MANTS - A Great Experience

One of the exciting features of MANTS is that the attendee or exhibitor always finds new things there, including new plant cultivars, new tools, new machinery and equipment, new water features, new hats and other clothing, new hardscape materials, new pottery - I could go on and on. In short, this great show gives the visitor a huge preview of what's available in the Green Industry for the coming year. Looking through the 2008 List of Exhibitors, there were more than 3000 single booth spaces filled by more than a thousand exhibitors. MANTS is full, with a waiting list of hopeful exhibitors. This is where buyers and sellers, manufacturers, growers, brokers, wholesalers and retailers meet to facilitate marketing of their products. A visit to MANTS is truly the way to start the new year.

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**Seen at MANTS:** Clockwise from upper left: A medley of plant material arranged into an attractive garden by Conard-Pyle Co.; Representative Dave Gommoll posing with the handsome plants from Iseli Nurseries; pump with tipping bucket in the Henri collection; display of double pink Knock-Out roses; Pro-Line Nursery Contour Trimmer offered by Bouldin & Lawson automates uniform trimming of plants in pots, trays or flats with its variable speed conveyor and trimming blades. The variable speed blades are adjustable from 18 inches down. It features a custom vacuum system to gather and store loose clippings in a 10 cubic foot storage drawer underneath. An optional misting system and blade sterilization system are available. Left center: another Pro-Line, this one a Nursery Contour Trimmer for potted plants with variable speed conveyor and adjustable and removable contour blade system to trim plants from 20 to 5 inches in height and diameter. Middle: Mark Springer and Kyle and Brett Merritt at the G & G Nursery booth. Behind Brett is one of their beautiful 9 foot, well budded dogwoods.
Clockwise from upper left: First 5 pictures are plant displays seen at various points in and around the MANTS registration area. The middle left landscape was in the lower Pratt Street lobby across from the entrance to the showroom floor and was created and installed by the Montgomery College, Baltimore, staff and students. This has been a feature for a few years at MANTS.
ANLA Management Clinic 2008
Scheduled for February 8-11, 2008,
at the Galt House Hotel & Suites,
Louisville, KY

Received by email from the American Nursery & Landscape Association, 1000 Vermont Ave. NW # 300, Washington, DC 20005, Phone 202-789-2900, Fax 202-789-1893.

“Something Special Happened Last Year
The ANLA Management Clinic changed peoples’ businesses. The changes may have been big or maybe there were lots of incremental improvements. Either way, the owners and managers at the Management Clinic were more successful at tackling the increasing challenges facing our industry and their businesses.

Attendees heard Bill McDonough speak about a model of sustainability built on a foundation of strong business. They then watched sustainability hit the front pages and gain momentum, both in green industry trade publications and in the nation’s newspapers.

People met at the Management Clinic and taught each other how to take a different look at managing staff, inventory and marketing. Or, maybe they just swapped one really good, simple, inexpensive idea for keeping container trees upright in the yard. Big or small, these new, and important, ideas came not only from the Management Clinic’s top national speakers, but from your green industry peers - open and willing to share their successes and failures.

It is the people there who made the Management Clinic the truly unique event that it is.

Never before has learning been this much fun!
It’s all waiting for you at the 2008 ANLA Management Clinic! This year is even better with new, innovative, interactive Advanced Learning Labs. Having been inspired to be green, learn the how-to’s in 10 new sustainability sessions. Seen it all before? This year’s ANLA Management Clinic brings you more than 48 sessions (out of 90 total!) from brand new speakers, plus back-by-popular-demand favorites with fresh new topics.

Make something special happen this year.
Register today for the 2008 ANLA Management Clinic. Because you and your business deserve success.”

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Somers, CN, may be the next Connecticut town to ban outdoor wood burning furnaces. The Zoning Commission there will meet to consider the ban. CNLA’s executive director spoke today at a briefing for town planners, where he urged them to allow agriculture a special status to install the furnaces. “Imagine heating a plastic house with $3.00 a gallon oil,” he implored the planners. Plant regulators have found two new bugs in Connecticut. A banded elm bark beetle (Scolytus schevyrewi Semenov) was captured in a trap hanging in a pine tree on a Fairfield County property. The beetle is native to Asia and was first found in the U.S. in 2003. The beetle attacks elm trees in the U.S., and additional host plants in Asia include Russian olive and willows. Carex mealybugs (Triphyllus carici Cockerell) were found on two species of bamboo on a property in New Haven County. The mealybugs, which were collected from umbrella and blue fountain bamboo plants in a landscaped bed on October 30, killed the plants. 29 persons passed the CT Accredited Nursery Professional (CNP) Exam over the past two weeks. The test continues to be challenging, with a passing rate of less than 30% out of the 102 persons enrolled in the course. The newest CNPs will be pinned at the Winter Symposium Jan. 16 in Waterbury. Does a river run thru your property? CT environmentalists will propose a new law in the 2008 session of the state legislature to protect river fronts and banks. They’ve asked the CT Green industries for our comments on how the law should treat agricultural interests. Agriculture in Connecticut does currently have the right to farm in wetlands. Let CNLA know if a river front protection law would have an impact on your business. More developments on the immigration issue. The Bush Administration decided last week to revise its policy to send out ‘no-match’ letters to employers whose Social Security numbers of employees appear illegal. Under the rule, an employer would face criminal and civil liability if it failed to follow the steps and an employee was found to be unauthorized to work. The Administration said it will not fight a lawsuit challenging the new rule, and instead re-write it in 2008. Also, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has released a revised Form I-9 that makes a number of changes to the kinds of documents an employer may accept from a newly hired employee during the employment eligibility verification process. You must have in your files an I-9 form on every employee you hire. For a copy of the new form, contact CNLA at 800-562-0610.

Journal of Environmental Horticulture: Selected December 2007 Abstracts
There is concern within the green industry about the number of established landscape trees that are declining or dying with excess soil over the main lateral roots. Death in the landscape is often delayed by a decade or more after planting. The excess soil over the roots may be deposited during production, harvest, landscape installation, or during the subsequent landscape maintenance. This has led to finger pointing among green industry segments and the need to identify where some of the excess soil might be deposited such that it can be corrected to prevent early decline and death from this cause.
Two ideas are hypothesized. First, during the various stages of tree production, roots are planted and grown without excess soil over the root system. Second, if excess soil is placed over the main lateral roots during production, it is removed during harvest as required by industry standards (Section 1.6.3 of the American Standard for Nursery Stock (3): “Depth of the ball is measured from the top of the ball which in all cases shall begin at the root flare.
Soil above the root flare shall not be included in ball depth measurement and should be removed.” This means that no soil should be located above the root flare.

In this study, deciduous trees in Ohio were surveyed before harvest (seven nurseries) and after harvest (eight brokerage facilities) to determine the depth of their main lateral roots. Main lateral roots originate at the root-shoot junction in trees and are also referred to as the root flare or buttress roots. In the nursery survey, differences in the depth of main lateral roots were found among nurseries and production year with main lateral roots an average of 6.1 cm (2.4 in) deep in the soil profile. From the broker survey, both brokers and propagation methods showed differences in depth with an average of 8.6 cm (3.4 in) of excess soil over the main lateral roots. The main lateral roots for most trees were greater than 2.5 cm (1 in) in depth which was deeper than industry standards allow. Landscape and maintenance contractors would normally assume that trees are produced according to industry standards. Excess soil can be removed from the main lateral roots during landscape installation or during landscape maintenance if contractors knew that it was required. Costs to remove the excess soil will be ultimately borne by the final consumer and that cost will be a function of where corrections were being made. Consumers, of course would like to minimize costs to the extent possible.

**Influence of Container Mulches on Irrigation and Nutrient Management.**

James Altland and Mario Lanthier. Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Wooster Ohio. *Journal of Environmental Horticulture* 25(4):234-238. December 2007. An experiment was conducted in 2005 and repeated in 2006 to determine the influence of mulch products and controlled release fertilizer (CRF) placement on irrigation and nutrition requirements of container-grown crops. Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘Fasan’ and ‘Endless Summer’) were grown in 2.7 liter (#1) containers with CRF placed above or below the mulch. Non-mulched controls were also maintained. Mulch products included geotextile discs, coco discs, plastic discs, hazelnut shells, sawdust, Biotop, and crumb rubber. Hydrangea growth, plant quality, foliar color, and foliar nutrition were measured, as well as water loss from containers. Controlled release fertilizer placed below mulch resulted in larger plants with higher quality ratings and foliar N levels compared to CRF placed above the mulch, and similar or superior size, quality and foliar N compared to non-mulched containers. After correcting for differences in plant size, there were few and minor differences in water loss from hydrangea between mulched and non-mulched containers.

More details are given in the complete articles in the December 2007 J. Environ. Hort. If anyone would like a reprint of the articles, please contact Brad Bearce.

**Trees & Utilities**

**National Conference**

**April 7-9, 2008**

**Wyndham Orlando Resort**

**Orlando, Florida**

This conference is loaded with timely and important information on:

- Utility/community partnerships
- Tree care and vegetation management
- Public education and communication
- New pruning research
- Innovative solutions
- Regulatory developments
- Tree Line USA recognition program
- Find out more and register at arborday.org/TUConference or call 888-448-7337. The conference is presented by the Arbor Day Foundation, P.O. Box 81415, Lincoln, NE 68501-1415.

**Big Tree of the Month**

**Yellow Birch**

West Virginia Division of Forestry

Charleston, WV

http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/b/betall/betall2.html

Yellow Birch, *Betula alleghaniensis*, is commonly found in cool regions, often on north-facing slopes. It is native from Newfoundland to Manitoba and south to higher elevations from Georgia to Tennessee and is hardy from zones 3 to 7.

Yellow Birch has a pyramidal form when young, changing to a more irregularly rounded wide spreading crown when mature. Summer leaves are alternative and simple, 3-5 inches long and half as wide, elongated oval in shape, doubly serrate, with dull, dark green upper surface and light green underside. Leaves turn a showy yellow in fall. Broken twigs have a weak aroma of wintergreen, however, unlike Black Birch, *Betula lenta*, the bark has a bitter taste. The bark on twigs and younger trunks and branches is amber to silvery in color, smooth and exfoliating in thin shreds or rolls. On older trunks the bark becomes reddish brown and breaks up into large ragged grayish to blackish brown plates. This creates quite an ornamental effect, especially in winter when the bark is revealed due to leaf fall.

Flowers are borne in male and female catkins, the male catkins pendulous and female erect, blooming in mid to late April on the same tree (monoecious). Fruits are small oblong winged nutlets (samaras) borne in the catkins.

Yellow Birch is an important lumber tree, used for cabinets, furniture, flooring and doors. As with Black Birch, oil of wintergreen can be distilled from stems and bark.

Yellow Birch prefers cooler environments and is not as well adapted to heat and drought as Black Birch. It grows best in full sun and cool moist soils. It can be moved B & B or in containers. It is propagated by seed.

As a shade tree, Yellow Birch produces light shade and is useful in naturalized areas, such as the edge of woods. An advantage is its relative insusceptibility to leaf miner and bronze birch borer. It may be short lived and is subject to stem cankers. It also may be hard to locate in the nursery trade.

The West Virginia Big Yellow Birch has a 158 inch trunk circumference (50.3 inches), a height of 85 feet and an average crown spread of 41 feet. It is located in Randolph County in the Monongahela National Forest at Gaudineer Knob and was nominated in 1977 by Bill Grafton. National Champion is 76 feet tall by 91 feet wide in Deer Isle, Maine. Once again the West Virginia Big Tree is taller and thinner than the National Champion!
Plant of the Month
River Birch
http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/b/betnig/betnig3.html

River or Red Birch, Betula nigra, is a North American tree, native to the eastern United States, from southern New England to Florida and west to Minnesota and Kansas. It is cold hardy to zone 4. In the wild, it is limited to moist areas and is most commonly found along stream banks and areas that flood.

River Birch is a deciduous medium sized tree, reaching 50-70 feet in height or larger. When young, it has an oval or pyramidal shape. Mature specimens exhibit a rounded to irregular crown. It often grows as a multistemmed plant. Its texture is medium and it has a medium to fast growth rate.

Summer foliage is lustrous medium or dark green. The egg to diamond shaped leaves have a wedge-shaped base and are simple and alternate, 1.5-3.5 inches long by 3/4-2.5 inches wide, with doubly serrate to shallowly lobed margins. Fall color is yellow, however, leaves drop quickly, making the species not the best for fall color.

Flowers bloom in March-April before the leaves and are borne in catkins, the 1-2.5 inch long female catkins erect and male drooping near the branch tips, both male and female catkins in clusters of 3. Male catkins are formed the previous growing season and present an interesting picture throughout the winter. The female catkins emerge as the buds unfold in spring.

Fruits are winged, broadly oval chestnut brown nutlets about 1/8 inch long, subtended by 3-lobed bracts, bracts and nutlets falling from the catkins in mid-summer.

The young branches and trunk of River Birch have thin, shiny-red-brown bark while the older portions develop creamy orange bark; “reminds me of a creamsicle” that exfoliates in large thin sheets. On very old trunks and branches, the bark turns brown and develops ridges and furrows in a somewhat platy fashion.

River Birch makes its best growth on moist river bottom soil, but has proven to be adaptable to drier sites. It prefers full sun and is better adapted to heat than other birches. It develops chlorosis (iron) on soils above pH 6.5. It is easily transplanted and established from B&B or container.

River Birch is a good lawn tree, for its shade is light, allowing turf to grow underneath, but shady enough for comfort on hot sunny summer days. It is good for planting along stream banks in naturalistic areas and for a specimen with larger residences and on public grounds, parks, golf courses, etc. It is effective in groupings or plaza plantings.

The bark may disappoint those hoping for a white birch, however, the creamy orange exfoliating bark, the catkins mostly in 3’s, the slightly pubescent twigs and buds and the diamond-shaped leaves create much aesthetic interest.

According to Michael Dirr (Manual), this is probably the most trouble-free birch, however, leaf spot in wet years can cause defoliation of interior leaves and aphids can cause significant dripping and stickiness on walks and landscape furniture and structures. It is bronze birch borer resistant, perhaps immune, due to the lack of rhododendr. A chemical borer attractant present in white-barked species of birch.

River Birch is propagated by seed and softwood cuttings.

The cultivar ‘Cully’ (Heritage) has become the dominant birch cultivar in the marketplace. It is superior in terms of disease resistance. Ornamentally, the peeling bark is very striking at a young age, exfoliating to reveal salmon-brown and white patches. Fall color can be a good yellow and the habit is usually multistemmed and rounded to 50 feet tall.

‘Little King’ (Fox Valley) is a form that is gaining more exposure and popularity in recent years. It is a relatively dwarf plant not expected to exceed 15 feet tall, with very dense growth and branches to the ground. The habit is rounded and the bark exfoliates like the species for a good winter display. It might be employed as a specimen or as a hedge/mass in areas with moist soil. (Michael Dirr writes in his Manual that leaf miner has been reported on this cultivar. Also, “Zone 7b growers have succeeded with this cultivar”, thus it may be questionable further north.)

Disease of the Month
Bacterial Leaf Scorch

Bacterial Leaf Scorch (BLS) is a disease which causes premature defoliation, dieback and eventual death of trees such as oak, red maple, American elm and dogwood. It is caused by the bacterium Xylella fastidiosa. The disease has been identified in the urban forest (landscapes, street plantings, and small woodlots) throughout the eastern United States and as far west as Texas.

Xylella fastidiosa is spread from diseased to healthy trees primarily by leafhoppers. Once introduced into the tree, the bacterium grows within the xylem of the leaves, branches and roots. Leaf scorch results from moisture stress due to plugging of vascular tissues in leaves, twigs and branches.

Symptoms are first evident as a browning of the leaf margins. A distinct yellow halo often occurs between the brown and green portion of the leaf.

Scorch symptoms usually begin to appear in late July or early August. By September, defoliation of affected leaves usually occurs.

There is no effective cure for BLS.

Insect of the Month
Oakworms

(This and the following article on Bacterial Leaf Scorch together with the photographs are reprinted by permission from the 2008 Cooperative Forest Health Protection Programs Calendar recently sent me by the WV Department of Agriculture.)

Three species of native oakworms are fall defoliators in the eastern United States. Orangestriped (see picture), pinkstriped and spiny oakworm caterpillars strip the foliage from oaks and other hardwood trees from August to October.

The adult saturnid moths emerge, mate and lay eggs in late summer. Caterpillars hatch and feed gregariously, skeletonizing the leaves. Older larvae eat all but the main leaf veins and may be found feeding solitarily.

The larvae of all three species have long black horns arising from their second thoracic segment and grow to be about 2 inches long.

Oakworms rarely cause lasting damage to trees. In high populations they may become nuisance pests and cause aesthetic damage to ornamental trees. Control measures are generally not recommended as natural enemies tend to keep populations in check.

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SUCCESS: Is Customer Service Dead?
By Linda Talley

Is customer service dead? Many people (customers) would say YES! I hate to give up on it so here are some ideas:

When a customer walks into your business, there is a huge potential for revenue, relationships, referrals and more! Every customer that walks in the door may be the goose that laid the golden egg! Don't sneer at geese! Instead impress them! And don't do it by saying, “Hi, may I help you?” That is such a turn off! Create some emotion to create a high level of purchasing intent; do a great job for them; go the extra mile for them. They'll remember and not only will they be a satisfied customer but also a loyal customer and if you create the story for them, an advocate!

Yesterday I ordered 2 windsock poles from Above It All Kites in Washington state. I called and left a message explaining that I wanted to order, was at their on-line store and had some questions and could they please call me. Remember, this was New Year’s Eve. They called me back and gave me good explanations to my questions and I ordered. The woman who helped me said the order would go in the mail that day. I asked her if she could give me a confirmation number and she said she would call back with a tracking number. I thought I wouldn't hear from her again. However, around 4pm my time, she called and said the package was in the mail and gave me my tracking number. Incredible service! Will I buy from them again? You bet!!! When customers aren’t taken care of, they become hostile in many cases. I know, I do! So make sure that you train, train, train and re-train your staff on customer service. Keep in mind that customer service is a priority! When a customer service issue comes up, don’t treat it as a one time deal, study it, learn from it and make process changes so it doesn’t come up again! Whether you are providing products or service via a retail outlet, over the phone or on-site, your staff must be trained, trained and trained again and the changes must be communicated, communicated and communicated again! If members of your staff are resistant to these changes, be prepared to remove these people only after you have trained, trained, trained and communicated, communicated and communicated. I believe poor customer service should be grounds for termination and I have told a lot of businesses this!

Great customer service is so important because when there isn’t great or even good customer service, the customer tends to become hostile, either verbally or emotionally (hopefully not physically) and is less respectful to your staff. Poor customer service leads to lowered purchasing intent, greater badmouthing by the customers to other customers or prospective customers which all lead to disruption of your business. And what is happening to you? You’re having to put out fires, soothing hurt customer feelings and cleaning up the mess. And, remember, if you are working for the government, a large corporation, etc. you still have customers. They could be internal or external!

Bottom line: make great customer service a cornerstone of your business and you’ll never regret it. Marilyn Ferguson said, “Each of us guards a gate of change that can only be opened from the inside,” Is this the year to make customer service a priority?

NEW ARTICLE: As a Boss, Some Things to Remember in the New Year

Click on Articles on the left side after entering the web site.
www.lindatalley.com

My Wish for You in 2008
From Linda Talley
May peace break into your house and may thieves come to steal your debts. May the pockets of your jeans become a magnet of $1000 bills. May love stick to your face like Vaseline and may laughter assault your lips! May your clothes smell of success like smoking embers and may happiness cover your body like a great warm coat and may your tears be that of joy. May the problems you have forget your home and email address! In simple words .........

May 2008 be the best year of your life!!!

Linda Talley, CSP The Leadership Coach
The Speaker Who Gives People Something to Talk About!
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If you would like to receive the free monthly E-newsletter, SUCCESS Enewsletter, email us at Linda@LindaTalley.com and write SUBSCRIBE in the message box.
Top row: Yellow Birch, *Betula alleghaniensis*, left to right: rounded irregular form of tree in open, bare trunk and branches viewed in winter, close-up of bark on young trunk and branches, bark on mature tree, erect female catkins in spring, open male flowers on pendulous catkin.


**Bottom pictures:** I happened to see *Betula nigra* ‘Summer Cascade’ in the 2007 Klyn Nurseries, Inc., catalog and looked it up on the net. Klyn’s and the net sources report it to have a unique, pendulous habit with graceful arching branches. It is ideal for use as a specimen tree or focal point, particularly with water features, or for use in group plantings or creative design elements including topiary. The original plant, grown free-form, is 6 feet tall and 10 feet wide after 10 years. When staked or trained, it can be grown as a tree to an undetermined height, but could potentially reach 60 feet as is typical for this species. Like any River Birch, it tolerates a wide range of growing conditions and problems. Hardy to zone 4.

Skeletonization of oak leaves from feeding by oakworms.
Photos by permission from West Virginia Department of Agriculture.
Bacterial Leaf Scorch on Oak Leaves. Note yellow halo between brown and green portions of the leaves. Photos by permission from West Virginia Department of Agriculture.
Britt Slattery, USFWS

White Mulberry *Morus alba* White mulberry, a native of eastern Asia, was introduced during colonial times in an effort to establish a silkworm industry in the United States. It occurs throughout the country with the exception of Arizona and Nevada. The ecological threats posed by white mulberry include its hybridization with and replacement of our native red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), the transmittal of a harmful root disease to red mulberry, and its ability to invade natural areas including fields, forest edges and roadsides.

**Prevention and Control** Seedlings can be pulled. Otherwise, cut the tree and grind the stump or cut and paint the stump with glyphosate; if very large, girdle the tree.

**Native Alternatives** red maple (*Acer rubrum*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)

Invasive and Noxious Weed References


And, remember the WVNLA Educational Winter Meeting next week!

Date: January 29-30, 2008
Place: Embassy Suites, Charleston, WV

Unfortunately, Mike Dirr has been called away due to illness in his family.

Speakers include Tony Avent, Paul Cappiello, Don Shadow, Maria Bollinger, Fred Hooks, Joe Eck, Wayne Winterrowd, Marcia Donahue, Alex Niemiera, Rick Crowder and Chip Callaway. Returning are Linda Talley and Bob Negan, along with a new speaker, Jerry Teplitz, to go with us further along the road to Leadership!

The WVNLA Business Meeting will be held on January 30 at 11:30 AM.

There will be Pesticide Recertification credits available!

See Centerfold for Schedule!

Seen at MANTS 2008: Patio fireplace; Japanese Lantern; and mobile post hole auger.