

President's message

Thanks to everyone who attended the Winter Symposium. Although attendance was down slightly, months of planning produced an excellent program that was enjoyed by all. Please make your plans now for next year's meeting on January 25. And remember that the MANTS show will be January 9-11, 2019, in Baltimore.

At this year's symposium, before speaker Dave Tucker began the main body of one of his CLIP software presentations, he offered some thought-provoking remarks. He said that everyone in that room had the opportunity to be somewhere else—to be doing something other than attending his talk. We could have been working, shopping, sleeping—or a myriad of things other than sitting in that room listening to him. He was very appreciative of our time. He made me realize that those

(Please see *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE* on page 7)



WVNLA president Bud Cottrill recently made time for a visit to Disney World with his family.

Barberry ban on track for 2020 implementation

By Julie Robinson

About a year ago, word spread among nursery owners and landscapers around West Virginia that the state's Department of Agriculture Commissioner Kent Leonhardt was proposing the placement of Japanese barberry *Berberis thunbergii* DC on West Virginia's Noxious Weed List. Should the amendment be adopted by the state legislature, it would be illegal to grow, sell, transport or install barberry in West Virginia.

Many of our growers and landscapers expressed surprise and consternation regarding the amendment, while a few others acknowledged barberry's invasive nature and ability to take over untended open areas and fields. Indeed, as we delved into the study conducted by WVDA, it was apparent that the amendment was prompted by dairy and beef farmers whose fields included stands of invasive barberry.

Barberry's colorful, thorny branches, coupled with its prolific berries, make it an attractive plant to landscapers, who can offer it as one of the few plants the state's abundant deer population truly will not touch. Its hearty qualities also render it nearly indestructible once established on untended fields and meadows.

Because most West Virginia nurseries and landscapers have a significant number of barberry plants in stock and stand to suffer significant financial loss, should the amendment be adopted, WVNLA's leadership officially opposed the amendment as written during the public comment period last July. We asked that the loss these independent businesses would suffer be considered and, should the amendment be forwarded, that it include a grace period of at least three years, to allow growers to turn over their stock and minimize financial loss. We also asked for the exemption of noninvasive cultivars from the amendment, as New York state had recently allowed, based on research from UConn. WVNLA members were encouraged to officially log their own opinions and were

(Please see *BARBERRY* on page 2)



Berberis thunbergii will likely be added to West Virginia's Noxious Weed List, effective July 2020.

provided the necessary contact information.

In October, WVDA held a public hearing in Morgantown. I was one of six people who signed in to speak. The others all represented agricultural interests and spoke in support of the amendment. I stated that WVNLA opposed the inclusive ban of barberry and asked that WVDA consider the exemption of noninvasive cultivars. I also asked them to consider a grace period to minimize the financial loss of growers and landscapers. I requested the establishment of an invasive species advisory group, which would include industry members and would be involved in the future addition of plants to the list.

In addition, I said we were concerned about the precedent of WVDA banning a common and useful

landscape plant without consulting growers. I also pointed out that none of our neighboring states (Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky, Ohio and Virginia) have placed Japanese barberry on their noxious weeds lists. Their landscapers and garden centers will continue to use the plant and, presumably, sell it to West Virginia consumers who could cross state lines to make their purchases.

In November, members of the legislature's joint Legislative Rule-Making Committee met to consider amendments of rules that had been sent from various state agencies for their consideration, including Amendment 61CSR14A, the proposed barberry rule. Del. Kelli Sobonya (Cabell) and Sen. Mark Maynard (Wayne) headed the committee and heard from WVNLA members who voiced concerns. Earlier, on several occasions, Brett Merritt of G&G Nurseries, Bud Cottrill of ProScape WV, Kim Jackson of Kim's Greenhouse, Mark Springer of Lavalette Landscaping and Zach Crede of Crede Lawn and Landscaping had met with committee members. On the advice of these legislators, we contacted other committee members in writing and by phone with our requests. Some of the same WVNLA members participated in a conference call with Commissioner Leonhardt, during which he

heard our concerns and assured us the amendment would include a grace period from the effective date.

In December, Bud, Kim, Mark and I attended a Legislative Rule-Making Committee meeting at the Capitol and fielded questions about WVNLA's position on the amendment. Representatives of WVDA and the Farm Bureau, a plant scientist, and a dairy farmer spoke in support of the amendment. When the amendment came out of the committee, it included a two-year grace period for implementation and the option to add an exemption for noninvasive cultivars in the future.

Commissioner Leonhardt spoke at WVNLA's Winter Symposium on January 25 in Charleston, where he presented his position on Japanese barberry. He told the group that WVDA staff

members had received many reports of invasive barberry on farmland and that it was a problem in state parks, including Cacapon, where state money is spent to eradicate it. He said that he could not in good conscience condone the sale of a plant that his department was also attempting to eradicate. When asked about the exclusion of noninvasive cultivars, Leonhardt said that he didn't think the

science was in place to prove noninvasives were viable, and that he understood the state of New York was having difficulty enforcing the sale only of exempted noninvasive cultivars. On his way out of the meeting, he said that he hoped the two-year grace period would afford growers the opportunity to minimize loss and begin growing alternatives to barberry.

At press time, the amendment had not fully made its way through the legislative process. If it passes, as appears to be likely, the rule will be effective July 1, 2020. This is the current version:

"Effective July 1, 2020, Japanese Barberry, *Berberis thunbergii* DC, shall be declared to be a noxious weed. However, the Commissioner of Agriculture may exempt certain cultivated varieties of Japanese Barberry upon determination that those varieties are sterile and pose no threat to agriculture in West Virginia."

Suggested substitutes for Japanese barberry

For dwarf purple cultivars of *B. thunbergii*:

- **Old Fashioned Weigela**, *Weigela florida* (Dwarf purple cultivars)

For standard purple cultivars of *B. thunbergii*:

- **Smokebush**, *Cotinus coggygria* (Purple cultivars)
- **Eastern Ninebark**, *Physocarpus opulifolius* (Purple cultivars)
- **Weigela**, *Weigela florida* (Standard purple cultivars)

For yellow or gold cultivars of *B. thunbergii*:

- **Eastern Ninebark**, *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Dart's Gold'
- **Old Fashioned Weigela**, *Weigela florida* (Yellow cultivars)

For green cultivars of *B. thunbergii*:

- **Spicebush**, *Lindera benzoin*
- **Bush Cinquefoil**, *Dasifora fruticosa*
- **Fragrant Sumac**, *Rhus aromatica* (Dwarf cultivars)
- **Virginia Rose**, *Rosa virginiana*
- **Weigela**, *Weigela florida*

Source: Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Evaluation manager researches plants most likely to succeed

By Lynne Schwartz-Barker

Wouldn't you love to know which perennials will thrive in your garden, returning year after year to produce copious, long-lasting blooms? In 40 years of gardening, I can't begin to imagine how many of my plants have disappeared, or have been relegated to the compost heap for poor performance.

If you visit the Chicago area, you can check out the Chicago Botanic Garden's plant evaluation area, as I did on a trip to the Windy City almost four years ago. There, Richard Hawke, plant evaluation manager, puts perennials, woody shrubs, and green roof plants through their paces. Those of us who attended WVNLA'S Winter Symposium in January were lucky to hear Hawke speak and give us the scoop on perennials that have stood up well during a four-year trial period.

Perennials in the test garden are grown in clay soil, in sun and wind, with very cold temperatures in winter and heat in summer. They are not divided or fertilized, and get no insect or disease control. Because it is a display garden, it is kept weeded and is irrigated with overhead watering. Soil pH is around 7.2, much more alkaline than ours. Our soil pH hovers around 6.0, which is slightly acidic. (A soil pH of 7.0 is considered neutral. Numbers above that are alkaline and numbers below are acidic).

As Hawke took us through a number of gorgeous plant images, his comments on some of the plants were enlightening. Have you regularly lost new varieties of coneflowers, as I have? Hawke told us he's discovered that if a coneflower goes into winter without much basal foliage (leaves that grow close to the ground), it will probably die over the winter. He recommended Pica Bella, a pink-flowered, compact, reliably hardy variety. He also likes the native Tennessee coneflower, a tough plant that has the peculiar habit of facing east when it's in bloom.

Do your perennial hibiscus bloom only at the stem tips? If you want flowers all over the plant, try Jazzberry Jam. Its nine-inch-wide blossoms cover the four-foot plant from mid-summer to fall.

See Richard Hawke's list of proven perennials on pages 4-5.

How about a tall garden phlox that's resistant to powdery mildew, a disease that coats its leaves in an unattractive silver by late summer? Hawke recommended Shortwood as the most disease-resistant variety. What about a dianthus that

doesn't rot during prolonged spells of wet weather? Paint the Town fits the bill and has a long bloom season.

If you love black-eyed Susans (and who doesn't?), Hawke said that American Gold Rush Everlasting Sun is not just his favorite Rudbeckia, it's one of his favorite perennials. Why? A great



Chicago Botanic Garden's plant evaluation area. (Photo by Lynne Schwartz-Barker.)

pollinator plant, it is upright and naturally compact, reaching about 30 inches tall. It has a long season of bloom, from July to the end of October, and no leaf spot problems. Sounds like a plant I'll want to track down this spring!

I also learned that one of my new favorite plants, Blue Ice bluestar, will spread by underground rhizomes. I love this plant's blue spring flowers, its yellow fall foliage, and its deer-resistant qualities. With a compact growth habit, it needs no staking. And now I know I'll be able to divide the rhizomes in a few years and make more plants. Nice!

If you love ornamental grasses, Hawke recommended two of them: Jazz little bluestem has narrow blue foliage with purple hues in fall and is a compact grower that will not flop over.

Tara prairie dropseed has seed heads that smell like cilantro or popcorn (!). Its vase-shaped foliage turns a bright orange-red in autumn.

Lynne Schwartz-Barker is the senior garden designer and a partner in Flowerscape, a family-owned landscape design, planting and maintenance company she started in 1984. She writes a gardening column for the Charleston Gazette-Mail and is a WVNLA board member. This column appeared in February. Reprinted with permission from the Charleston Gazette-Mail

Punch up your landscapes with these proven perennials

Dr. Richard Hawke, plant evaluation manager at Chicago Botanic Garden, provided Winter Symposium attendees with the following list of perennials that stood the test of time in trials.

Agastache 'Rosie Posie' – hyssop (Zones 5/6-8) Full Sun
Purple-pink flowers with darker rosy calyces, mid-July to early October; 22 in. tall × 24 in. wide

Agastache 'Purple Haze' – hyssop (Zones 5-8) Full Sun
Blue-purple flowers in upright clusters to 11 in. long, late June to frost; 38 in. tall × 36 in. wide

Allium Summer Peek-A-Boo® – ornamental onion (Zones 5-8) Full Sun
Light purple flowers, 2 in. wide, mid-July to mid-August; 16 in. tall × 20 in. wide; dark green leaves, flowers sit just on top of leaves; compact sport of 'Summer Beauty'

Allium 'Millenium' – ornamental onion (Zones 5-9) Full Sun
Rose-purple flowers, 1¾ in. sphere, early July to mid-September; 20 in. tall × 13 in. wide; dark green leaves

Amsonia 'Blue Ice' – blue star (Zones 5-9) Full Sun to Partial Shade
Deep lavender-blue flowers, May and June; 20 in. tall × 36 in. wide; compact habit; bright yellow fall color

Amsonia montana 'Short Stack' – dwarf blue star (Zones 5-9) Full Sun to Partial Shade
Pale blue flowers to 5/8 in. wide, early May to mid-June; 20 in. tall × 36 in. wide; compact, bushy mounded habit but taller than expected (listed as 10 in. tall); lime-green to strong yellow fall color

Athyrium 'Branford Beauty' – Japanese painted fern hybrid (Zones 4-8) Partial to Full Shade
Bright silvery-green fronds with purple rachis; clumping with irregular arching habit, 18 in. tall × 40 in. wide; morning sun enhances leaf color; deer resistant; five star rated in trial

Athyrium 'Branford Rambler' – Japanese painted fern hybrid (Zones 4-8) Part to Full Shade
Bright green fronds with purple rachis; spreading fern with irregular arching fronds, 25 in. tall × 40 in. wide; hybrid of *Athyrium niponicum* and *Athyrium filix-femina*; five star rated in trial

Baptisia 'Lemon Meringue' – false indigo (Zones 4-8) Full Sun
Bright yellow flowers, 16 in. long, late May to mid-June; 32 in. tall × 62 in. wide; dusky buds and



Baptisia 'Lunar Eclipse'

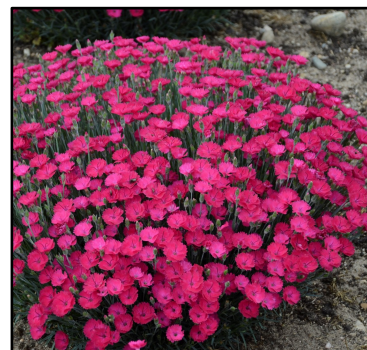
stems; **'Lunar Eclipse,'** creamy and light and dark violet flowers, 22 in. long; 36 in. tall × 68 in. wide

Campanula 'Viking' – bellflower (Zones 5-8) Full Sun
Lavender, bell-shaped flowers, 2 in. long, mid-June to early August; 18 in. tall × 32 in. wide; slow spreader

Clematis 'Cleminov 51' – Sapphire Indigo™ clematis (Zones 4-8) Full Sun
Deep purple-blue flowers, 5 in. wide, early June to September; nonclimber, 36 in. long stems

Dianthus 'Paint the Town Fuchsia' – pinks (Zones 4-9) Full Sun to Part Shade

Fuchsia-pink flowers, 1 in. wide, mid-May to early July, repeat in fall; 6 in. tall × 14 in. wide; **'Paint the Town Magenta,'** magenta flowers, 1¼ in. wide, mid-May to late June, repeat in fall; 8 in. tall × 14 in. wide; blue leaves



Dianthus 'Paint the Town Magenta'

Echinacea purpurea 'Pica Bella' – purple coneflower (Zones 3-8) Full Sun to Part Shade
Deep pink flowers, 4 in. wide, mid-June to mid-September; 30 in. tall and wide; strong-stemmed habit

Echinacea tennesseensis – Tennessee coneflower (Zones 5-9) Full Sun
Pink flowers, 2-3 in. wide, June to August and into October; 18-24 in. tall and wide; upward-facing ray florets; long-lived plants; federally endangered species; **'Rocky Top'** is comparable to the species.

Geranium soboliferum 'Starman' – cranesbill (Zones 4-8) Full Sun to Partial Shade
Purple flowers with dark starburst, 1½ in. wide, August to October; 16 in. tall × 30 in. wide; mounded habit and red fall color; prefers moist soils

Geranium 'Azure Rush' – cranesbill (Zones 5-9) Full Sun to Light Shade
Light blue flowers, 1□ in. wide, mid-June to October; 9-14 in. tall × 39 in. wide; sterile; sport of 'Rozanne'



Geum 'Mai Tai'

Geum 'Mai Tai' – geum (Zones 5-7) Full Sun to Partial Shade
Apricot flowers, semidouble, 1¼ in. wide, late April to late May; 24 in. tall and wide with flowers;

'Sangria,' bright orange-red flowers, 1¼ in. wide, mid-June to mid-July; 35 in. tall × 30 in. wide

***Helianthus angustifolia* 'Gold Lace'** – swamp sunflower (Zones 5-9) Full Sun
Golden yellow flowers, 2½ inches wide, late September through November; 48-60 in. tall × 36 in. wide; fine-textured, dark green leaves

***Heliopsis* 'Venus'** – false sunflower (Zones 3-9) Full Sun
Golden yellow flowers, semi-double, 4-5 in. wide, mid-June



Heliopsis 'Venus'

to mid-September; tall, bushy plants, 54 in. tall and wide; very best of the false sunflower trial; bred for cut flower industry

***Hibiscus* 'Jazzberry Jam'** – rose mallow (Zones 4-9) Full Sun to Partial Shade
Deep magenta flowers, ruffled edges, 9 in. wide, early August to mid-September; green leaves with red veins; 50 in. tall × 60 in. wide; indeterminate blooming

***Hibiscus* 'Midnight Marvel'** – rose mallow (Zones 4-9) Full Sun to Partial Shade
Scarlet red flowers, 8 in. wide, late July to early September; 48 in. tall × 48 in. wide; purple, maple-like leaves

***Nepeta* 'Novanepjun'** – **Junior Walker™** catmint (Zones 5-9) Full Sun
Lavender-blue flowers, late May to October; nonseeding; blue-green leaves; compact, 22 in. tall × 35 in. wide

***Nepeta* × *faassenii* 'Purrsian Blue'** – catmint (Zones 3-8) Full Sun
Lavender-blue flowers, 6 in. long, late May to October; bluer than Junior Walker; green leaves; compact habit, 17 in. tall × 25 in. wide

***Phlox paniculata* 'Ditondre'** – **Coral Crème Drop** garden phlox (Zones 4-8) Full Sun to Partial Shade
Coral flowers, 1¼ in. wide, mid-June to October; 32 in. tall × 22 in. wide; upper leaves and calyces are deep burgundy; excellent mildew resistance

***Phlox* 'Forever Pink'** – phlox (Zones 4-8) Full Sun
Purplish-pink flowers, 1 in. wide, June and intermittently into October; 17 in. tall × 31 in. wide

***Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Little Goldstar'** – black-eyed Susan (Zone 4-9) Full Sun
Golden yellow flowers, 1¼ in. wide, mid-July to late September; 26 in. tall × 34 in. wide; bushy mounds

***Rudbeckia* 'American Gold Rush' – Everlasting Sun™** – black-eyed Susan (Zone 4-9) Full Sun
Golden yellow flowers, 2¼ in. wide, drooping rays, late July to mid-October; dense bushy mounds, 27 in. tall × 40 in. wide; hairy foliage resistant to Septoria leaf spot

***Salvia* × *sylvestris* 'Little Night'** – dwarf meadow sage (Zones 3-8) Full Sun
Dark violet-blue flowers with burgundy calyces, 6 in. long, early June to mid-July; 16 in. tall × 18 in. wide; tight mounded habit

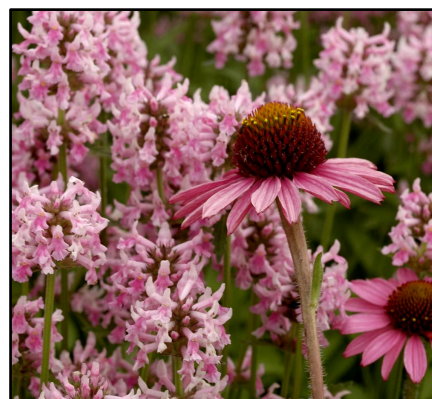
***Salvia nemorosa* 'Crystal Blue'** – sage (Zones 3-8) Full Sun
Light lavender-blue flowers with chartreuse calyces, 8 in. long, mid-May to mid-July; 20 in. tall × 21 in. wide; unique flower color

***Schizachyrium scoparium* 'Jazz'** – little bluestem (Zones 4-10) Full Sun
Blue-green leaves; 24-30 in. tall × 18-24 in. wide; stays upright; similar to but shorter than 'The Blues'

***Sporobolus heterolepis* 'Tara'** – prairie dropseed (Zones 4-8) Full Sun to Light Shade
Fine-textured, green leaves; vase-shaped habit; 24 in. tall (w/flowers) × 18-24 in. wide; fragrant flowers; darker seed heads than species; orange fall color; drought tolerant

***Stachys officinalis* 'Pink Cotton Candy'** – wood betony (Zones 4-8) Full Sun
Two-tone, bright pink flowers, late June to late August; 24 in. tall and wide; dark green leaves; robust habit

Stachys minima – dwarf betony (Zones 3-8) Full Sun
Bright violet flowers in July and early August; 8 in. tall × 12 in. wide; dark green leaves; compact mounds



Stachys 'Pink Cotton Candy'

***Vernonia lettermannii* 'Iron Butterfly'** – slimleaf ironweed (Zones 4-9) Full Sun
Purple flowers (disk florets only), ½ in. wide, late August to early October; 30 in. tall × 45 in. wide; soft, needlelike foliage; tolerant of dry conditions but not overly wet soils; more compact than species

***Vernonia* 'Summer's Swan Song'** – ironweed (Zones 4-9) Full Sun
Deep purple flowers, 7/8 in. wide, late August to early October; 36 in. tall × 40 in. wide; compact hybrid developed by Dr. Jim Ault

For information: www.chicagobotanic.org/research/ornamental_plant_research/plant_evaluation

Varied background led student to horticulture

The 2018 Marcus W. Rennix Memorial Scholarship goes to Dustin Trychta, a West Virginia University horticulture student with a most interesting background. After graduating from high school in 1998, Dustin entered the army and was stationed as a cook in Budingen, Germany, for nearly seven years. He was honorably discharged in 2005 as a sergeant. He then worked as a civilian in security and quality control before settling into a 10-year stint in appliance installation.

Dustin's interest in horticulture began with cleanup of the yard of his first home, which had been neglected by the previous owner. After removing weeds and stumps, and regrading his yard to solve some runoff issues, Dustin tackled his first full-scale landscape project in his own yard. Then, learning as he went, he began planning and installing residential landscapes for coworkers and family.

Later, his horticultural interests broadened beyond general landscaping to giant vegetable gardening. This interest would later lead to his display of his giant gourd, "Pebbles," in WVU's student union as part of Mountaineer Week festivities. Dustin also provided additional oversized gourds, which were hollowed out to be "boats," for the first Giant Pumpkin Regatta Boat Race, held in Morgantown last fall.

Below, Dustin offers more information about his interesting background for WVNLA newsletter readers.

What brought you to WVU?

My wife, Kirsha Trychta's, career as a law professor was a catalyst in our decision to become Mountaineers. She was offered a job here. A large factor in the decision was that I could finally pursue a degree in horticulture. It was a decision for two careers, rather than just one.

How do you think your experience as a nontraditional student with military background prepares you for a career in horticulture?

My military experience is a tremendous help in both completing my education and starting a career in horticulture. As a former cook in the military, I am familiar with working long and varied hours while performing strenuous tasks. The military taught me the value of waking early and resting late when deadlines are fast approaching. The military, in general, requires a broad set of skills, much like the horticulture industry. It also

matured me and instilled leadership qualities that will be necessary when I expand my work into the employment of others.

How is your college experience different from that of traditional students?

Most notable is my understanding that I only get out of my education what I'm willing to put into it. Most college students are here because their parents told them they had to go to college, while others want to be here but are unsure what they want to do in life. I am fortunate enough to have lived some life prior to school and to know exactly what I want to study. I also very much appreciate coming home to my peaceful backyard garden every day, rather than a dorm room.



Dustin Trychta carefully places a scion on a stock.

You have expressed an interest in starting a small-scale nursery specializing in the grafting of ornamental hardwoods. That is a very specific goal. How will you get there?

I have been giving that question a lot of thought. My educators and mentors tell me that is not the most logical idea, especially in Morgantown, where I live. However, my heart tells me that there is nothing I cannot accomplish, once I am determined to do it. The answer probably lies somewhere in between. If I pursue that dream, I know it will take dedication to my craft and long hours, often without a paycheck. It will take support from my wife and family, as well as continuing relations with industry professionals and members of organizations such as WVNLA, who can provide valuable insight.

(Please see SCHOLARSHIP on page 7)

SCHOLARSHIP *(Continued from page 6)***You mentioned volunteer activities. Where do you volunteer?**

The main place I volunteer is at WVU in the organic farm, where I display giant pumpkins for school activities. I also volunteer for various projects at school and through the WVU Horticulture Club. I partnered with North Elementary School in their fourth-grade gardening program, and I have helped build or repair high tunnels and raised beds, and amend soil. I helped erect a high tunnel for Operation Welcome Home in Mylan Park, which is designed to teach local veterans how to extend the growing season and increase self-sustainability. I also auctioned off a party in my giant-pumpkin patch to raise money for a program in WVU's College of Law. Agriculture students from Trinidad and Tobago attended the party, and I taught them about techniques we use to increase efficiency and yields.

What are your hobbies/interests?

My wife (who is a teaching associate professor and director of the Academic Excellence Center at WVU's College of Law) and I love to travel together. We like to visit new places but also enjoy amusement parks and thrill rides. We enjoy puzzle games and trivia, and the occasional bingo night with her mother. We are planning a dream vacation when I graduate to tour the West Coast and see the majestic redwoods.

Do you think it is likely that you will remain in West Virginia after your 2019 graduation?

As of now, I have no intention of leaving West Virginia. When we moved here, we bought a home and intended to put down roots. Morgantown has been very kind to us and West Virginia is a beautiful state. I can't promise that I will be here in five years, but if you had asked me five years ago where I would be, I wouldn't have thought it would be here. No matter where life takes me, I will always hold West Virginia close to my heart.

I would like to thank WVNLA for supporting me and my education, and also for its support of the WVU Horticulture Club. It is in great part due to WVNLA that WVU students compete annually at the National Association of Landscape Professionals Collegiate Landscaping Competition. The opportunity there is great for industry exposure and networking practice at the focused job fair. Employers at the job fair offer actual job and internship opportunities. Thank you for your continued support.

Congratulations, Dustin!

Save the date

You'll want to mark September 8 on your calendar now. That's the date WVNLA partners with Proven Winners to cosponsor the Proven Winners Landscape Roadshow at The Greenbrier. This full-day event, at one of West Virginia's finest resorts, will feature experts from Proven Winners, who will talk about new and exciting plant introductions and offer design tips. A behind-the-scenes tour of The Greenbrier's beautiful grounds is also in store. Planners are also considering an additional day of garden tours, featuring landscapes in surrounding gated communities and nearby historic Lewisburg.

CEU credits will be available and lunch will be provided for a nominal cost. You'll receive e-mails with registration information and more details as they are available, but we wanted to let you know now about this wonderful event!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 1)

were moments in our lifetimes that we would never, ever have again.

This brought to mind that Lu Anne and I lost our son over six year ago. It's hard to believe that it's been that long. I think of him every day, and I'm thankful for the time that I had with him. From his days as a little guy to those of adulthood, I am very appreciative of the time we spent together. Moments in time that will never, ever happen again.

In early February, we were able to spend a few days with our daughter and her family at Disney World. I could have been working or busy with many other things, but I'm glad I decided to spend that time with them.

It's never too late to change your plans—to change your priorities—to do the right thing. You will NEVER regret the time you spend with your loved ones. You WILL regret the missed opportunities to play ball, to play house, to take a walk, to have a picnic, to play a game. Please think about that.

The few minutes you spend reading this newsletter are gone forever. I hope that you will consider that time spent wisely.

With warm regards,
Bud

Reclaiming boxwood from boxwood blight

WVNLA's board of directors voted at its January meeting to make a sizable donation to the Horticulture Research Institute's boxwood blight fund. The project focuses on a standardized protocol to assess boxwood varieties for boxwood blight tolerance.

By Jill M. Calabro, Ph.D. Science & Research Programs Director, AmericanHort

Back in the late 2000s and early 2010s, before boxwood blight became a household name among nurseries, growers reported a slump in sales of boxwood and plentiful inventory. This was during the period where the great recession was in full swing and new housing construction was at low levels. Fast-forward a few years, and it's a whole different story.

The recession ended, and the U.S. real estate market rebounded. Growers now report an inability to meet consumers' demands for boxwood—a good scenario! Boxwood is the #1 woody plant sold in the U.S. In 2014, the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service estimated the value of U.S. boxwood production at over \$126 million, beating azalea, holly, hydrangea, arborvitae, and many others. Even some greenhouse producers are handling boxwood at certain times of the year.

With demand for boxwood at an all-time high, it's unfortunate that growers must contend with boxwood blight, the impact of which is increasingly



Photo by Jill Calabro

felt in production. The costs to grow boxwood have reached an all-time high as well for most growers.

While other diseases and pests threaten boxwoods—such as boxwood leafminer, *Volutella*, and mites—boxwood blight, caused by *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*, is the primary concern in the U.S. at the moment. This was confirmed at the recent American Boxwood Society (ABS) meeting, where new developments in boxwood blight research were featured. Some in the industry are concerned that the U.S. is on the cusp of exponential boxwood blight spread.

“The American Boxwood Society was overwhelmed at the response to the Boxwood Blight meeting in Beltsville on February 20, 2018,”

commented Bennett Saunders, President of ABS. “It is obvious to the Society that the industry is very interested in fighting this disease. Indeed, the talks centered on keeping the disease out, but there is an increasing realization that in the future we will manage the disease through better pruning techniques, better ground cover management, more resistant cultivars, and other practices.

“As this disease becomes better managed, we see a continued strong demand for this ‘Aristocrat of Plants’, in spite of the higher cost of production.”

To date, boxwood blight has been positively identified in 25 states. However, consensus among researchers is that it is likely present throughout the contiguous U.S. wherever there is a sizable population of boxwood. Any state where boxwoods are used in the landscape, but the disease hasn't been reported, may just not have been identified yet. In any event, incidence of boxwood blight is increasing, both in production and landscape settings, as well as in cut greenery. Several reports emerged during the 2017 holiday season of boxwood blight-infected cuttings used and sold in wreaths and greenery in floral arrangements; horticultural inspectors issued quarantines on some of this material.

Margery Daughtrey, Senior Extension Associate with Cornell University specializing in ornamental plant pathology, noted, “In any given locality, the fungus that causes boxwood blight is usually moved only short distances, mostly by rain splash, or wind-driven rain...but we help it out in its distribution by inadvertently moving infected plants over large distances via the nursery trade. Diseased boxwood leaves and cankered shoots travel via B&B material, gallon containers, and even in Christmas wreaths.”

In parts of Europe, where boxwood blight has become almost ubiquitous in production and landscapes, treatment with fungicides is the norm. Eradication is not their primary control strategy, since the disease is widespread. The U.S. may get to that point – or maybe not. Our industry strategy is to keep boxwood blight out of areas, especially historic gardens - relying on a “start clean, stay clean” mantra. Time will tell how successful we are. In the interim, research continues.

Though boxwood blight was only identified in the U.S. in 2011, a tremendous amount of research has been done since then. From 2014 to 2017, USDA APHIS has dedicated over \$2.7 million to boxwood blight research through the Farm Bill, Section 10007. Additional research funds have come from the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative program through USDA ARS and the IR-4

Ornamental Horticulture Program with funding from USDA APHIS and USDA NIFA. The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) sponsors research directly in tandem with its education and advocacy efforts.

Early research efforts focused on fungicide efficacy trials. Since then the research has morphed into the investigation of novel control strategies and longer-term solutions.

Dr. Chuan Hong, Virginia Tech, is coordinating a number of valuable research projects with a “you got questions, we got answers” attitude.

One example is the evaluation of mulch to help prevent spread in landscape situations. The spores of *C. pseudonaviculata* are very large and sticky; therefore, they do not readily spread via air currents. Tools, boots, rain splash, animal movement (even cats and dogs!), and infected plant material are prime ways boxwood blight is transmitted. Dr. Hong has

found that mulching can effectively suppress disease through reduction in rain splash transmission and possibly by a change in the microbiome. Dr. Anton Baudoin, Virginia Tech, is considering the impact of mulch in production.

Dr. Hong is also working with Dr. Len Coop, Oregon State University, on development of a boxwood blight forecasting model. The model can be found online now but should only be used as reference at this point. Future validations are needed and will enable it to more accurately serve as a guide for fungicide applications. Release of a mobile app is expected later this year.

Regarding fungicides, Dr. Jim LaMondia, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, has been testing the efficacy of commercially available products. Dr. LaMondia’s work has indicated some potential, early curative effects from certain demethylation inhibitor (DMIs, also known as sterol biosynthesis inhibitors or FRAC code 3) fungicides. More work is needed here, since many DMIs regulate plant growth or can cause severe plant injury.

Dr. LaMondia is also considering the impacts of alternate host plants, such as *Pachysandra* and *Sarcococca*, on disease development. *Pachysandra* production is different than boxwood and is not considered a likely source of boxwood blight. However, *Pachysandra* can serve as a reservoir for the pathogen in landscape settings.

Sanitation should always be a consideration – regardless of what disease is at play - for both producers and landscape managers. Several

products are effective, such as ethanol, bleach, Lysol™, and Zerotel™. Ethanol in particular has been shown to effectively kill *C. pseudonaviculata* microsclerotia. This is great news because microsclerotia are masses of hardened fungal material capable of tolerating extreme weather conditions for an extended period of time. Microsclerotium formation is one way boxwood blight can persist in the soil for a very long time.

Other key research areas include biocontrol options, betterment of diagnostic tools (maybe even one suitable for field use!), the disease cycle, and a breeding program.

Finding tolerant boxwood varieties is a critical need identified by many throughout our industry. Mark Sellew, President of Pride’s Corner Farm, added, “At Prides Corner Farms we still grow and sell susceptible varieties but have dramatically changed our cultural practices to minimize disease pressure from limited access to the

plants, to careful water management and finally to an aggressive chemical program with multiple MOA’s.”

“I believe our industry has to do a better job of policing ourselves, particularly when it comes to growing very susceptible varieties like *Buxus suffruticosa*. This plant, in my opinion, should be absolutely banned. It is highly susceptible and is most likely spreading the disease and jeopardizing the future market potential of the entire genus of *Buxus*.”

Once boxwood blight was discovered in the U.S, HRI acted quickly and established a fund for boxwood blight research, making some of the first fungicide efficacy trials possible. Since then, HRI has continued support of the industry by leveraging these funds for additional support and the development of a best management practices (BMP) document through collaboration with AmericanHort and the National Plant Board. The BMPs help gold standard growers ensure clean boxwood production.

One of HRI’s latest projects is working with researchers towards a standardized protocol where boxwood varieties can be assessed for boxwood blight tolerance. Previous studies have been conducted to evaluate boxwood varieties in terms of tolerance and susceptibility; however, the studies varied in methodology and, in some cases, results. Due to this variability, a more streamlined approach is desired. The boxwood blight research fund was reopened in 2018 and is now accepting donations to help guide the industry towards production of boxwood blight tolerant varieties.



Photo by Jill Calabro

2018 Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show celebrates highest registration in 10 years

The Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show celebrated another successful year January 10-12 as the show attracted the largest number of registrants since 2008. A diverse group of green industry professionals traveled from across the country and around the registrants (including exhibitors) representing 46 states and 15 foreign countries to this year's show, the best attendance in ten years. These attendees, who gathered to do business, network and learn about the newest green industry trends for 2018, had the opportunity to visit 963 exhibiting companies spread out over 1,536 booths. In addition to exhibitors, 3,659 non-exhibiting/buying companies were represented on the show floor. Covering 300,000+ square feet of contiguous exhibit space at the Baltimore Convention Center, MANTS is the premier green industry marketplace for business.

"In addition to our increased registration, it was incredible to walk the show floor and feel the energy and excitement our colleagues already have for this season," said Vanessa Finney, Executive Vice President of MANTS. "Business was booming at MANTS this year, too. 81% of our attendees were designated as final decision makers by their companies and it showed; many exhibitors commented about the quality of the attendees and the amount of business conducted during the show's three days. We are so glad MANTS continues to be a valuable asset to the industry."

MANTS is co-owned by the nursery and landscape associations of Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. MANTS 2019 is scheduled for January 9-11 at the Baltimore Convention Center.

Southern Nursery Association news

The Southern Nursery Association (SNA) has announced plans for the 2019 SNA Conference. After favorable reviews of the 2018 conference, plans are underway to hold the 2019 conference once again at the Baltimore Convention Center on January 7 - 8, 2019, preceding the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show.

Participants of the 2018 SNA Conference were positive about the location, the meeting space, and the added convenience of the conference held two days before the opening of MANTS, according to Karen Summers, SNA executive vice president. Visit sna.org for more information.

For the latest information visit our mants.com or call 410-296-6959.



Brett and Marie Merritt of G&G Nursery in Lesage talk with a customer at MANTS.

Certification congratulations

Congratulations to **Steve Hawkins** of Green Meadow Services in Cross Lanes and **Greg Howell** of Aspen Corporation in Daniels, West Virginia's newest Certified Professional Horticulturists. Steve and Greg both achieved passing scores when they took the exam on January 25 in Charleston.

The next CPH exam will be administered in July. The 100 multiple-choice questions are based on material covered in the Certified Professional Horticulturist study manual, which is available to members for \$60 and to nonmembers for \$100. The cost includes access to an online version of the study guide. The exam also requires identification of 25 plants.

For more information, e-mail wvnlassoc@gmail.com or call 304-553-1234.



WVNLA names Outstanding Person 2018

Bud Cottrill of ProScape of West Virginia was honored as **Outstanding Person of the Year** at the Winter Symposium

As a board member and during his current term as president, Bud has exhibited sound judgment, insight, and strong leadership. Bud encourages others in the industry to grow professionally and personally and supports WVNLA programs and initiatives with his time, knowledge, and talent.

We wish Bud success in all that he approaches and are thankful to him for his contributions to this organization and to the world around him.

Congratulations, Bud!

Welcome new members

We welcome the following new members to the West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association:

Greenbrier Plant Health Care

Active member

George Piasecki

1410 Stone House Rd., Caldwell, WV 24925

304-520-2112

wv.logger@gmail.com

Specializing in insect, disease, and environmental problems diagnosis and control, and turf management

Kim's Greenhouse

Active member

Kim Jackson

2432 Little Two Mile Creek Rd., Milton, WV 25541

304-743-3310

kimgreenhouse@frontier.com

Kim's Greenhouse on Facebook

Retail garden center, nursery supplies, perennial nursery

Sunrise Carriage Trail

Associate member

Kenny Williams

2061 Newhouse Dr., Charleston, WV 25302

304-553-5607

samsworld@suddenlink.net

Landscape construction and maintenance

West Virginia Dept. of Natural Resources – Twin Falls State Park

Associate member

P. O. Box 667, Mullens, WV 25882

304-294-4000

randell.allen@wv.gov

Golf course maintenance



Members elect new board member

Attendees at the annual members meeting on January 26 in Charleston voted **Lisa McDavid** of Lisa's Gardenscapes as a new member of WVNLA's board of directors. Lisa replaces **Scott Barnitz** of Bob's Market and Greenhouses, whose years of service as a board member were noted by president Bud Cottrill.

Lisa launched Lisa's Gardenscapes in 2009 after working for other employers. Lisa holds degrees in unrelated fields, but came from a farming family in the midwest, where she says she absorbed a great deal of practical knowledge and hands-on experience.

Lisa's Gardenscapes is based in Cross Lanes, W.Va. Services include residential and commercial consultation, design/build, utility reclamation, horticultural coaching, West Virginia-certified application services, sodding, tree/stump removal, maintenance services, interior/exterior decorating, and holiday lighting.

WVNLA NEWS

P. O. Box 20284

Charleston, WV 25362

WVNLA Dates to Note

April 12-14 West Virginia Urban Ag Conference,
Camp Virgil Tate, Charleston, UrbanAgWV.com

June 13 WVNLA board meeting, Huntington

September 8 Proven Winners Landscape Roadshow,
The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs,
provenwinnerslandscaperoadshow.com

January 7-8 SNA Conference, Baltimore, sna.org

January 9-11 MANTS, Baltimore, mants.com



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