip-mining reclamation law, which required tree planting. The projected demand was for 20 million seedlings a year.

Clements, located nine miles north of Point Pleasant, and another state nursery in Parsons produced most of the seedlings used in state reclamation. Production peaked in the 1967-68 shipping season when 9.3 million seedlings were sold.

Yet, over time, demand for the seedlings slowed. Clements was closed in 1982, but reopened in 1986 after the Parsons nursery was



Photo provided by West Virginia Department of Commerce

destroyed in the flood of November 1985.

For many years, Clements' major customer was a reclamation company from Georgia, which is still awarded about 90 percent of West Virginia's surface mine reclamation work. The company owner eventually purchased his own nursery, where he grows

seedlings for his reclamation work.

"Last year, we sold 600,000 seedlings. We don't receive any state funds and are supposed to be self-sufficient. We are not," said West Virginia Division of Forestry Director and State Forester Charles "Randy" Dye. Nearly two thirds of the seedlings last season were sold to Ohio customers. Ohio has closed its state nursery.

Some political leaders are pushing for closure, but Clements has strong support from others. As Randy looks for solutions to move the nursery's bottom line back into the black, he wonders if service to private nurseries in the state might be

Name game

The land that includes the Clements Nursery's 125 acres was originally part of a farm owned by the grandparents of Samuel Clemens, known also as Mark Twain. The nursery was not named for the Clemens family, however. It was named in 1963 in honor of longtime U.S. Forest Service nursery inspector Charlie Clements.

the answer. He is looking for answers to the following questions:

- Do any private nurseries in the state already provide bare root seedlings?
- Would any private nurseries be interested in purchasing the Clements bare root seedlings for the purpose of potting and growing for their own use/retail?

Clements grows more than 25 species of native hardwoods and conifers, including white oak, red oak, sycamore, alder, sugar maple, redbud, tulip poplar, white pine, Norway spruce, and Virginia pine. The one- and two-year seedlings are sold in orders as small as 25, with discounts for orders of 5,000 or more. Trees purchased in small quantities cost about \$2 per plant. Seedling orders are accepted September 1 through April and delivered from Thanksgiving through April.

American chestnut seedlings also thrive at Clements, where foresters have worked with researchers for nearly 40 years to find genetic resistance to chestnut blight.

The nursery is maintained by Nursery Superintendent Jason Huffman, one full-time equipment operator, two part-time employees, and female inmates from nearby Lakin Correctional Center. "We've had a partnership with Lakin since 2007," Jason said. "It works out well. They weed, seed beds and sow by hand."

The inmates provide valuable labor in the beds, but the need for infrastructure repairs far exceed the nursery's limited budget, Jason said. "As to what we'll do in the future, I really don't know."

"We're looking for opportunities to partner with private nurseries in a way that would benefit us all," said Randy.

For more information about Clements Nursery, visit wvforestry.com, or contact Jason Huffman at 304-675-1820, or e-mail jason.l.huffman@wv.gov. Contact Randy Dye at 304-558-2788, or e-mail c.randy.dye@wv.gov.

Students gain unique perspective of European landscapes

In late spring, WVNLA answered a last-minute request for funding to augment the money WVU Davis College students raised for a 17-day tour of Western European gardens. The tour was



Le Mont Saint-Michel Abbey on an island in Normandy, France

led by horticulture professor Dr. Sven Verlinden and landscape architecture professor Dr. Peter Butler. The tour of gardens, parks, estates, and

general sights in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Germany marked the seventh time Sven, a native of Belgium and WVNLA member, has led student tours.

"We see things tourists don't always see. The students have the opportunity to venture to places they normally wouldn't," he said. For instance, the students saw the same elaborate formal gardens at Versailles palace that are open to the public, but they also toured the



Monet's Garden in Giverny, France

extensive *potager*, or kitchen gardens, where produce was once grown to feed the palace occupants. "Most visitors don't know to visit the *potager* garden," he said.

The tour started in Brussels with the National

Botanic Gardens and continued to the smaller cities of Ghent and Bruges. In Normandy, they visited D-Day beaches and learned about the landscaping there. Also in Normandy, they stopped at a hard cider



Students and their tour leaders in front of the town hall in Louvain, Belgium

brewery. Normandy is known for apples and dairy.

From Normandy they traveled to Giverny, France, where they studied Monet's Garden and contrasted it to the formal gardens of Versailles.

"Monet's Garden was very focused on color and sequential blooming. They created a cultivated wild look," Sven said.

Landscape architecture students focused on city planning and public parks. Students carried sketchpads on the tours and were encouraged to draw architecture, examples of city planning, gardens, and plants. "That sketchbook makes them focus more than they would just taking a photo. They don't have to be artists to do it," said Sven, who shares the rudimentary drawings he's made in his own sketchbook with the students.

The trip, for which students earned six hours of credit, is designed to explore and instill an appreciation for the historic, social, economic, agricultural, and political backgrounds of the countries visited.

"As always, we are very grateful to the generous support WVNLA provides for our programs at Davis College," Sven said.

Retiring nursery owner reminisces on years in Hinton

By Chris Chanlett

July Fourth we closed Groundworks Nursery Garden Center on its sixteenth anniversary, 31 years after we started the business. With prices marked down 75 percent, customers cleaned the pickings to the bone.

Over the years, on a 2.5 acre bench along the floodplain of the Greenbrier River, we sold well over \$1 million worth of plants, not including the landscaping sales that mostly originated there. We were privileged to find near our home nursery a spot that was conspicuous, unto itself, and easy to beautify. We populated the landscape with the kind of mixed landscaping we liked to do and offered a big selection for a rural garden center—more than 600 varieties of annuals, perennials,



Groundworks staff in this 2010 photo included, from left, Chris Chanlett, Torula Chanlett-Avery, Sinead Balnionis, Yarrow Levine, Daniel Kopkas and Jordan Wills.

scrubs, and trees, especially those that fruit.

Selling that amount means we also collected more than \$60,000 for the state of West Virginia. We consider most of that well spent, although we would have preferred a larger portion go to environmental regulation. We were well served during all the state's nursery inspections. We always enjoyed the plant and trade camaraderie of WVNLA and MANTS.

The financial return barely justified the operation, but many other rewards are worth recounting. The main one was social, as the

garden center gave us a tangible and vital place in our community. We provided a way for people to “connect to nature” by absorbing how much plants can enrich a site and by buying some of them with whatever questionable advice we had to offer. We solved their site problems as best we could.

Besides beautification, people came to grow food. People came for their memorial and special occasion needs. People came to take home a piece of our place and state. People came back.

We were able to give part-time employment to many fine workers, who potted plants by the thousands and hauled, sold, and planted them in scores of settings, every one unique in its challenges. We loved the problem-solving involved in mediating owners and their places on Earth. We derived environmental meaningfulness from using homeowners' resources of topography, stone, and available time to enhance their landscapes.

With the help of a few volunteers, we also picked up over ten tons of roadside debris through the Adopt-a-Highway program. We always found some plant label litter or something else that originated at our place—and quite a few useful items. The first thing found on the first pick-up in 1998 was a dollar bill.

Finally, we just found the business to be entertaining. We never knew who was going to crunch the gravel next at Groundworks, from rust buckets to massive “utility vehicles.” We did know that recounting customer peculiarities would tickle our evening relaxation on the deck.

The garden center survived some flooding and scandal, the collapse of demand after 9/11 and in the recession, an attack by a rabid raccoon, and the rise of deer and big box store predation. What it could not survive was the total lack of interest of another generation to carry it on. But it sure gave us a lot of bang for our buck of investment and we hope it leaves our community in a little better shape.

Chris and his wife, Torula, owned the recently closed Groundworks Nursery in Hinton.

Note on nursery supply: About 15 years ago Cutlip's Nursery in Princeton turned us on to their vast accumulation of pots. We never had to buy another 3 gallon container and that haul saved us from purchasing many more. Now we have a lesser stock of the same and more, including a few dozen stabilizing pots for 7 gallon containers. Contact me at cchanlett@gmail.com if you want free pots in southern West Virginia. --Chris

After military stint, hort grad finds peace at Monticello

By Sven Verlinden

Dr. Sven Verlinden, associate professor of horticulture at WVU, contributes articles to WVNLA News to keep members up-to-date on Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design. In this issue, he profiles former student Brian Hartsock.

Brian Hartsock grew up in and around Beckley. Before coming to WVU in 2004, he was a



Brian Hartsock and his buddy Jack

submariner stationed in Pearl Harbor and Italy for eight years. He always admired people who knew about nature and plants, and was intrigued by the job satisfaction of people in the horticulture field.

Although he enjoyed the military, he knew that there was more in store for him. In 2008, he graduated with a horticulture degree. After trying a couple of jobs, he found his dream career at Monticello in Virginia. He

currently manages the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, a division of the Monticello estate, where he is in charge of three employees, a plant collection, a nursery, and greenhouses.

He believes that the WVU horticulture program, with its hands-on greenhouse and field experiences, helped him get the job.

"The best advice I have for students is have at least one niche that you know very well. Stay current and maintain contact with your peers—you will all benefit," he said. "If you have the opportunity, make sure to develop good oral and written communication skills. Learn how to work in teams and manage people. Shadow successful people, practice, and have a mindset for growth."

Good advice for students in all walks of life.

Brian, his wife, Sarah, and baby, Abel, live in Charlottesville, Virginia. When he can find the time, he studies astronomy and goes fishing.

Weevils hit WV poplars hard

An invasion of yellow poplar weevils caused poplars throughout the state to turn brown earlier this summer. The black beetles are native to West Virginia.

"The weevils have been here since before people settled this country. This is not something new. Some years are worse than others. This is one of those years," said Dr. Berry Crutchfield, a West Virginia Department of Agriculture plant/pest biologist.

Most healthy poplar trees will be able to withstand the damage, but they will be transformed by the encounter. Added stressors, such as drought, may cause a tree damaged by weevils to sustain damage.

"Yellow poplar contributes more total volume to West Virginia's forests than any other species; therefore, there is reason for concern," said State Forester Randy Dye. "The Division of Forestry is working with the Department of Agriculture to closely monitor this situation to help ensure the sustainability of this important forest species."

According to the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, the large number of trees affected by these insects precludes a successful insecticide program. The poplar weevils went into hibernation in the middle of July and will return next spring. The healthy trees should return to normal next year.

Proposed overtime rules pending

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has proposed a change to federal overtime pay requirements, raising the exempt status of overtime pay to \$50,440 in 2016.

Under current rules, an employee is exempt from overtime if he or she earns a salary of more than \$455 a week/\$23,600 annually, and his or her "primary duties" are defined by the DOL as managerial, professional, or administrative.

The DOL's new proposal more than doubles the threshold to \$970 a week/\$50,440 annually. So any employee who makes less than \$970 a week would be classified as an hourly employee, and would be paid overtime if he or she works more than 40 hours a week.

For more information on the proposed changes, which would go into effect 60 days after passage, visit landscapeprofessionals.org.

WVNLA NEWS

P. O. Box 20284

Charleston, WV 25362

Dates to Note

2015

- Sept. 19 **Designers' Choice Garden Tour**,
Charleston, WV. wvnla.org.
- Oct. 7 **WVNLA Board of Directors meeting**,
Morgantown, WV.
- Oct. 8-11 **Association of Professional Landscape
Designers Conference**, Washington, D.C.
apl.org.
- Oct. 16 **Perennial Plant Conference**, Swarthmore,
PA. perennialplantconference.org.
- Oct. 21-23 **LANDSCAPES 2015** (formerly Green
Industry Conference), Louisville, KY.
landscapeprofessionals.org.
- Nov. 13 **Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping
Council Conference**, Towson, MD.
chesapeakelandscape.org.

2016

- Jan. 6-8 **MANTS**, Baltimore, MD. mants.com.
- Jan. 21 **WVNLA Pesticide Applicators
Recertification Workshop**, Charleston, WV.
- Jan. 21 **WVNLA Certified Professional
Horticulturist Exam**, Charleston, WV.
- Jan. 22 **WVNLA Winter Symposium**,
Charleston, WV. wvnla.org.

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