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LNLA Quarterly Newsletter - Volume 83

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A MORD FROM OUR President

Greetings LNLA Members,

Summer is here and with it comes mixed emotions. The anticipation of vacation time, Fourth of July barbecues, and activities on the water. But, for business owners, it creates more challenges and the fear of hurricane season. The extreme heat slows down production in the field and there are constant worries about caring for our employees. We all take the extra steps to prepare for any and everything which sometimes causes us great stress. The good news is it won't last too long, about 3 or 4 months, and we have all endured it before and will move forward. Thanks to Mother Nature for a longer than usual spring, but she needs to give parts of Louisiana a LITTLE more rain, please not flooding rains. (You have to be careful for what you wish for).

March 30, 2023, CariJane, Ricky Becnel and I participated in an LSU Extension shareholder meeting at Hammond Research Station lead by Dr. Tara Smith. Dr. Smith is the Executive Associate Vice President & Director of LSU AgCenter Extension Service. This meeting creates more opportunities for LNLA to continue their partnership with our LSU Ag team. We shared the goals of our organization and highlighted the need for more youth education in the industry. We participated in another zoom meeting with Dr. Smith, Toby Lepley(4-H) and FFA Representative to discuss our goals for more youth education partnerships. Thank you Dr. Smith for bringing us together.

LNLA Board continues on it's mission to make agriculture NUMBER 1 in our state.

On April 18, 2023, our Lieutenant Governor, Billy Nungesser, hosted LNLA for our Annual Legislative Breakfast at his Barracks apartment. It was extremely well received by our attending members and the legislative members joining us. The word continues to spread at the capital that we are a positive force for the state. After breakfast, we set up our tent on the Park Lawn in front of the Capital to distribute the most beautiful coffee plants grown by TONY CARTER WITH LANGRIDGE PLANT SALES. You are AWESOME Tony. It was a treat to see the Legislative Staff Members, Senators and Representatives exiting the building heading our way to receive their gift from our industry. This afforded us the opportunity to talk to them about LNLA and what we bring to our state. Many new relationships were made and the capital was full of our plants with our LNLA cards in full view. We quickly picked up at 2:00 pm and headed into the capital for the reading of our industry's Proclamation on the house floor by Representative Troy Romero. Thank you **REPRESENTATIVE TROY ROMERO for highlighting our** importance. Next, we headed to the Senate floor to hear our Proclamation read by Senator Cameron Henry. Thank you SENATOR CAMERON HENRY for also highlighting our importance. We mingled and represented LNLA to as many Representative and Senators that would lend us their ear. CariJane's idea for "The Capital Plant Day" was a huge success and brought awareness to the state about the importance of agriculture. It took a village that day to pull this off and a village we had. Thanks to all for making this day so successful.

We know all too well about our industry's labor crisis. The problems we continue to have with H2A and H2B are relentless. A tremendous THANK YOU to Representative Rhonda Bulter. She knows and understands our issues on a Federal level. She arranged a meeting on April 28, 2023 with Senator Cassidy, Senator Kennedy and Congresswoman Julie Letlow's staff assistants for us. Debbie Head, Jeff Reid, Michael Gore, Susan Poole, Vicky Fralick, Juan Garcia, Mary Jones, Ross Harper and Brian Breaux represented



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A MORA FROM OUR President

our industry to discuss the issues we are having with H2A and H2B. This meeting has resulted in more meetings with Senator Cassidy. He has personally invited Jeff Reid to speak with him in Washington DC on June 14, 2023. Jeff Reid will be representing us in Washington DC on June 13 and 14, 2023. He is joining forces with the Seasonal Employment Alliance (SEA) to fight for our industry's labor issues. He has also attended meetings with Congressmen Garrity Graves' and Congressman Mike Johnson's staffers while there. We are extremely proud to be represented so Beautifully by JEFF REID. God's Speed to Jeff.

I traveled to Mobile, Alabama on May 31, 2023 to attend the GSHE board meeting. GSHE remains strong and we Louisianans represent our state proudly. Thanks to all of our exhibitors and visitors from our state for making this show such a great success.

Thank you CariJane and Dr. Jeb Fields for attending the Nurseryman Advisory Committee luncheon on June 8 in Henderson. The importance of our partnership with Farm Bureau is immeasurable. We are honored to stand with you to protect agriculture.

Dr. Fannin and Madison Plaisance requested a zoom meeting with the economic impact committee. We met via zoom on June 5, 2023. We reviewed the current status of the economic impact study and assisted with formulating survey questions. This economic impact study survey is critical for our industry's future and is forthcoming for your responses. PLEASE FILL THIS SURVEY OUT AND SEND IT BACK. It is completely confidential.

Busy, busy, busy!

Yes Indeed, the Foundation's Gala is June 23, 2023 at the Pavilion of Two Sisters in the Botanical Gardens, New Orleans from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. This fundraiser is the Foundation's premiere event. The list of Live Auction items is impressive to say the least and the silent auction will not disappoint. The food will be delicious, the band is so New Orleans, the venue is breathtaking, but best of all is the attendees. It is a treat for me to see us in our dress clothes, clean fingernails and smelling so sweet; it is very different from our usual work wardrobe. The monies raised will fund grants for youth education and research in our industry. Thank you President Ricky Becnel, CariJane Murray and the Foundation Board for all the hard work it takes to put this event on and having so many sponsors supporting it. Our industry is Blessed to have so many giving individuals and businesses.

Our next program is on July 11 -12, 2023. Dr. Jeb Fields and CariJane Murray will travel to Lafayette to teach the Certified Nursery & Landscape Professional Courses Next up is Field day at Hammond Research Station on July 21, 2023 at 8:00 am. This is a great way to get hands-on education about all the newest research in our industry. You will have the opportunity to touch, see and smell all the new plant selections growing and maturing. Our LNLA board meeting will also take place in the office conference room. This meeting is open to all members wanting to participate or just observe. Please consider stopping in to see how this board is working hard for our industry. After lunch, sponsored by LNLA, there will be an open forum with the opportunity to ask questions. Hoping our Commissioner can make it again this year. He is very knowledgeable and readily answers the tough questions. Hoping you can make it.

We are very excited to continue educating our industry. Please join us this fall, September 12, 2023 at the Foundation Center in Lafreniere Park, 3000 Downs Blvd, Metairie, LA 70003 for an educational symposium. Registration begins at 8:00 am. Dr. Abdi has an exciting lineup of speakers with topics that will enlighten us about diseases, insects, weeds and more. This is a great way to further educate yourself and your employees at no cost. LNLA will be providing lunch and drinks. This will be the first educational opportunity in years for this area. The capacity is limited to 100, so please register with us upon receipt of the email announcement. Thank you Councilman Deano Bonano and Councilman Dominick Impastato for securing this beautiful venue for us.

Our plans are to bring the next educational symposium to the Lafayette area. We will be announcing details for this upcoming event soon.

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Lisa Loup & Cari Jane Murray

LNLA Plants Make a Difference Day at the Capitol



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Chad Everage, Scott Alford, Lisa Loup



Debbie Head, Representative Rhonda Butler



Lisa Loup, Brian Bridges

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Debbie Head, Owner

Obituaries

Michael John Hoogland

Michael "Mike" John Hoogland, 61, of Shreveport, LA, passed away unexpectedly on March 23, 2023, in his family home. He was a pillar of the North Louisiana community, and the owner and President of Hoogland's Landscape, LLC.

Born on October 18, 1961, in Shreveport, LA, to Frederic Lee and Diane Griffith Hoogland, Mike was raised in Ruston, LA. He attended Cedar Creek and graduated from Louisiana Tech University. In 1984, he earned a degree in Landscape Design & Horticulture and a minor in business. During his time at Tech, Mike was a member of the Student Government Association and the Sigma Nu Fraternity.

Upon graduating, Mike relocated to Shreveport, LA, and began working with his father before purchasing the family's small landscape nursery. Over the next 35 years, he transformed the small business into one of the largest landscape design and construction operations in the state. A creative visionary, Mike had a unique ability to turn dreams into reality in a way that felt magical. His creative legacy can be seen all throughout the state of Louisiana, where he beautified his community. His relentless entrepreneurial spirit and enthusiasm led him to fulfill his lifelong aspiration of being a farmer and rancher, as he created and managed Bayou Point Plantation with its Black Angus cattle, pecan production, and wildlife conservation.

Above all, Mike valued relationships. A strong community, family, and an extensive network of friends were the backbone of his life. Most importantly, he was a devoted husband to Valerie Adger Hoogland, with whom he shared 34 years of marriage, and a loving father to their three children, John (32), Caroline (30), and Hunter (27).

A man of the community who seemed to have more than 24 hours in a day, Mike served in numerous leadership roles throughout his life. He was a board member of Loyola College Prep, St. Joseph's School, President of Cotillion, President and board member of Plantation Club, board member of Shreveport Country Club, board member of Caddo Parish Farm Bureau, Co-founder of the JETS Football Club, President of Northwest LA Nursery and Landscape Association, board member of Loyola Messmer Stadium where he designed, donated, and built the patio and pavilion, and was Vice-President of the Flyer Club. His giving nature knew no bounds, as he donated countless plants, projects and hours of personal time to charitable organizations, schools, and businesses. Throughout Mike and Valerie's lives, they spent many weekends teaching kids how to water ski, enjoy nature, and hunt at Goldpoint Lake. Known to many as "Coach," Mike coached all three of his children's basketball teams for over 15 years.

A big man with an even bigger heart – he opened his home and farm for community events, hosting dozens of engagement parties for his kids' friends whom he treated like his own, an annual southern-style Dove Hunt, and shared hunting camps in West Texas and Arkansas with friends. Mike was a larger-than-life figure who was able to create a connection with everyone he met, filling the room with his presence, humor, and engaging storytelling.

Mike was preceded in death by his mother, Diane Griffith Hoogland, his sister Cynthia Lee Hoogland, and his granddaughter, Holly Diane Hoogland. Mike is survived by his father, Fredric Lee Hoogland and his wife, Margaret, and his brother David Jay Hoogland and his wife, Kellye. Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Valerie Adger Hoogland, and their children John Adger Hoogland and his wife, Carlyle, Caroline Lee Hoogland, and Hunter James Hoogland and his wife, Olivia.

As we mourn the loss of Mike Hoogland, we celebrate his remarkable life and the positive impact he had on those around him. Hoogland's Landscape, LLC has pledged to continue his legacy and maintain the high standards of quality and professionalism that he instilled in the company.

Obituaries



Walter Stagg, Jr.

A private graveside service for Walter Stagg, Jr. will be on Monday, May 22, 2023, at Roselawn Cemetery in Glenmora with Reverend Neil Tremme and Chaplain Bill Tisdale officiating. Committal service is under the direction of White Oaks Funeral Home, Oakdale.

Walter, 87, of Glenmora, entered eternal rest on Friday, May 19, 2023, in his residence surrounded by his loving family and friends. He was born on October 9, 1935, in Pineville, to the union of Walter Stagg, Sr. and Nell Bollar Stagg. He graduated from Bolton High School in Alexandria, La

and went onto to earn both his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, La. He met the love of his life, Barbara Gill Andrus on a blind date in 1954 and married her on June 1, 1957. Later that year he joined the U. S. Air Force and served in South Korean. After returning home, they continued to travel with the military until 1963, settling in Lake Charles, La where they raised their two children. Walter worked at PPG Industries for 37 years. Upon retirement, he and Barbara moved to Glenmora, La to enjoy family, open spaces, and fresh air. Soon after building their home, they became members of the Glenmora Baptist Church. He loved spending time outside on their property and cherished relaxing and visiting Barbara, their family and numerous friends.

Walter was an exceptionally humble, generous, intelligent, and loving man who enjoyed deep conversations with all those he knew. Walter was a huge fan of LSU football, Astros baseball, and he had a passion for classical music. He was an avid reader and especially enjoyed science fiction, military history, and biblical history. His love of music recorded on vinyl albums was something he passed along to his children, grandchild, nieces, and nephews. He often impressed people with his incredible memory recall and endless supply of facts. With his loving and caring heart, he never met a stranger, gathering countless friends during his 87 years.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Walter & Nell Bollar Stagg; brother, James "Jimmy" Stagg; father and motherin-law, Robert Andrus & Audrey Gill Andrus; two sisters-in-law, Doris Delaney Andrus, and Janice Farmer Andrus, and brother-in-law, Charles Gassiott.

Those left to cherish his memory are his loving wife of 65 years, Barbara Andrus Stagg of Glenmora; son, Jason Stagg and spouse, Joe Rajnert Jr. of Baton Rouge; daughter, Kimberly Stagg Atkinson of Glenmora; one special granddaughter, Karly Atkinson of Glenmora; one brother-in-law, Bobbie Andrus and one sister-in-law, Billie Gassiott, both of Glenmora; along with a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.



Chalmers Brumfield

Chalmers Brumfield was born May 13,1938 to the late Shirley Brumfield and Aileen Blackburn Brumfield. He was the youngest of three siblings born to this union. Regretfully, he did not get to know his mother, she fell asleep in death when Chalmers was six months old. Shirley married Naomi eighteen months later and she became his step mother.

Chalmers married his lovely wife Leola in 1963. He loved, cherished, and appreciated Leola for being supportive and a help mate in his life. She supported him in all his endeavors.

Chalmers leaves behind his cherished wife, Leola; two sisters, Lillie Mae (John) Burris, and Rose Mary (Matthew) Tate; one brother, Marshell (Carol) Brumfield; one sister-in-law, Hazel Brumfield; one brother-in-law, Edgar Lewis; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Preceding him in death, one brother, Gary Brumfield; two sisters, Shirley Ann (Flovel) Hollins, and Annie Mae Lewis; one God Daughter, Latisha.

Landscape Management Services *Growing Strong in Southwest Louisiana for more than 30 years.*



Since 1991, Landscape Management Services has provided Southwest Louisiana with leading commercial and residential landscape installation and maintenance. That's more than 30 years of service that started as a partnership between Mitch Drost and Doyle Pennick, current Owner/President. Drost retired as a Co-Owner in 2000, but the two remain close friends and continue to have lunch together regularly.

How does one begin a career in landscaping? Pennick has lived in the Southwest Louisiana area for his entire life and began his landscaping passion and entrepreneurship dream at an early age, spending many summers weeding neighbors' flower beds and mowing area lawns. Also, after school each day, he would work with his mentor, Gary Abrahams of Prien Pines Nursery, who really helped him enhance his craft.

Pennick believes his business's staff and department managers are what sets Landscape Management apart. The company maintains its commitment to quality, integrity and service, and these principles remain an important part of all their projects. Their service don't just include landscaping design installation; they also include irrigation, erosion control, maintenance, outdoor living and parking lot cleaning. They also offer a large inventory of plants and landscape materials at their local retail nursery, located at 5005 Cobra Road in Lake Charles, for the "do-it-yourself" landscaper or landscape contractors.

In addition, as a local business owner, Pennick strives to support other local businesses through business and personal purchases.

"I want to remind everyone to shop small and shop local," said Pennick. "We celebrated 30 years in business in 2021, no small feat considering during the previous 14 months our region experienced five federally declared disasters. We appreciate the continued support of the community! When you shop local for landscape, you are helping to rebuild and strengthen our community and live in a more sustainable way. Using native plans and creating planting plans specific to the unique challenges and advantages precise locations face, is our specialty." There's a calm following a storm, but there's nothing low-key about the disaster response required to get a region's landscape back into shape. For Landscape Management, a company committed to growing and making Southwest Louisiana more beautiful, the impact of Hurricane Laura on August 27, 2020, resonated on multiple levels.

Pennick, who stayed in town during the storm's landfall and aftermath, said it was a gut punch to look out over his retail yard and nursery. "It was completely annihilated. After building a business for more than 30 years, seeing it literally leveled is not something you could ever prepare yourself for, but after the initial shock wore off, I rounded up members of my team who were in town and we got back to work. Our customers needed us."

Nineteen of the company's fleet of service vehicles were under a collapsed building where they had been moved before the storm. Five of these were destoryed completely; those not destroyed had varying degrees of damage. Pennick says the first step was getting the vehicles out. "We used cutting torches to remove pieces of the metal building and then a lift to raise the roof enough to drive the vehicles out from under it."

As they worked to clean up debris, the team also had to figure out how they could service their clients – more than 100 across the community. "We were getting calls from customers asking for help in clearing fallen trees and damanaged landscape," says Pennick. "We were committed to both restoring our facility and helping our clients, and I'm proud to say we were able to do both simultaneously. It's a credit to our team and their work ethic."

Fortunately, the main office of Landscape Management, across the street from the retail yard and nursery area, escaped the storm with barely any damage, giving them a base of operations – one without working phones or electricity for several weeks – while working on clean-up and repair.

Procuring replacement vehicles, in the midst of a worldwide inventory shortage druing the pandemic, was daunting, but Pennick said he scoured the country and was able to get his fleet restored within 90 days.





LNLA Monthly Networking Zoom

<u>Members and Non-Members Welcome!</u> Right where you are!

First Friday of Every Month at 11:30 via Zoom. Networking with peers and other professionals keeps our businesses and our industry strong! We will keep this discussion to 30 minutes only, introduce ourselves and discuss industry news (the good, bad and ugly), new ideas and a few plants!

I look forward to seeing all your faces!

Cari Jane will email the zoom link out the week of the call and the day of.



NEW SHOW DATES FOR 2024

Exhibitor Move-In: January 23 & 24, 2024 Education Sessions: January 24, 2024 Trade Show: January 25 & 26, 2024

We've got some exciting news to share! For years we've heard from frustrated exhibitors and attendees about overlapping shows in January. There are many events and only a few weeks available that month, so some degree of conflict is unavoidable. That said, the Super Bowl (yes that Super Bowl) has moved later by one week, which triggered a date change by the Senior Bowl held annually in Mobile, that ultimately has allowed GSHE to contract the Mobile Convention Center on our preferred week. This should eliminate conflict with TPIE, Green & Growin', and AmericasMart for the next few years at least and hopefully far beyond.

We are eager to welcome back exhibitors and attendees who have been unable to join us due to these conflicts.



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"We approached each challenge as it presented itself and worked our way through it," says Pennick. "And as we planned the rebuild, we turned this disaster into an opportunity to make improvements we already had on our 'wish list.' We built back better and stronger than we were before."

The structures destroyed were over 20 years old. Pennick used this opprtunity to expand and moderize operations. Their new building was ordered in November of 2020 and delivered in July of 2021. It expanded the retail yard from 8,400 square feet to 14,000 square feet. The new truck shed can house up to 28 vehicles. Much of the exterior of the retail yard is now concrete and a new fence was also installed. Convenient drive-thru service is now avialble for customers when loading plants and landscape materials.

"What was most rewarding about this entire expeirence was seeing our community come together in the face of overwhelming adversity," adds Pennick. "We provided fuel to many contractors when most of our local gas stations were still closed. These contractors helped us removed debris and clear our site. Customers and even complete strangers showed up with food to share with our crew. It's amazing how God provides when you need it the most. The resilience of this entire community is humbling as we look back and reflect on how far we've all come. We're proud to be a part of it."

To learn more about Landscape Management, visit their website at www.landscapemanagement.org or give them a call at 337-478-3836.











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The 2023 LNLA Summer Internship at the Hammond Research Station



Kendall May

There were quite a few applicants for the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association Internship this year. While the decision was tough, one applicant stood above the rest.

Kendall May is a native of Hammond, Louisiana. She is a junior Biology student at Southeastern Louisiana University and is concentrating in Ecological and Environmental Sciences. She was introduced to agriculture and plant science by her middle school science teacher, Hammond Research Station Research Associate,

Ashley Hickman, who sparked her interest in this portion of the sciences. Kendall's passion continued to grow as she was involved with Hammond High's FFA, Agriculture, and Greenhouse Management Programs. She also began working at the AgCenter during high school as a student worker and continued until graduating in 2022. This season at the station, she will be conducting research with Ashley Hickman and Jeb Fields to evaluate the effect of substrate management on root zone temperature and fertilizer longevity. In addition to this 16-week study, Kendall will be assisting with other graduate student research projects and supporting the Hammond Trial Gardens. When she is not working on research and extension, Kendall enjoys staying active, working in environments that involve the outdoors, innovation, continuous learning, variety, and meaningful application which is why she has found such an interest in working with research at the AgCenter. She also appreciates the opportunity to interact with such knowledgeable individuals and the opportunity to study God's creation in more depth.

MEET MADISON PLAISANCE

Collecting our data for a major impact



Hello LNLA Members,

My name is Madison Plaisance, and I am a current graduate student in the College of Agriculture at Louisiana State University within the Agriculture Economics department. In January I began working on a project measuring the overall contribution of the Green Industry to the Louisiana economy. Our team at the LSU AgCenter have been working hard and would like to inform you of what's to come in the near future. Since January, the AgCenter signed the cooperative agreement with LDAF that funded the project to fund this study.

I have completed an initial overview of available literature and similar studies that have been completed by other universities and the national government in order to obtain an idea of what has been done in the past, what has worked, and what needs to be improved so that we will generate a quality study based on best practices for measuring economic contributions of a green industry to a state economy.

Your association has graciously provided me with an extremely helpful set of mentors who assembled an advisory team and includes Mrs. Cari Jane Murray, Mrs. Lisa Loup, Dr. Jeb Fields, and Mr. Jeff Reid. Thank you all for your continued support and knowledge. Our advisory team has already kicked off this project with our first meeting back in March in which we began to discuss the overall goal of this project, what you all as members are seeking to gain from this opportunity, and to choose which segments of the industry will need greater research process.

I am excited to be working with such an influential industry. I hope to become a familiar face and meet the phenomenal members of this organization. With that being said, the survey we are creating and will be sending to you is extremely crucial to the findings of this project and I highly encourage you to participate once they are sent out. We plan to send out surveys starting the end of June continuing to send them out through July, and we hope to have you all send them back to us by Labor Day. If you have any questions or would like to contribute in anyway, I am here to help and learn as much as possible so do not hesitate to reach out to myself or the LNLA Advisory panel that will be guiding me throughout this process.

I'd like to give a huge thank you to the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, I am beyond grateful to have been given this opportunity and I hope to exceed your expectations.

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2023 Regular Session SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 12 BY SENATORS BERNARD AND BOUDREAUX

A RESOLUTION

To commend Walter Imahara on being inducted into the 2023 class of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame in Natchitoches, Louisiana, each year collaborates with the Louisiana Sports Writers Association in selecting a limited number of sports figures who embody the character, skill, and talent worthy of being named to the Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Induction Class includes Walter Imahara; and

WHEREAS, Walter Imahara is a six-time United States of America national champion in the 60 kg (132-pound) weight class while competing in the press, snatch, and clean and jerk; he is a member of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Athletics Hall of Fame and the Louisiana Weightlifting Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Walter Imahara became the first Asian to attend the Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI), now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, in the mid-1950s where he was nicknamed the "Asian-Cajun" by the school president, and graduated with a degree in horticulture in 1960; and

WHEREAS, Walter Imahara joined the SLI weightlifting team and was an All- American when the program won the 1957 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) team title, the first-ever for the school; and

WHEREAS, he was the NCAA Featherweight Champion in 1957, 1959, and 1960, improving his total each time, lifting a total of 645 pounds in 1957, 695 pounds in 1959, and 725 pounds in 1960 when he was named an All-American, earned "Best Lifter" acclaim, and won the 1960 Junior National crown; and

WHEREAS, a longtime Baton Rouge resident and businessman, Walter Imahara won his first national professional weightlifting titles in 1962 and 1963 while serving the United States Army and winning four consecutive titles from 1965 to 1968 representing the New Orleans Athletic Club; and

WHEREAS, Walter Imahara won eight Senior National crowns, the 1967 Pan Am Gold Medal, eight Southern Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) crowns, six Louisiana State crowns, two Southern USA championships, and he was the National Masters Champion from 1980 to 2005; and

WHEREAS, in 2000 and 2002, Walter Imahara was a recipient of the Grand Slam Award given to athletes who have competed in and won all four major Masters events in one year: National Masters Championships, Pan American Masters Championships, World Masters Championships, and American Masters Championships; and

WHEREAS, prior to retiring from competition at the age of 68, Walter Imahara held 68 national records, 35 Pan American marks, 42 World Masters-Masters Games records, and had been the chairman of the International Weightlifting Federation-Masters Program for 20 years.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Walter Imahara on being inducted into the 2023 class of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Walter Imahara.



LNLA Quarterly Newsletter - Volume 83



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HOMEGROWN HELP

LSU AgCenter Extension Services Offer Unique Opportunities to Enhance your Business

Jeb S. Fields and Damon E. Abdi

For decades, LSU AgCenter specialists and agents have contributed to a rich legacy of assisting agriculturists, from the farmers who keep us fed to the landscapers that maintain our garden beds. While the challenges have changed over the years, the commitment to providing timely, actionable assistance remains unwavering.

Louisiana is home to 64 parishes, each bearing a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Fortunately, the AgCenter has an office in every parish, dedicated to serving the citizens of that specific community by solving the issues that directly affect them. These offices are the first step to take in acquiring horticultural help, whether all you need is a soil test kit or finding the nearest AgCenter expert that can assist you with major issues. The parish extension offices provide actionable resources for our stakeholders.

AgCenter horticultural agents specifically serve their parish or parishes, where their individual area of expertise lends them to solving the issues in your yard. Please make sure to check out the table for a list of current LSU AgCenter Extension agents who have horticultural responsibilities. These horticultural agents are the first line of defense when your lawns and landscapes are under attack, bringing their eyes and ears to see and hear what issues you face, offering up solutions to "nip it in the bud" before it gets out of hand. Communication is a key foundation in the extension service, where area horticultural agents share their experience and insights amongst other agents within their region and beyond, as well as with the AgCenter specialists.

Another unique and industry-tailored Extension tool that the LSU AgCenter provides the green industry is the Hammond Research Station. This station is dedicated to supporting the Louisiana green industry through its two-fold mission of evaluating and promoting new plant materials for Louisiana and enhancing nursery productivity and landscape management through research-based information and outreach.

The Hammond Trial Gardens are the most prominent feature of the research station, with over 2,500 different taxa in trial at any time. These gardens are some of the most beautiful in the state, and they are particularly useful for the industry. Plant evaluations at the Hammond Research Station support the industry by evaluating new materials for viability in Louisiana landscapes, ensuring that only the best performers make it into our industry. Growers trust the gardens to vet any new plants, while also relying on them to identify new materials for the

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industry. The landscape industry can utilize the gardens to not only see what will perform well, but also how it should be managed. The gardens also serve as horticultural promotions, encouraging the public to plant and generating interest in ornamental horticulture.

That being said, the gardens aren't the only benefit of the station. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to serving their green industry stakeholders throughout the entire state, keeping our ears to the ground to remain aware of the current and future issues facing Louisiana landscapers and nurseries. In response to these challenges, relevant resources are devised and delivered directly to stakeholders and area agents to keep the citizens of Louisiana armed and ready to tackle these issues head-on.

Both Drs. Fields and Abdi maintain thriving research programs geared to support industry stakeholders. However, beyond their individual nursery and landscape research programs, the station regularly hosts outreach events for the green industry, including stakeholder field days, continuing education events, and recertification workshops. Our biggest outreach event is the Horticulture Field Day, where as a member of the green industry, you are invited to come visit the station, tour the gardens, hear about current and ongoing research activities, and share your thoughts on what you would like to see pursued next. Plus, the LNLA hosts its annual membership meeting at Field Day, so you can catch up with the association and hear from the LNLA leadership. This year's field day is scheduled for Friday, July 21, so make sure you come and visit. If you are unable to visit, just know we are always here to assist with any issues or ideas that arise. To that point, the Hammond Research Station is dedicated to creating a truly statewide service and working to bring educational events throughout the state. The "Landscape Professional Workshop Series" is a statewide partnership with LNLA, which provides curated information to green industry professionals across Louisiana, specifically tailored to their region. No matter what part of the state you are based out of, the AgCenter extension services are here to serve the green industry professionals that keep Louisiana growing.

Dr. Jeb S. Fields is the Assistant Research Coordinator for the Hammond Research Station and Director of the Hammond Trial Gardens. Dr. Damon Abdi is the state Landscape Specialist, both domiciled at the Hammond Research Station. You can reach them at 985-543-4125 or by email JFields@ agcenter.lsu.edu and DAbdi@agcenter.lsu.edu.

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THE PLANT DOCTOR

Dr. Raj Singh, Associate Professor and Director, Plant Diagnostic Center, LSU AgCenter, Baton Rouge

Sweet Olive Leaf Scorch



Sweet olive (Osmanthus fragrans Lour.) is an evergreen upright shrub native to Asia. It is a small ornamental tree that can grow up to 20 feet tall. Sweet olive's dark, shiny green leaves and white fragrant flowers make it a popular ornamental plant among home gardeners and landscape professionals.

Sweet olive is susceptible to a bacterial disease called leaf scorch caused by Xylella fastidiosa. Different strains of this bacterium are known to cause several economically important diseases, including, Pierce's disease of grapevine, plum leaf scald, and leaf scorch of almond, coffee, pear, pecan, oak, oleander and several other landscape trees. The bacterium resides in the xylem vessels (water-conducting channels) of the plant, where it multiplies and blocks these channels and eventually obstructs the flow of water and nutrients within the plant. The bacterium is transmitted and spread by xylem-feeding insects, such as sharp shooters, leaf hoppers or spittle bugs. Symptoms of sweet olive leaf scorch include chlorotic mottling of the leaves that starts from the tips and margins and progresses toward the midribs (Figure 1). As disease develops, leaf tips and margins become necrotic (Figures 2). Severely infected plants defoliate and die (Figure 3).

Presently there are no chemicals available to manage sweet olive leaf scorch. Cultural practices that improve plant vigor, such as proper watering and fertilization, may help the infected plants to live longer. Pruning symptomatic branches will not save the plant. Detection and removal of infected plants at early stages may help reduce subsequent spread of the pathogen.

Symptoms of marginal leaf scorch are often attributed to other causes, such as salt injury or water and heat stress. Positive diagnosis of bacterial leaf scorch requires specialized testing of infected plants. The LSU AgCenter Plant Diagnostic Center is equipped with serological tests to diagnose this disease. Visit our website (www. lsuagcenter.com/plantdiagnostics) to find information on submitting samples.



Necrosis of leaf tips and leaf margins caused by Xylella fastidiosa

Defoliation of sweet olive caused by Xylella fastidiosa

Chlorotic mottling of leaves

caused by Xylella fastidosa

Why are your plants sick? Ask the plant doctor.



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BUCK ABBEY, ASLA - THE GREEN LAWS ORGANIZATION, NEW ORLEANS

Trees Galore

Urban Forestry Grants

Six months ago this column asked the question, "are we ready." The purpose for that article was to alert the communities in Louisiana. as well as interested members of the green industry that Federal money was coming down the pike for urban forestry grants.

Funded projects under this program will support street tree plantings, plantings in parks, on public land, and trees for public institutions such as universities.

Louisiana Urban Forestry

Urban Forestry began in Louisiana in the 1970s supported the Louisiana Office of Agriculture & Forestry. In the late 80s, communities across the state formed the Louisiana Urban Forestry Council. Today this organization no longer exists largely due to the fact that funding has flowed to trickle. Yet several cities are still involved in local tree planting.

Recently USDA Grant receivership has been passed from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to Baton Rouge Green a private organization. In recent years grants have been awarded to Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, New Orleans and Mandeville.

Dollars Available

A new shot in the arm toward urban forestry is bringing a burst of dollars to the states. The Biden Administration announced recently that the "Inflation Reduction Act" was providing more than \$1.5B dollars to expand the amount of green spaces and tree plantings administered by the USDA Forest Service. Use of these funds are conditioned. The purpose is to expand equitable tree plantings into disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Fundable neighborhoods are found using a "Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool" issued by the Federal Government. This tool maps census tracts in Louisiana in which grant money may be used. Look for the grey areas on the map. They can be found around all of the larger cities in the state. Non grey areas are not fundable under this program.

This money is to be used under the President's Justice40 Program and White House Executive Order 13985. These directives offer money for projects in underserved communities that are overburdened by pollution and impacted by climate change. In addition the grants are to advance principles of environmental justice.

Projects submitted to this program shall be in the range of \$100K to \$50M. All funding will be for a period not to exceed five years.

But what is interesting and unique about this program is that money can be used to rebuild the urban forest on private property as well as within parks, public spaces and properties controlled by a home owner associations. Planting on private land is something new to forestry grants and that is a great idea since that is where most of the urban forest is found.

Funding Allocation

This \$1.5B program is the largest ever Federal grant made to support urban forestry programs within cities and towns. In years past, grants for this purpose in Louisiana were very small.

Think of this. The money allocated under this act will plant five hundred million trees (500,000,000) or (10,000,000 trees per state) across this nation. Another way to visualize this is to imagine D.H. Horton building 4000 middle class single family homes or Elon Musk selling 29,708 Model Y vehicles!

Available money this year must recognize severe environmental quality in communities some of which can be mitigated with tree plantings and the the re-incorporation of nature based solutions in cities, within parks and paved over areas.

Winners

Landscape architects, urban foresters, arborists and landscape horticulturists will certainly benefit from this program. Moderating unhealthy environments and poor living conditions for those living in cities is a great reason to rebuild the urban forest in these places.

Funding under this program will help states across the nation. At this date, communities have been allocated money by the Federal Government for local projects. For instance, large states are getting large grants. California has been allocated \$43.2M, Texas \$21.75M, New York \$13.5M, and Georgia \$9.75M.

At the time of this writing it is not clear in spite of numerous telephone calls how many millions of dollars have been set aside for the State of Louisiana?

What is the impact of planting trees under this Act if the cost of planting a tree is calculated at \$300 per tree? (\$100 for the tree, \$110 for planting, \$90 handling & management).

What is the impact of this Act on Louisiana Growers? With an estimated allocation of \$3.4M expected we could plant 11,666 trees. Do we have that many trees available for sale in Louisiana?

We noted above that five hundred million tree can be planted across the county under the Biden Act. For Louisiana our share of growing these trees would be to grow ten million trees! (500,000,000 / 50). Who will grow the trees valued at \$1.5B and planted hither and yon, (not only here but in other states too)? How many trees can Louisiana growers produce as full grown 20 or 30 gal container trees over the next 5 years? This is a question Louisiana tree growers must answer.

This urban forestry program is a wonderful benefit for our nursery industry. Growers should immediately seek contract growing arrangements with states who will have millions of dollars to spend planting millions of trees. The Biden Act to grow and plant trees is a once in a lifetime boost for Louisiana's tree growing industry.

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WATER STRESS INDICATOR PLANTS IN THE LANDSCAPE BED

By Damon E. Abdi, PhD, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist, LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station



A carefully crafted landscape bed showcases several plant species, each one bringing notable features that attract the attention of onlookers and passing pedestrians. These features often include bright flowers, unique foliage, or showy fruits to garner interest. One thing that people do not want to see is wilting plants.

It is a good practice to use plants that have similar water requirements when designing a landscape bed. This makes it easier to decide on irrigation practices for the entire bed, creating comfortable conditions for all the plants. Many landscape beds are only supplied with water on an as-needed basis, as we in Louisiana are no strangers to the rain providing ample water to our landscape. When times of drought or dry weather come, how do we decide when it is time to pull the trigger on our garden nozzle? By using indicator plants.

An indicator plant, as the name implies, provides some early insight into the conditions of the environment before it affects the other plants around it. In this case, an irrigation indicator plant would show signs and symptoms of drought stress and wilting before the rest of the landscape bed. Take for example this image of a landscape bed. A line of boxwoods provides an evergreen border to two showy plants -white flowered vinca and coleus with dark red foliage. Look closer. Notice how some of the coleus are showing visible signs of wilting. The coleus, a plant that is one of the first to wilt in dry conditions, indicates that the soil is a bit too dry for its liking. This would suggest that additional water is needed, and that holding back for too much longer may cause the less drought-sensitive plants to wilt soon. Fortunately, coleus are quick to bounce back once they get watered, so the short-term suffering is not in vain as it may very well have protected the rest of the plants in the landscape bed.

Look even closer. This wilting is localized to just a small area of the bed, with other sections of the coleus mass looking perfectly fine. Let us assume that there is an irrigation system in the bed, applying water routinely to the different sections. A bed like this would likely have drip irrigation weaved throughout the plantings, out of sight and out of mind..... until something goes wrong. Perhaps an emitter became clogged, perhaps a pest chewed through a section of plumbing, perhaps some routine maintenance broke a connection, perhaps the irrigation valve didn't activate, when the irrigation line is discreetly tucked below the plant canopy it can be difficult to know until it is too late. An indicator plant for drought stress serves as a diagnostic tool for when something just doesn't seem quite right with your irrigation system. In this image, knowing that just a small subsection of the coleus are wilting suggests that it is likely just a clogged emitter. If all of the coleus were wilting, it would suggest that the irrigation did not turn on at all or an entire zone was not irrigated.

We began this article describing features that people want to see in the landscape, and wilting plants were certainly not part of that list. However, having an indicator plant as the "canary in the coal mine" can prevent widespread wilting throughout a landscape bed. For anyone who services irrigation systems, that wilting plant sure looks like a pretty sight when it saves several hours of work trying to identify what needs fixed. So with this thought in mind, what plants could you use as a drought stress indicator?



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Please keep KK in your prayers!

Smart Irrigation Technologies Are Responsive to Landscape Irrigation Requirements

Stacia L. Davis Conger, Ph.D.

Proper irrigation scheduling is important to maintaining a healthy landscape in Louisiana's hot-humid climate with 50-60+ inches of rainfall per year on average. Irrigation should be scheduled to satisfy plant water needs of each unique landscape. Irrigating too much or too often can result in leached nutrients, erosion, runoff, diseases, and ultimately results in wasted money.

Smart technologies were designed to schedule irrigation for the landscape based on changing plant water needs. Current smart technologies include weather-based irrigation controllers (WBIC) and soil moisture sensor (SMS) systems.

WBICs rely on estimates of evapotranspiration (ET) and rainfall, but range significantly in complexity and function across product lines. Typically, ET is used to represent the amount of water that must be replaced by irrigation when rainfall is not sufficient. In most cases, the WBIC replaces the irrigation timer, but some products become "smart" by adding a sensor or Wi-Fi module to an existing timer. Most require user-programmed site conditions so that the technology can accurately schedule irrigation based on maintaining well-watered plant material.



Figure 1. The Rachio is a WBIC that leverages internet access from existing Wi-Fi networks to obtain ET and rainfall information for scheduling irrigation. Image downloaded from https://rachio.com/newsroom/

SMSs include a sensor buried in the root zone to estimate the amount of moisture available to the plant. Residential or light commercial SMSs also have a sensor controller that wires into the existing timer and decides if irrigation is necessary based on a wet/dry threshold. Larger applications typically include the sensor controller functionality within the irrigation controller itself. Sensors act as shutoff devices, like rain sensors, resulting in no irrigation if the soil is too wet. If the soil moisture reads less than the threshold, then irrigation occurs based on the programmed schedule.



Figure 2. The Baseline SMS comes in a large size to accommodate landscaped areas or zones and a small size for potted material or installation in restrictive areas. These sensors are typically added to two-wire systems that can support multiple sensors. Image provided by Hydropoint Data Systems.

Choosing between WBICs and SMSs can be a consumer preference. SMSs are generally small, cost-effective solutions, but the need for burying additional wires within the landscape may restrict installation options or limit changes to established landscapes. Costs increase with increasing sophistication (e.g., wireless sensors). WBICs may be preferable because direct measurements from the landscape are not necessary for this technology. It is important for smart technologies to be installed and programmed by someone who is knowledgeable.

Research by the University of Florida, also located in a rain-dominated hot-humid climate, has shown that water savings can be as high as 92% during wet seasons and approximately 55% during dry seasons for SMSs and average annual water savings of 43% for WBICs. These savings were achieved by comparing to the monthly irrigation schedule suggested by UF-IFAS extension for the locations of the studies.

For more information on smart technologies or irrigation requirements, please contact Dr. Stacia L. Davis Conger at sdavis@agcenter.lsu.edu.



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Tammany Baumgarten



Box stores and nurseries are full of tropical hibiscus right now, but for true longevity and flare in the landscape, think native! Some of the most dramatic and colorful native plants for summer gardens in Louisiana, with flowers sometimes as much as 8-10" across, are our native hibiscus species. These plants, in the Malvaceae family, also answer to common names like Rose Mallow, Swamp Rose Mallow, Crimson-eyed Mallow and yes...Marsh Mallow. The genus Hibiscus includes four species (aculeatus, grandiflorus, lasiocarpos, and mosheutos) that are native to LA plus H. coccineus that is native to the United States but perhaps not Louisiana. Also garden worthy is Kosteletzkya virginica, our Saltmarsh Mallow which has smaller but more prolific blooms and a shrubbier habit than the others. Found naturally in moist to wet areas up the eastern seaboard from Louisiana to New Jersey, all of these easy-to-grow plants shine in the summer heat and thrive here in our landscapes.

Native mallows are herbaceous, long-lived perennial plants. Flower colors often vary in nature from white to shades of pink and even bright red in the case of Hibiscus coccineus, better known Scarlet Rosemallow or Texas Star Hibiscus. Hibiscus aculeatus, the Pineland Hibiscus or Comfortroot, can be a soft white to butteryellow, reminiscent of an okra flower. Hibiscus moscheutos and H. lasiocarpus are usually "crimson eyed" having a distinctive red throat on white flowers. Halbeardleaf Hibiscus, H. laevis, is distinguished by its' leaf-shape and can also be found in many color variations. All have an impressive pollen-coated stamen that protrudes from the flower, making them particularly attractive to people and pollinators alike. Lots of breeding has been done with our native hibiscus species. Hybrids and cultivars abound in the nursery trade, including the LSU Super Plants in the Luna series.

In the wild, mallows occur in ditches, in or near swamps, and lake or river edges showing off their love for moist to wet, rich soil and plenty of sunshine. While they are well suited to wet areas (which makes them the perfect stormwater management plant), they are equally as happy in the average sunny garden bed with adequate moisture. As we progress into summer, it is easy to spot these plants along our roadsides in ditches or in swampy areas. I often see pink mallows on the Lake side of the Bonnet Carre' spillway and pale yellow Comfortroot blooming in wet swales along North Shore roadways and the sides of the highways near Houma are full of Pink Kosteletzkya.

Most native Hibiscus species can get quite tall, as much as 5-8 feet, but the plants can be encouraged to branch by pinching the growing tips at an early stage before they set flower buds. As each plant matures, more and more flowering stalks will emerge every year from the growing crown, creating a bushier, fuller appearance. Native mallows differ from non-native tropical hibiscus in that they are perfectly cold hardy. The plants go dormant in winter, leaving only upright tan-colored, hollow stalks standing. These stalks have drama and interest of their own in the winter garden and rather than clip them down, I like to leave them standing. This not only marks where the plant is in the garden, but also provides perfect nesting spaces for native bees that rely on hollow plant stalks for rearing their young. I have also seen birds shred the dried, woody stems to make nesting material.

For some summer sizzle in your sunny landscapes, go native and ask for these excellent, easy plants that are sure to impress!

Tammany Baumgarten is the current President of the Louisiana Native Plant Society and owner of BaumGardens Landscapes in the New Orleans area.



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UNDERSTANDING AND CONTROLLING THE TAWNY CRAZY ANT

Dr. Aaron Ashbrook

The tawny crazy ant (Nylanderia fulva) is an invasive ant species that has gained attention due to its high number of individuals in colonies, fast spread in the US, impact on ecosystems, and being a general nuisance. The tawny crazy ant is native to South America, and has successfully established populations in various regions in the US and worldwide. Initially, it was found in both Texas and Florida. In Texas, a pest control operator whose last name is Rasberry, discovered the ants, therefore, they were called Rasberry crazy ants until being renamed. Tawny crazy ants thrive in urban and rural areas and have a preference for warm, wet habitats. It is known to invade residential areas, agricultural lands, natural habitats, and structures. They can be incredibly disruptive to outdoor activities because of their sheer numbers, crawling over people and objects in the yard or infested areas.

The tawny crazy ant displays characteristics that make it successful as an invasive species. They form large, dense colonies with multiple queens, allowing for rapid colony growth and expansion. These ants are adaptive, exhibiting both trail-following and foraging behaviors. They are known to forage over long distances, often disrupting native ant populations and interfering with natural ecosystem processes. Their foraging trails are often loosely followed, with ants frequently running away off of the trails, and then returning in an erratic curled pattern. This foraging trailing behavior is why they are called "crazy" ants.

The life cycle of the tawny crazy ant consists of the typical ant stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. The development time from egg to adult can vary depending on environmental conditions such as temperature and food availability. The queen ant lays eggs, while the workers tend to the brood, foraging for food, and expand the colony.

The tawny crazy ants can have severe ecological impacts. They displace native ant species, disrupt arthropod communities, and interfere with pollination processes. These ants have also been observed to cause damage to agricultural crops, including fruits, vegetables, and ornamental plants. They can also displace red imported fire ants. Both tawny crazy ants and red imported fire ants evolved in the same area. Therefore, the tawny crazy ant has adaptations to detoxify fire ant venom, by applying acid to their bodies, once exposed to fire ant venom. Tawny crazy ants are not capable of stinging, but instead have an acid sprayer. Their presence in urban environments can lead to electrical equipment malfunctions due to their affinity for electrical junction boxes. Then can also damage irrigation pipes and hoses by nesting inside, then when water is turned on the debris can build up and cause them to burst.

Controlling tawny crazy ants requires an integrated pest management approach that combines multiple strategies. Various insecticides have been found to effectively manage tawny crazy ant infestations. Combining both baits and residual sprays are effective for reducing ant populations. However, caution must be exercised to ensure the chosen products are safe for humans, non-target organisms, and the environment. Be sure to follow label directions. Never apply an insecticide when the soil is saturated with water, it is about to rain, or is raining. Typically, slow acting insecticides such as fipronil containing products with non-repellent activity are preferred. Sprays can also be used to protect structures from ant entry. Creating physical barriers can help prevent tawny crazy ants from accessing structures or sensitive areas. To create barriers includes sealing cracks, crevices, and other entry points that ants may utilize. In agricultural production environments, exclusion techniques such as screens and row covers can be used to protect crops. Tawny crazy ants also are susceptible to biological control. A microsporidian pathogen and virus that are specific to tawny crazy ants have been successful in eliminating the ants without harming non-target species. However, these pathogens are naturally acquired by colonies while foraging and are not currently used for control. Practices such as sanitation, removal of food and water sources, and regular maintenance of structures can help discourage tawny crazy ants from establishing and expanding their colonies.

In the future, Drs. Aaron Ashbrook and Damon Abdi will conduct collaborative experiments to determine what mulch types are preferred by tawny crazy ants. By knowing what mulches are detrimental to tawny crazy ants, we can further understand additional exclusion techniques and further discourage the establishment of the ants in certain environments. Continued research and collaboration among scientists, landscapers, naturalists, and pest management professionals is essential to addressing the challenges posed by the tawny crazy ant.

We are currently looking for colonies of Argentine and ghost ants. If you have any questions about tawny crazy ants, or can help us locate Argentine or ghost ants, please contact me at: aashbrook@ agcenter.lsu.edu.



Dorsal and lateral views of a tawny crazy ant worker. Photo Credit: M. Ausburn. Adult tawny crazy ants are reddish-brown in color. Workers are all about the same size, 1/8 inch long, have long antennae and legs and have many, long, coarse hairs on their body. There is no club on the 12 segmented antennae.

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Controlling Algae in Nurseries: The Green Monster

Hannah Rouillard, Content Manager for BioSafe Systems, LLC



Algae growth has similar requirements as cultivated crops for development: light, water, and nutrients, which means the frequent irrigation, nutrient runoff, and increased temperatures during the late spring and summer months create an environment primed for algae growth. Greenhouses, nurseries, and landscapes can all

be vulnerable to algae when the right factors combine; acting preventatively is key for effective management. Algae spores spread via water, people, and equipment with exponential growth after germination. Therefore, controlling indoor growing conditions to reduce spore transmission is the first line of defense. Cleaning and sanitation protocols are vital for algae remediation, as is source water treatment. Implementing efficient nutrient programs, reducing runoff, and improving drainage and airflow mitigates these conditions too.

In aquatic systems like lakes and ponds, some levels of algae help support a healthy ecosystem by oxygenating the water, however large algae blooms in source water during the summer months can be problematic. Unfortunately, blue-green algae and cyanobacteria blooms are common and are known to produce dangerous toxins that harm people, animals, and the environment. Algae also become a vector for insect pests and pathogens and can build up in irrigation lines and emitters; it can clog filters and intake valves, requiring constant maintenance and labor.

If algae show up inside a facility it can create worker safety hazards and becomes a vector for insect pests and pathogens on equipment and soil surfaces. Algae on hard surfaces cause a range of issues when it covers equipment like irrigation tanks, emitters, walkways, and weed mats. When algae are left unchecked on hard surfaces, the slimy surface creates dangerous slip-and-fall hazards around the workplace. Aside from workplace risks to personnel, algae infestations on the soil surface absorb vital nutrients meant for the plant and irritated hydrophobic soil conditions further complicate the delivery of these vital inputs. Lastly, insects like fungus gnats and shore flies make algae their habitat and food source, then reproduce; and populations can get out of hand. Implementing an algae management program can reduce these pest populations without the need for pesticide applications.

From the outside, managing algae infestations is vital to the success of your operation and the best place to start is with water. Prevent nutrient overload in source water by testing runoff for residual chemistry found in common fertilizers and adding beneficial bacteria to break down organic buildup. Sometimes physically removing large algal blooms from the surface with a rake, skimming it off the top, or applying a water-safe oxidizer to break up the blooms helps too. Injecting sustainable sanitizers into the lines can break down biofilm housing bacteria and prevent the transmission of pests and pathogens through the system into your facility.

Once inside, consistent line cleaning during production and between crops is important to maintain cleanliness after source water quality has been addressed. Inside a facility, identify your critical control points using foot pads at every entryway to cut down on cross-contamination. It is recommended not to use a power washer when cleaning algae off surfaces. While the water pressure is effective at moving the algae out of corners and off mats and tables, it doesn't kill the algae and often releases pathogens and spores lingering in the slime into the air to circulate. The bottom line is; when you encounter the green monster in your operation, treat it first with a cleaner that will get it off equipment, tools, and surfaces, then always follow up with a sanitizer to oxidize the algae on contact, immediately.

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Dr. Jeb Fields, LSU AgCenter's Commercial Horticulturist, is the instructor for the manual review/training session.

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