

WVNLA NEWS

West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association, Inc. www.wvnla.org September/October 2011

\$5000 Offered in New Awards Program

The WVNLA staff recently mailed the Awards Program details to active members. This packet included a members certificate, information about the Awards (including an entry form) and further information about staff safety training.

The 2011 awards programs will include five Categories: Residential Design: Under \$10,000 and over \$10,000; Trade Show Display, Garden Show Display or Seasonal Display; Unique Project (water garden, pergola, green wall), Container Gardening Design and Garden Center Display in West Virginia

All of this information is also posted on our website - the Awards page.

New criteria for members to review: Businesses submitting an entry must be physically located in West Virginia. The entry must have been completed in West Virginia and the business submitting the entry must be an active member of the WVNLA.

Greenbrier Area Center Highlighted

reprinted with permission from the Charleston Gazette Mail. Photos by Kenny Kemp

The success of owning a garden center/landscape business depends on the whims of Mother Nature -- sun, rain, soil and such can be the life or death of the venture. Add clinging to the bank of the longest undammed river on the East Coast, and you've got Groundworks Nursery in Hinton.

Chris and Torula Chanlett-Avery have been growing, planting and selling annuals, herbs,

Tidbits, Updates, Etc.

The 2011 Green Industry Conference

Louisville, Kentucky, October 26-29, 2011.

Please visit the conference website

www.landcarenetwork.org/events/GreenIndustryConf for more information about the event.

2012 WVNLA Winter Symposium

Charleston, WV, January 18, 19, 20, 2012



Chris and Torula Chanlett-Avery stand in the doorway of their Hinton garden center, Groundworks, located on the bank of the Greenbrier River.

vegetables, perennials, shrubs and trees since 1984, when Chris, now 63, was a self-described "hippie with a pickup truck."

He's now on his fifth truck, and he and wife Torula, 59, have built a thriving business complete with a garden center in an unlikely spot along busy W.Va. 3 in Summers County. *continued on page 2*

MANTS January 11 - 13, 2012

Baltimore Convention Center

Baltimore, Maryland

Show Hours: January 11 & 12 (9:00 am - 5:00 pm)

January 13 (9:00 am - 2:00 pm)





The sign in front of Groundworks Nursery announces they have blueberry bushes for sale along with other fruits, perennials, annuals, shrubs and trees.

"When we built, there were 7,000 cars passing here each day," Chris said. "Now it's probably 10,000. We have a lot of repeat business, business from second-home people who have vacation homes nearby. We also sell to people who are from Huntington or Charleston and just in the area."

Someone from the nursery travels to the Lewisburg Farmers' Market each week, and while they don't sell a lot of items at the market, they make many valuable contacts that lead to jobs at The Greenbrier resort and throughout the area.

The early landscaping business grew from the couple's love of the land that brought them to West Virginia.

"We were part of the homesteader movement," Torula said. "We moved here to live on the land. We lived sustainably, grew wheat, everything we ate."

They lived communally with others and with their daughter, Emma, who was 6 months old at the time. They had another daughter, Sadie, three years later. Both girls went to Summers County High School; Emma went on to Amherst and Columbia and now works for the Library of Congress as a congressional researcher. Sadie went to Bryn Mawr College and lives in Oakland, Calif., and is the in-house yogi at Clif Bar & Co., a maker of natural energy foods and drinks.

Avid kayakers and canoeists, the couple has become involved in the preservation of the rivers they love. Chris is president of the organization Friends of the Lower Greenbrier River Watershed. He grew up in Chapel Hill, N.C., the son of a college professor, and Torula was born on Long Island and was raised in the D.C. area. ↗

Both of their parents had engineering backgrounds, and Torula credits their own design sense to growing up in that environment. They designed and built the structures that contain the garden center.

The sliver of land between the highway and the river on which the nursery is built had two trailers on it back in 1996 when the Greenbrier River flooded to a record high, and the trailers were washed away. The couple had to get approval from FEMA before they could construct their buildings in 1998; those structures are built to withstand high water, with deep pilings, removable doors and windows and washable natural materials.

"We are four miles from the mouth of the Greenbrier, so we get about a day's notice when there's a chance of flooding," Chris explained. The flood season is between November and March, when the garden center is shut down, so there hasn't been much loss from rising waters.

Inside the garden center's main building, there are lines drawn on the walls marking flood water levels. The "hoop houses," where they grow their plants, are closer to the highway on higher ground. Torula said the main loss during the worst flood was the gravel parking lot that washed down the bank.

"But after that flood, we laid out the garden center in a more efficient manner, so something positive came from it," she added.

Water for the plants comes from two wells, and many of the shade plants are displayed under a large bank of trees along the parking area.

The business is packed with thriving plants, each one carefully tended daily by the Groundworks staff. The fruit trees and roses from Bailey's are the healthiest I've seen, and the prices were reasonable. Torula said the fruit trees are big sellers, and she treats them with an organic fungicide to keep problems at bay.

"The 'Easy Elegance' roses compete with the 'Knock-Out,'" Torula said. "The sales rep said that while they are guaranteed, the company rarely sees one returned."

Many Proven Winners shrubs, in full bloom right now, can be found around Groundworks, including hydrangeas 'Invincibelle Spirit,' 'Incrediball,' 'Cityline,' 'Mars' and 'Limelight.' There's Proven Winners' version of the "Endless Summer" hydrangeas -- 'Let's Dance' and 'Moonlight.' Also blooming are 'Sunshine Blue Caryopteris,' Buddleia 'Miss Ruby' and 'Miss Molly,' 'Lo & Behold' and ↗





hibiscuses ‘Blue Satin’ and ‘Lavender Chiffon.’

The Ninebarks -- ‘Summerwine’ and ‘Coppertina’ -- are stunning, and Torula has several that are trimmed into standard form.

“Ninebarks have that drooping branch when they are mature, so I’m looking forward to seeing them as they mature in these standard forms,” she said.

The center receives bare-root plants in February, and they pot them in a mix of 80 percent fine pine bark and 20 percent compost, shipped in from North Carolina. It’s all hands on deck getting the young plants into pots and into the hoop houses to mature. They speak fondly of their loyal staff.

“We had a young man show up when he was 8 years old with his mother, and he said, ‘I’m going to work here someday.’ Well, he’s worked here for six years now; he’s 20, and in college at Concord,” Torula said. “We’re all family here. Two gals who work here are daughters of our farm partners. We’ve been referred to as ‘Team Groundwork.’”

The couple is at home walking among the beautiful garden beds along the highway, teasing each other about different plantings and combinations. Her bumper sticker describes their philosophy: “Practice Random Acts of Gardening!”

They can’t use the lower part of their land that spans the bank of the Greenbrier for business purposes because of the tenuous nature of the river’s water levels.

“We have a picnic every July down there for staff and friends, but that’s all we can use it for,” Torula said.

The river and the road play an integral part in Groundworks’ success, and Chris said the sounds from both play a part in their daily lives. ↗



“In the early spring, you can hear that river, and, of course, you can hear the cars on the road. Then a train comes through, and wow! It’s loud.”

The couple agrees that the best sound, however, is the crunching of tires on the gravel parking lot in the spring signaling the beginning of growing season.

“Ahhh ... the sound of tires on gravel,” Chris said with a laugh. “We like that sound.”

Groundworks Nursery is located along W.Va. Route 3, in Hinton. For directions, visit www.groundworksnursery.com or call 304-466-4440. 🍀

By Sara Busse

Member Business for Sale

After operating a successful sod farm, hydroseeding and wetland mitigation business for 13 years, Charlie Price and Becky Morris are planning to retire.


As everyone in the “green industry” knows, it’s very rewarding to be involved on a daily basis making the world more beautiful and improving the environment. And that has certainly been true with Riverside Sod Farm. The business is for sale and if anyone would like more information, please call the office at (304)755-0581.



Memberships Due Now

We have sent out renewal notice invoices. Please take a moment when you receive yours and check your member level, fill out and send in the form along with your check. Doing so insures your continued participation in YOUR organization and you won't miss a single event, newsletter or marketing opportunity.

Exact benefits of WVNLA membership are on our website Members page (download application form, it includes all specific level benefits).

Thank you for your interest in the West Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association. 

Focus on a New Member

Michael Baker Jr., Inc.

Todd Schoolcraft - landscape architect

Every design is an attempt to address a problem. The problem for the Charleston Habitat for Humanity Restore was a lack of adequate parking for both store goers and delivery trucks, combined with a desire to create a new entrance facing the back lot of their newly renovated building. Should Habitat choose to pave their lot, they would be required by City of Charleston Code to address stormwater management and to provide on-site storage of some type. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization with limited funds. Historically rain water falling on the site created a sediment laden sheet flow running across an existing street into a curb inlet. Underground piping and storage of rainwater would be required since the majority of the surface area was needed for parking. The City of Charleston also has a problem in that much of their storm sewers are older and are combined with sanitary sewers. Such is the case in the older industrial portion of the City where the ReStore is located. These are unfortunately two all too typical urban problems.

Rain Gardens have been described as "Intelligent Puddles" and have become one of an arsenal of tools being used to manage rainfall at its source. Each rain garden functions as a small, cost effective landscape feature that mimics a site's predevelopment hydrology. Each rain garden includes a selection of wetland edge plants that take up excess water such as wildflowers, sedges, rushes, ferns, shrubs and small trees. As water flows into the rain garden it filters through soil layers before entering the groundwater system. Root systems enhance infiltration, *continued on page 6*

Horticultural Research Institute (HRI)

The Horticultural Research Institute was established in 1962 to support and promote horticultural research that benefits the nursery and landscape industry. HRI is the research affiliate of the American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA). HRI purpose is to focus on industry survival issues such as pest management, environmental stewardship and sustainability, marketing, and mechanization/automation to reduce industry vulnerability to labor challenges and improved product efficiency.


In 2010, HRI awarded \$210,000 to 8 research projects, one research conference and four student scholarships. Two research projects were selected for funding which detailed containerized nursery crops and irrigation scheduling and the usage of floating plant treatment systems for nutrient remediation of runoff from greenhouse and nursery operations. HRI also funded research on how to improve root systems that will create fewer returned trees to the nursery, result in fewer tree loss during winter storms and increase the lifespan of trees. Another key project is the use of poultry-feather resins to produce nursery containers.

Further researching information on HRI can be found at: www.HRIResearch.org. 

North Hills Nursery

Located on a small farm in rural Braxton County, West Virginia, you will find a small nursery specializing in sempervivum. That nursery is North Hills Nursery and is owned and operated by Martha Cochran with the help of her husband Charlie. The nursery was purchased in October 2010 and relocated to its current location. The nursery was previously located in Rock Cave, West Virginia.

Sempervivums (Hens and Chicks, Cats and Kittens, Hens and Biddies, Houseleeks) are a succulent plant that is hardy and will survive the cold winters of West Virginia and surroundings areas. The succulent plants have become more popular in today's society due to the ease of care and tolerance of neglect which makes these plants ideal for those who don't have a lot of time for gardening.

Sempervivum or houseleeks have been grown in the European countries since the 



North Hills Nursery coldframe

middle ages. They were believed to protect buildings against lightning and thunderbolts. Today, sempervivums are used in the green roof industry and continue to be planted on roofs.

Sempervivum come in many colors, shapes, and sizes. Colors include red, silver, purple, green and a combination of these. The plant may have smooth leaves while other are ciliate (hairy) and other may have a cobweb appearance. Color changes throughout the year with the plants. The early spring is the most colorful time of year. There are many factors that affect the color of the sempervivum.

Most enthusiasts grow sempervivum in pots and other containers. The size of the container is not critical however good drainage is critical. In natural conditions, sempervivums often grow in very poor soil but their extensive root system allows for deep penetration in search of nutrients. Sempervivums can often survive and grow in areas that were inhospitable to other plants. Beautiful rock gardens can be produced using sempervivum and other complimentary plants. North Hills Nursery offers such complimentary plants.

The nursery currently offers for sale 350 different cultivars of sempervivum. The nursery offers individual plants sales, planted containers, collections, internet sales, and wholesale purchasing. Martha has recently begun using some lava rock and decorative concrete planters in her plantings. She also has created living wreaths, living chairs, and living art. The nursery developed a Styrofoam based hypertufa planter. The large planters are made using coolers recycled from doctor's offices. The hypertufa planter looks like rock but is much lighter. ↗



Black Velvet, Frosty and Autopurpureum

The nursery is open to the public from April 1 through September 30 most days. There are times when they are not available so it is always a good idea to call before making the trip. The number is 304-452-8819. They do several festivals in the state throughout the spring and summer months and because they are a 2 person operation there will be times that they are just not at the nursery. There is more information regarding the sempervivum and the nursery, including a printer friendly road map, all of which can be found at the nursery's website: www.northhillsnursery.com. 🍁

Spotlight on WVU

Agriculture, Horticulture & Landscape Architecture Careers

October 26 / 10 AM to 2:00 PM

NRCCE, Evansdale Campus

The WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Design and the Career Services Center invite you to participate in the Spotlight on Agriculture, Horticulture & Landscape Architecture Careers. This smaller, more personalized career event is designed to increase your visibility on campus and allow you to network with the students and faculty in an informal setting.

If are you unable to participate this fall, you are still welcome to visit campus for information sessions, interviews, and other promotional activities. You can also post your employment opportunities for free on MountaineerTRAK.

REGISTRATION

Register in the Career Fairs and Events section of MountaineerTRAK (no deadline)
www.myinterfase.com/wvu/employer

COST

The \$50 fee for this event covers parking, breakfast, lunch, and advertisement for the recruiters.

AGENDA

9:00 AM - Employer set-up/breakfast

10:00 AM - Career fair begins

12:00 PM - Lunch

2:00 PM - Career fair ends

DISCIPLINES

Agriculture, Landscape Architecture, Horticulture

INFO: sarah.glenn@mail.wvu.edu 304-293-8214

Website: careerservices.wvu.edu 🍁



Baker continued moisture redistribution, and diverse microbial populations involved in biofiltration.



The overriding landscape design intent for the Habitat Garden is a naturalistic, shaded, four season's green space that will attract wildlife such as birds, bees, butterflies and ladybugs. A variety of appropriate and predominantly native plants with colorful flowers and seeds were specified. Native plants were used because they are more tolerant to local climate, soil, and water conditions. The relative diversity of the species of plantings in the garden will compensate for the natural ↗

failure of some. The true character of the garden and indeed its success as a major landscape feature on the site will not be entirely established for another two growing seasons. Since its construction the rain garden has already successfully contained, filtered and redistributed runoff from many considerable storm events this year. 🍁

Email Addresses

We want to make it as easy as is possible to contact your organizational leaders. If you do not have email capabilities, we will be pleased to pass along any letters sent to Board members. Below are email addresses for everyone on the Board.

Patrick Biafore patrick@biafore.com

Bill Mills TerraSalis@gmail.com

Mark Springer Mark@lavalette.net

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