

# Louisiana Nursery News

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1999

The Newsletter of the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen

*Louisiana Nursery News* is a newsletter produced by the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen as a member service. The opinions and statements expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of LAN, its staff, Board of Directors, or its editors. Likewise, advertisements do not constitute an endorsement of the featured products or services. ●

## Newsletter Highlights

TAN/MISSLARK '99 Post Show Report .....	pg 1
LAN Officers, Board and Committees "Goldsturm" Rudbeckia Named "LA Select" Plant for 2000 .	pg 2
Imahara Elected SNA President SNA Environmental Leadership Award .....	pg 3
GSHE Ad Ten Commandments of Leadership .....	pg 4
How to Influence & Serve Today's Gardener .....	pg 5-6
Federal Crop Insurance for Nurseries .....	pg 7
New Crape Myrtles from Lacebark, Inc. Congratulations! New CNP's .....	pg 8
More on Giant Salvinia LABI's Scorecard .....	pg 9
Economic Contributors of LA's Green Industry .....	pg 10
LAN Membership Application .....	pg 11

## TAN-MISSLARK '99 Post Show Report

A total of 10,445 attendees visited the last TAN-MISSLARK Show at the Dallas Convention Center in Dallas, Texas August 6-8, 1999. In future years, the show will be The Nursery/Landscape Expo, reflecting the broader base of the management organization, the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association (TNLA). TNLA was formed when the Texas Association of Nurserymen and the Texas Association of Landscape Contractors merged on March 1, 1999.

The 1999 Show included a pre-show seminar with record attendance of over 400, and 1,675 sold-out exhibit spaces plus an outdoor equipment demonstration.

Booth Awards at the show included three categories in greenlines and hardlines this year, adding a "medium" category to the traditional small and large awards. Winners were: Hardline: Small - Watson's Evergreen Gardens; Medium - Check Garden Products, Inc.; Large - Pavestone Company. Greenline: Small - Jordan's Plant Farm; Medium - Crockett's Wholesale Nursery; Large - Color Spot Nurseries.

The 2000 show, The Nursery/Landscape Expo, will be held August 18-20, 2000, at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas. A few booths remain for the 2000 show, sign up early. A waiting list will be formed as those few vacancies are filled. For information about the 2000 show contact TNLA at (800) 880-0343, or e-mail [info@txnla.org](mailto:info@txnla.org). \*

## Landscape Maintenance Workshop

**Wednesday, October 20**  
**Calcasieu Ag Center Office**  
Gulf Hwy - Lake Charles

Contact: Allen Owings (225) 388-2222  
or Robert Turley (318) 475-8812

## GULF STATES HORTICULTURAL EXPO

**January 28 -29, 2000**  
(Education Sessions - January 27<sup>th</sup>)  
**Mobile Convention Center**  
**Mobile, AL**  
Contact: Linda VanDyke  
Phone 334/502-7777, Fax 334/502-7711

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#### **TAN/MISSLARK Trade Show Representative**

Allen Owings

## 'Goldsturm' Rudbeckia Named "Louisiana Select" Plant for 2000

The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service and Louisiana Association of Nurserymen have announced 'Goldsturm' rudbeckia as the "Louisiana Select" plant for Spring 2000. *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' has been previously recognized as the Perennial Plant of the Year in 1999.

'Goldsturm' rudbeckia produces bright-yellow, 3-4 inch flowers with a dark-brown to black eye. Flowering occurs mid-late spring through fall in Louisiana. It reaches 3-4 feet tall in landscapes and is recommended in USDA hardiness zones 3-9. Plant in full sun in the landscape for best flowering performance. 'Goldsturm' is tolerant of heat and drought and makes good cut flowers with long post-harvest qualities.

Growers can produce 'Goldsturm' from seeds or by vegetative cuttings. Plugs and liners are also available. Seed germination takes 2-3 weeks and occurs sporadically after sowing at 65-72 degrees. A seed stratification of 3-4 weeks at 40 degrees improves germination percentage. Slightly reduce the soil temperature after germination.

For a production medium, the recommended pH is 5.8-6.8. Seedlings usually can be transplanted 4-6 weeks after germination. Production time for 4 inch pots is 4-5 weeks after transplanting 128 plugs. One gallon containers planted with 2-3 plugs require an additional 3-4 weeks production time.

In order for plants to produce more than a minimum number of flowers the first year, a cold treatment is needed. A fall planting in 1999 will produce more flowers than a spring planting in 2000.

'Goldsturm' rudbeckia is a highly recommended and reliable performer in Louisiana landscapes. This plant will be actively promoted in April through June 2000. Contact Allen Owings (225) 388-2222, fax (225) 388-1068, or e-mail [aowings@agctr.lsu.edu](mailto:aowings@agctr.lsu.edu) for promotional materials (available in February 2000) and any additional information. Previously named "Louisiana Select" plants are 'Telstar' dianthus, 'New Gold' lantana, 'Trailing Purple' lantana, 'Dallas Red' lantana, 'Confetti' lantana, 'Silver Mound' lantana, 'New Orleans Red' coleus, 'Homestead Purple' verbena, bald cypress, 'Watchet' azalea, 'Foxy' foxglove, 'Lady in Red' salvia, 'Henry's Garnet' Virginia willow, and 'New Wonder' scaevola.\*

Allen D. Owings  
Associate Specialist  
(Horticulture)  
LSU Agricultural Center



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## News From Southern Nursery Association, Inc.

1827 Powers Ferry Road, NW, Bldg. 4, Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30339 Voice (770) 953-3311, FAX (770) 953-4411



### Walter Imahara Elected SNA President As Association Begins Second 100 Years

Walter M. Imahara, owner of a Baton Rouge, LA landscape and maintenance firm has been elected president of the 16-state Southern Nursery Association (SNA), an Atlanta based trade association celebrating 100 years of service to the southeastern nursery industry.

Imahara took office August 1 during the annual SNA Business Meeting which was held in conjunction with the association's annual convention and trade show in Atlanta. He succeeds William D. Reese, Ocala, FL nurseryman.

The son of second-generation Japanese-American parents, Imahara served as vice president and director, representing SNA members in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, before his election to the presidency of the regional association.

Imahara's industry-related achievements in Louisiana reads like a "who's who of the industry", including 26 years of membership on the Board of Directors, honored three times as the Nurseryman of the Year, and honored with the James A. Foret Award. He is currently serving as President of the National Landscape Association.

Imahara's passion is the sport of weightlifting, where he has won many titles, beginning in 1967 with a gold medal for the United States in the Pan American Games. His latest win came in June of this year when he captured a world class record in the Pan American Masters competition in Canada. In 1996 he was inducted into the prestigious IWF-Masters Hall of Fame.

Born in Sacramento, CA Imahara's parents grew grapes and strawberries before they were relocated during World War II to Arkansas. Following the war, the Imahara family moved to Baton Rouge where Walter attended high school before

earning a horticulture degree from the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Imahara was serving in the army in Germany when he met Sumi, a teacher who would become his bride in 1963, the same year he entered the horticulture business in Baton Rouge.

On accepting his new position, Imahara expressed a special goal: "That of securing a financial base of strength for SNA, through responsible management, so the future of programs, old and new, can keep pace with the changing times." He added, "a strong association can only function on its financial strength and well being, and therefore, can give deserved member services."

The Southern Nursery Association, established in 1899, is a non-profit professional trade association representing the horticultural industry. SNA's primary purpose is to advance the horticultural industry in the southern U.S. through educational, commercial and research opportunities. \*

### Inaugural SNA Environmental Leadership Award Shared by Six "Best Management Practices Guide" Authors

Six university professors, who authored the Southern Nursery Association's *Best Management Practices Guide for Producing Container-Grower Plants*, have been named winners of the association's Environmental Leadership Award, a new honor initiated this year by SNA to recognize outstanding leadership in the environmental field.

The group consists of Tom Yeager, University of Florida; Charles Gilliam and Ken Tilt, Auburn University; Ted Bilderback, University of North Carolina; Donna Fare, University of Tennessee, and Alex Niemiera, Virginia Tech.

The educational leaders were recognized during SNA's 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention held July 30-August 1 in Atlanta.

Collectively, the six horticulture specialists at their respective institutions, developed a much needed publication now in use by producers throughout the 16 states comprising the SNA. A number of government and environmental agencies also utilize the guide as a reference document to gauge the effectiveness of proactive grower management practices designed to minimize environmental impact.

The award, created by the SNA Board of Directors early this year, will be given annually, when merited, but is not limited to SNA members or to the horticultural industry.

The Southern Nursery Association, established in 1899, is a non-profit professional trade association representing the horticultural industry. SNA's primary purpose is to advance the horticultural industry in the southern U.S. through educational, commercial and research opportunities. The SNA's "Best Management Practices Guide" is available from the LAN office. Member price is \$25. Non-member price is \$35. \*

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# TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LEADERSHIP

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- 1** People are illogical, unreasonable and self-centered. Love and trust them anyway.
- 2** If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.
- 3** If you are successful you will win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway.
- 4** The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.
- 5** Honesty and frankness will make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.
- 6** The biggest people with the biggest (and best) ideas will be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest ideas. Think big anyway.
- 7** People favor underdogs, but follow the top dogs. Fight for the underdogs.
- 8** What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.
- 9** People really need help, but may attack you if you do help. Help anyway.
- 10** Give the world the best you have and you may get kicked in the teeth. Give the world your best anyway.

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"Author Unknown  
Progressive Farmer  
Vol. 114 (5)  
Modified by Allen Owings"

## 2000 Gulf States Horticultural Expo

*"The Premier Winter Trade Show of the South"*

Dates:.....January 27 - 29, 2000  
Educational Opportunities.....January 27  
8:00am - 5:30pm  
Show Hours.....January 28  
9:00am - 5:00pm  
January 29  
9:00am - 3:00pm  
Location.....Mobile Convention Center  
1 South Water Street  
Mobile, AL 36602

- 535 Booth Trade Show
- Thursday Night (Roussos) Reception
- New Plant Varieties
- New Products
- Ladies Program
- ANA Golf Classic
- Education Opportunities featuring
  - Dr. Allan M. Armitage
  - Dr. Lawrence Helms
  - Mr. Phil Nilsson
  - and many more



For More Information Contact:  
The Gulf States Horticultural Expo, Inc.  
P.O. Box 47  
Auburn, Alabama 36831-0047  
Voice: 334.502.7777 Fax: 334.502.7711

# How to Influence and Serve Today's Gardener

*This article is based on a presentation at the 1999 ANLA Management Clinic, where speaker Kip Creel of PK Data Systems told attendees how to "Dig Deeper Into the American Backyard." Additional data from this workshop will be presented in the next issue of ANLA Today.*

**W**hat motivates gardening consumers when they are buying garden products or contacting a landscape firm for services? The answer to that question is a green industry professional's roadmap to more efficient marketing, better customer service, and higher profits. Consultant Kip Creel says the path to that answer comes from "Digging Deeper Into the American Backyard,"

## Who is gardening today?

According to Creel, profound demographic shifts are influencing and will influence green industry profitability. Here are a few of the basic shifts.

- Lawn and garden sales in 1998 rose to nearly \$26 billion. By contrast, golf-related sales reached only \$18 billion.

- Gardening was rated the number one leisure activity in the United States, with lawn and garden sales growing three to five percent per year. All indications are that gardening will continue at the same rate for the next 10 or 15 years.

- Today, 70 million households garden. The number of new people coming into the activity hasn't changed much because there are so many people already doing it. In other words, there are only 100 million households in the US and 70 percent of those households already participate in some form of gardening.

## What's going on with these numbers?

If the number of participants is flat but the industry is growing, what's causing that? Answer: sales per participating household are going up.

Even people who are modestly committed to the hobby are spending a lot more money each year. That creates an opportunity to trade consumers up to more merchandise and more expensive purchases.

Creel gets his insights from the Grapevine Consumer Network, a panel of 1700 gardeners who agreed to answer questions about gardening. This statistically valid group say that they spend the majority of their gardening time on three activities:

1. Lawn Care. Sixty-four percent of respondents say that mowing and planting turf is their number one activity.
2. Flowers occupy time, including insect, weed, and disease control (pesticide sales are the highest ever in 1998).
3. Water Gardening is becoming more popular.

On average, seven to ten hour per week are spent in the garden, say these folks. Some people, whom Creel calls "devoted gardeners," spend 20 to 30 hours a week gardening.

These gardeners have been gardening for 24 to 25 years, although some have been at it for 40 years. Most pick up the hobby when they buy their first house, which is usually about age 32, putting the majority of current gardeners are in their middle age.

## What turns them on?

*Better Homes & Garden* magazine asked readers what inspires them to act—is it pictures, text, or both? The answer was a mixed bag. Females and younger readers are inspired by pictures. The older readers get, the

more inspired they are by text. "When you're merchandising or placing ads, you really need first to know who you're targeting and to design your advertisements and merchandising to appeal to that particular audience," Creel concludes.

We do know, however, that gardening is largely female. "Doesn't it make sense that we have to start promoting this industry as a very visual kind of industry? The numbers say it and we're still not doing it."

Asked what one famous person or celebrity is an avid gardener, 62 percent of gardeners had no idea. "We have a long way to go in this industry to develop personality," Creel notes.

The good news is that gardeners take a lot of pride in what they do, so retailers are helping customers to create something they're very proud about.

## Where do gardeners turn for information?

Most consumers say they aren't gardening authorities. That designation goes to friends, neighbors, and people outside the immediate family. Or the authority could be a garden center employee.

Gardeners are voracious readers and gardening magazines and newsletters are ranked very high with them. They also get information from friends and neighbors who share ideas. Gardening books and radio/TV shows are popular, too. Finally, garden center & retail store employees get their due.

The conclusion? Gardening is very much of a word-of-mouth phenomenon. People exchange ideas and pick up ideas from other gardeners, which creates lots of opportunity at the professional level.

*continued on next page*

## Other attributes

Research reveals other lifestyle traits of gardeners:

- **Pets.** Most gardeners own pets at about the same rate as other Americans, so it's not necessary to expand and include pet supplies. Stick to what you know.

- **Not exhibitionists.** Sixty percent of gardeners have not photographed lawns or gardens to show off or submit to contest or magazine. Forty percent share their garden only with an inner circle of friends. In other words, gardeners are proud but not boastful. The garden is considered very much a personal space and retailers need to recognize that gardens emotional.

- **Not competitors.** Only six percent of gardeners have entered gardening contests or flower shows, so Creel usually doesn't recommend that garden centers, hold contests/

- **Satisfied to spend.** Most gardeners say that lawnmowers and tractors were the most over-priced items they've bought, though most saw value even in these. "The good news is only 16 percent said live plants, flowers, shrubs, bushes are not a good value. Live plants are not necessarily a promotional item; they're a specialty item and gardeners see them as a good value."

- **Loving it all.** What do you hate to grow? Most gardeners say, "Nothing, though 25 percent joked about weeds and dandelion. It should make you very proud that we're not creating ire among consumers," says Creel.

## What else are gardeners doing?

Make your store look like someone's backyard, says Creel. Put a swimming pool and landscaping around to show someone what their backyard could look like. (It's noteworthy that only 8 percent of US households have swimming pools, but 10 percent of gardeners do. Hot tubs are another popular item; only 5 percent of US households have them, while 8 percent of gardeners do.)

"Gardeners have money to spend and they want help in bringing all these different facets of the backyard together," says Creel.

Creel notes that gardeners have other hobbies worth catering, too.

"Gardeners' number one hobby other than gardening is reading. A reading area ala Barnes & Noble is a great idea for a garden center." Other top hobbies of gardeners include sewing, crocheting, and quilting. "Consider a garden center had a quilting competition or put a green in your garden center for the 11 percent who golf."

## Why do they garden?

The top reasons for gardening include enjoying the outdoors, getting exercise, and relaxing. "Practical" considerations like improving property value or producing food for the family barely register on the gardener's scale.

Perhaps that's why advertising lines that focus on practicality are boring. "Don't talk about 'time to mulch,' 'dinner-plate sized blossoms,' or 'lightweight tiller perfect for all your gardening needs.' People do not want to hear this. You are selling an emotional item. You need to speak to them on an emotional level."

## Where do they shop?

What is a gardener's favorite place to shop for selected items? It depends. For live plants, 61 percent of gardeners prefer a local garden center or nursery. Places like Wal-Mart or Home Depot, etc. barely showed up. For items like fertilizers, chemicals, mulches, however, gardeners are more inclined to go to the big box stores.

Perhaps the reasoning behind shopping choices is even more enlightening. Gardeners shop in garden centers for quality and selection. Home improvement-type places get the nod for price and selection. Hardware stores offer convenience and selection, while supermarkets are rated well for

convenience and price. "Garden centers are place to go to get quality and selection, and gardeners aren't there to compete on price," Creel concludes.

## What are they looking for?

Focus groups all over US. show that gardeners are looking for ornamental and hybrid grasses, native plants, perennials, bright colors, cut stones and paving bricks, lots of curves in landscaping, small swimming pools and a natural, rustic look.

What "out" are "suburban-style" layouts, like grass, boxy shrubs, annuals, dull colors lots of concrete, straight lines, big swimming pools, and the over-manicured look on lines.

## What else do we know about gardeners?

- 74 percent of gardeners are female.

- Starting at age 45, gardeners begin to index higher than US average. Garden consumers are mostly in their middle years.

- Gardeners start at a household income of \$25,000 up, then index higher than the U.S. average at \$100,000+, which is double the U.S. average.

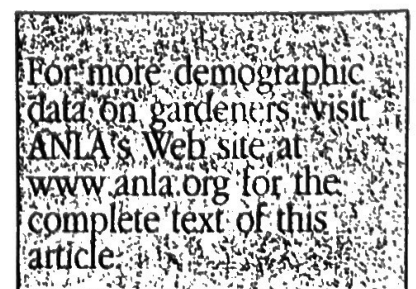
- Most gardeners are in two-person households and most are empty-nest households.

- Educationally, gardeners start at "some college," then start indexing higher than US average. The number with graduate degrees is almost 2 times the U.S. average.

- Eighty percent are married.

- Forty percent are employed full-time, 30% are retired; the group includes lower percentages of homemakers and part-timers.

*continued on next page*



## Four Groups of Gardeners

Gardeners can be classified into four groups among 68 million households.

■ **Middle Age Dabblers**—38% (26 million) spend five hours/week gardening and boast 25 years experience. Middle Age Dabblers have little time, work full-time, are at the peak of their careers, earn lots of money, and are heavy users of gardening media (magazines, newsletters, etc.) This group is involved in lots of different things.

They want solutions and want to get in and get out. Convenience is king. They also embrace trends. They are experienced gardeners, but need to be shown how to spend money.

■ **Elderly Dabblers**—21% (14 million) spend six hours/week gardening have 47 years experience. Elderly Dabblers – lots of time, retired - 62% are over age 65, not much household income, no longer top passion or concern, very price-sensitive, tend to shop discount department stores, independent – do not rely on others for gardening information, very set in ways.

■ **Masters**—36% (25 million) spend 24 hrs/wk, have gardened for 33 years. Masters spend lots of money on gardening (more as a percentage of household income than any other). They are not terribly affluent, but love to experiment and try new products. Masters tend to be “the early adopters;” hook a master gardener on something new and they’re out there spreading the word. They rely heavily on research/county extension services, but are not necessarily heavy users of gardening media (esp. TV).

■ **Starting Outs** spend six hrs/wk, and have gardened for eight years. Starting Outs spend lots and lots of money. These are the yuppies (20s, 30s, early 40s), with the highest amount of money (even more than Middle Age Dabblers). These gardeners are very time constrained and they rely on friends and family and other pros for gardening advice. They pick up trends very easily. These young families love ornamental gardening activities and need lots and lots of advice.

## MANAGEMENT

# Federal Crop Insurance for Nurseries

By Peter J. Fornof  
Senior Vice President  
Florists' Mutual Insurance Company

**F**armers have taken advantage of federal crop insurance programs for years. Now nurserymen are discovering it for themselves.

Because the federal government heavily subsidizes the federal crop insurance program, premiums are extremely attractive. For example, on the government's “Cat” program, the only cost is a \$60 administrative fee, and the insurance premium is entirely subsidized. While first-dollar coverage is not available for this product, growers will receive claim payments at specified percentages after 50 percent of an insured crop is lost — not a bad deal, considering the totally self-insured alternative.

For lower retentions than those provided in the “Cat” product, “buy-up” options are available to cover up to 75 percent of the value of the plant inventory with payments of up to 100 percent of the prices listed in the Plant Price Schedule. This lowers the retention to 25 percent of the plant inventory. Actuarial tables and loss experience indicate that a substantial premium should be charged for the “buy-up” program, but again, the government provides a heavy subsidy.

Both the “Cat” and “buy-up” policies cover many perils including adverse weather conditions, fire, wildlife damage, earthquake, volcanic eruption, and failure of the irrigation supply, subject to specific policy provisions. Additionally, the programs include field crops (in ground) as well as coverage on container-grown crops. And for the 2000 crop year, the program for nursery crops has been enhanced by a broader definition of “wholesale nursery” which will allow more growers to participate. Further, more

plant varieties have been added to the Eligible Plant list and container sizes have been standardized.

How does all of this benefit the grower? First of all, it provides peace of mind and reduces uncertainty. Crop insurance also helps the grower with risk management practices, as the policy specifies certain conditions that must be met to collect claim payments. Third, the existence of Federal Crop Insurance on a nursery provides loan collateral to lenders. And finally, a crop policy will help the grower maintain eligibility for Federal Disaster Assistance. The Federal government does not intend to make Federal Disaster Assistance available to growers who do not purchase Crop insurance.

Multi Peril Crop Insurance is insured by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and the Risk Management Agency under the auspices of the United States Department of Agriculture. It is truly a partnership between the Federal Government and private enterprise in that private crop insurance companies administer the program and distribute it through local insurance agents and brokers.

Federal Nursery Crop Insurance is a program that could be of immense benefit to your business should a catastrophe occur.

As with any insurance product, growers should contact their insurance agent and obtain more specific information concerning the Federal Nursery Crop Insurance program to review the various options and coverages before purchasing this protection.

# NEW CRAPE MYRTLES FROM LACEBARK, INC.

Over the last several years, Lacebark, Inc. of Stillwater, OK has released several new cultivars of crape myrtle. Each of these are *Lagerstroemia indica* cultivars and are intended to provide "improved red flowering" to the inventory of commercially available crape myrtle cultivars.

## 'Raspberry Sundae' (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit I')

This cultivar (U.S. plant patent #10297) has cardinal red to pink (red raspberry) with a touch of white flower color. It is more red in full sun and more pink with more white during cooler, cloudy periods or in partial sun to partial shade. Flower buds are crimson. Flowers have fragrance. Very few seed pods form. Growth habit is upright, more or less columnar. Cuttings from terminal growth yield tree form plants, while secondary cuttings or tip pruning cuttings will yield a tree with multiple upright stems. New leaves are thick and leathery, crimson, and change to dark, dull green with age. Fall foliage is orange-red. Mature height is 15-20 feet.

## 'Dynamite' (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit II')

This cultivar (U.S. plant patent # 10296) has cherry red flowers in large clusters. Flowers are more red than 'Victor' and other red cultivars. Some white petals may occur during cooler, cloudy conditions. Flower buds are crimson. This is a vigorous, upright grower with only moderate horizontal branching. New leaves are crimson, changing to dark green. Mature leaves are dark green, thick and leathery. Fall foliage color is orange. Mature height is 15-20 feet. Consumers rave about the red flowers on this cultivar.

## 'Pink Velour' (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit III')

This cultivar was originally sold as 'Royal Velvet' and is U.S. plant patent #10319. Flowers are bright red with little color variation. Crimson flower buds. New leaves are unique - wine/burgundy in color and gradually turn a dark purplish green. Fall foliage is orange/brown. Develops more secondary branches than other cultivars and reaches a height of 10-12 feet on a multi-stemmed shrub-type growth habit.

## 'Red Rocket' (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit IV')

'Red Rocket' (U. S. plant patent applied for) has cherry red flowers in huge clusters. Typical flower opening begins at base and progresses to the tip. Petals are large and heavily ruffled. Flower buds are crimson. New leaves are red to red-purple. Current season's stems have distinctive red color. Growth habit is vigorous and upright. Moderate horizontal branching. Mature height of 20 feet or more.

## 'Tightwad Red' (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit V')

This cultivar was originally sold as 'Firecracker' (U.S. plant patent applied for). Flowers are light red. Some flowers have white petals. Flower buds are crimson. Minimum seed pod production. New leaves are wine/red and quickly change to

purplish green, then dark green. Growth can be used to create a low mounding habit. Mound form continues with age.

Each of these cultivars are true *Lagerstroemia indica*, so there is concern about susceptibility to *Cercospora* leaf spot and powder mildew in Louisiana. Lacebark, Inc. reports that 'Red Rocket', 'Tightwad Red', and 'Dynamite' are highly resistant to powdery mildew. *Cercospora* leaf spot has been observed to a slight to moderate degree on 'Dynamite', 'Raspberry Sundae', and 'Pink Velour' in Baton Rouge. Observations on these cultivars will be made as additional LSU Agricultural Center studies are conducted.\*

Allen D. Owings, Associate Specialist (Horticulture)  
LSU Agricultural Center



## Congratulations !!

### NEW CERTIFIED NURSERY PROFESSIONALS



*Clegg's Nursery - Baton Rouge*  
*Summe Baugh*

*Greengate Garden Center - Lake Charles*  
*Rebecca Hoffman*  
*Pamela Sarver*

*Lowe's - Lake Charles*  
*Nancy Pierce*

*Lowe's - Leesville*  
*Sharon Johnson*

*Northwest LA Master Gardeners*  
*Mollie Chance*  
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## Imported Aquatic Plant Poses Problem For Louisiana Agriculture, Waterways

TOLEDO BEND RESERVOIR - A new noxious weed threatens both recreation and agriculture in Louisiana but can be controlled with public support, a variety of officials gathered at Toledo Bend reported in September.

The non-native aquatic plant known as *Salvinia molesta* was first discovered in Louisiana a year ago and is beginning to encroach on the state's waterways.

It could be a threat to Louisiana's rice, aquaculture and freshwater fisheries industries, according to LSU Agricultural Center weed scientist Dr. Dearl Sanders, who says the noxious weed could become a major problem in Louisiana's rice fields and threaten fish and aquatic plants if its spread is unchecked.

Sanders' comments came Wednesday during a gathering of officials from various agencies and the media for a *Salvinia molesta* awareness day at the Sabine River Authority office at Toledo Bend Reservoir on the Texas-Louisiana border.

*Salvinia molesta*, also known as giant salvinia, is a fast-growing aquatic plant that can choke a waterway and kill plants and animals underneath its thick covering. It was first discovered in Louisiana at Toledo Bend on Sept. 24, 1998, by Dr. Jim Hyde, a biologist with the Sabine River Authority, who found it while swimming.

"Its growth rate is phenomenal," Hyde said.

One plant has the ability to cover up to 40 square miles of water surface in one year, he said. Because it can grow 3-4 feet deep, it cuts off sunshine and oxygen to anything under the surface.

"It can get so thick that people can walk across it, with care," Hyde said.

Currently found in 10 states, including Texas, the weed apparently originated in South America and has few natural controls, Hyde said.

"In one bay last year we had giant salvinia covering about 250 acres," he said.

Prompt attention and spraying with

an approved herbicide stemmed the development on the lake, he said. And there is very little of it in the lake this year.

Sanders began an Ag Center research project in May to discover the best method of control and he has found that a herbicide called Reward - which is available for use in the state - is the best means of controlling the weed.

In addition to its threat to recreation and fisheries by clogging lakes, bayous and other waterways, giant *Salvinia* threatens agriculture because it can get into the waterways used in rice production. Sanders said in one area of Brazil, it destroyed 30 percent of the rice production.

"We're looking at a 30 to 40 percent rice yield reduction potential and as much as 75 percent reduced water flow in canals," Sanders said.

Now that the weed is present, there is no expectation of eradication, officials say.

"We can only control it," Hyde said. "So we're asking the public to help us find and identify the weed and keep it from spreading into other bodies of water."

Giant salvinia can spread in two principal ways - on unwashed boats that go to different waterways and by water garden hobbyists who get it from commercial nurseries or from fellow hobbyists.

"It's a pretty plant with thick accordion leaves," Hyde said.

Dr. Craig Roussel, director of horticulture and quarantine with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, said his department's inspectors have found giant salvinia in four nurseries so far in Louisiana, and these nurseries have stopped selling it.

Hyde advised boaters to be sure to clean their boats when they move from one body of water to another to be sure they don't carry the plant to other areas. He also asked that people who think they've seen giant salvinia contact the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries so the plant can be identified and controlled.

"*Salvinia molesta* could be a major problem in

Louisiana," Sanders said. "But with viable public support we can control it."

## LABI's Scorecard

Louisiana's top business lobby has completed its scorecard on state legislators for the 1999 regular session and its cumulative score on each lawmaker for the four-year cycle.

The Louisiana Association of Business and Industry rated lawmakers on how they voted on key business issues such as business liability, worker's compensation and tax policy.

For this year's regular session, LABI showed only one senator and four House members with a perfect 100 percent pro-business rating: Sen. Lynn Dean, R-Braithewaite, and Reps. John "Juba" Diez, D-Gonzales; Dan Flavin, R-Lake Charles; Jerry Luke LeBlanc, D-Lafayette; and Wayne Waddell, R-Shreveport.

LABI's lowest scores for the 1999 session went to Sens. Wilson Fields, D-Baton Rouge, and C.D. Jones, D-Monroe, 8 percent each, and Reps. Willie Hunter, D-Monroe, and Ed Murray, D-New Orleans, who never voted with LABI on any of its benchmark votes.

LABI's top-rated senators for the four years were Sens. Dean, 93 percent; Jerry Theunissen, D-Jennings, 89 percent; and John Hainkel, 88 percent.

For the four-year period, LABI's top ratings in the House went to Reps. Waddell, 96 percent, and Diez and Chuck McMains, R-Baton Rouge, 93 percent.

LABI's lowest ratings in the Senate for the four years went to Sens. Jim Cox, D-Lake Charles, and Cleo Fields, D-Baton Rouge, 13 percent each. The lowest ratings in the House went to Reps. Murray, 11 percent; and Naomi Faye and Arthur Morrell, both D-New Orleans and both 12 percent. \*



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