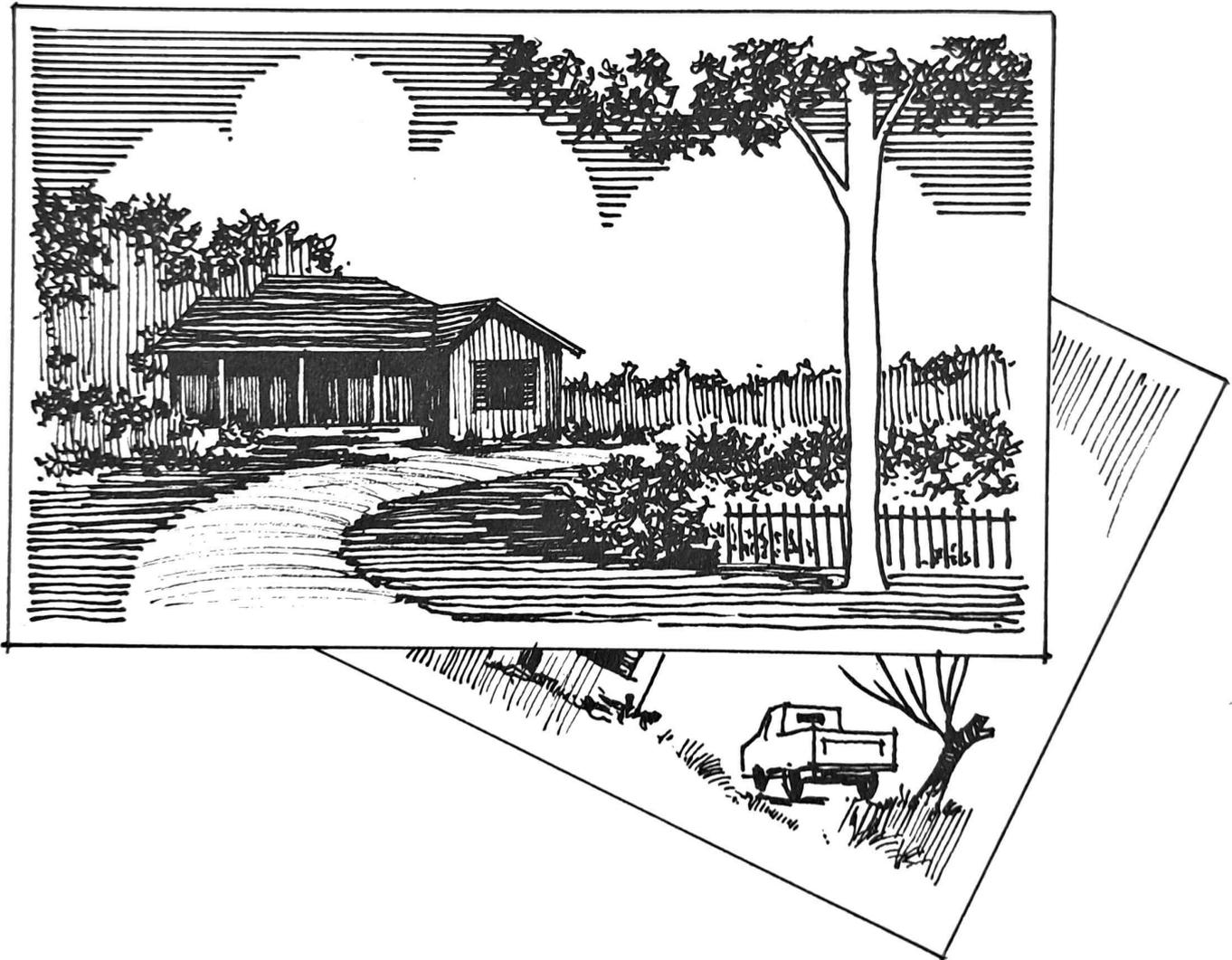


Louisiana's **NURSERYMEN**



LANDSCAPE ORDINANCES IN NORTH LOUISIANA *Changing the Visual Image of the State*

Inside: LAN-MNA Short Course Recap • Silverbell • Contracting Tips

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP Louisiana Association of Nurserymen

Why Join LAN?

- LAN expresses the collective voice of the Green Industry in Louisiana. LAN members sit on the Horticulture Commission and lobby for legislation that affects nurserymen.
- LAN promotes professionalism through a Certified Nurseryman training manual and testing program.
- LAN sponsors scholarships for horticulture students in universities across Louisiana.
- LAN supports research on topics important to nurserymen. One LAN grant supported a comprehensive study of Green Laws. This study will assist Louisiana communities in passing their own Green Laws.
- LAN schedules an annual short course jointly with the Mississippi Association of Nurserymen. This event draws more than 900 participants and more than 100 exhibitors. The course meets alternately in Jackson, Mississippi and Baton Rouge, usually on the second weekend in January.
- LAN is subdivided into nursery regions (e.g., the Central Louisiana Association of Nurserymen, the Northwest Louisiana Association of Nurserymen). Through these groups and through the annual short course, you'll meet others in the Green Industry. You'll get ideas, find suppliers or buyers, and meet a lot of enjoyable, dedicated people.
- LAN is a participating member of the huge TAN-MISSLARK trade show, which meets annually during the summer. It is the world's largest nursery show, and provides you with access to almost any nursery product imaginable.
- LAN members receive this magazine, plus supplementary mailouts from LAN secretary Dr. Warren Meadows.
- LAN offers members special services, such as training tapes for those seeking to comply with OSHA hazard communication standards.

To: Officers and Members, Louisiana Association of Nurserymen

I hereby apply for membership in the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen, subject to the approval of your membership committee. I agree that the decision of the membership committee is final.

Should I wish to cancel my membership at any time in the future, I agree that I must do so in writing to the secretary no later than the last day of December of the current fiscal year. Failing to do this, I acknowledge my liability to LAN for the current year's dues.

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Associate Membership

(\$35, for out-of-state nurseries, chemical and hard goods suppliers)

Make check payable to the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen and mail to:
Dr. Warren Meadows
4560 Essen Lane
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Research ideas needed

LAN now has a research fund endowed by more than \$30,000. Board member **Bob Barry**, Sunset, heads the research committee and is now seeking ideas from LAN members for needed research topics. If you'd like to propose an area for research, contact Bob at (318) 662-5318.

Ruston goes green

The town of Ruston recently adopted green law landscape ordinances. Ruston-area board member **John Kavanaugh** gave green law proponents a copy of the recently completed *Directory of Louisiana Green Laws*. According to John, these written summaries showing that other communities in Louisiana are adopting green laws helped dissolve opposition to the green laws.

Compiled by LSU landscape architect **Buck Abbey** with a grant from LAN, this survey of Louisiana's

green laws is available from **Dr. Warren Meadows**, LAN secretary, at 4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.

LAN contributes to SNA Meadows Scholarship

At its January meeting the LAN board approved a contribution of \$5,000 to the Sidney B. Meadows Scholarship Endowment Fund, which is being administered by the Southern Nurserymen's Association.

Mr. Sidney was a native of Ennis, La., and a graduate of the University of Southwestern Louisiana. He became one of the nation's leading nurserymen, by virtue of his innovative management, which he shared for decades as a speaker, writer and giver of advice to individual nurserymen.

During his long career with Flowerwood Nursery in Mobile, Ala., he received the highest honors given by the American Association of Nurserymen, SNA, and the Ala-

bama, South Carolina, Texas and Georgia associations of nurserymen.

SNA is seeking to create 32 endowed Sidney B. Meadows Scholarships—two in every state in the South.

Many individual nurseries have contributed to this fund. To contribute, send a check payable to the Sidney B. Meadows Scholarship Endowment Fund, and mail to SNA, 1511 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 115, Marietta, GA 30062.

LGGA Meets in June

The Louisiana Greenhouse Growers Association will meet in the Baton Rouge Holidome June 8-9. Now in its 20th year, LGGA will feature such topics as import competition, new seed varieties, heat-tolerant annuals, pesticide regulations, personnel exemptions, sawtooth greenhouses, integrated pest management, equipment maintenance and plug production. For further information or to register, contact Dr. Dennis Wollard at USL, (318) 231-5348.

Week-Long Landscape Course

LSU will offer the Landscape School of the South, a week-long series of lectures, field studies and studio exercises focusing on small-scale landscape design.

The course will cover residential and small commercial design, small landscape structures, drafting and drawing techniques, plant identification, design history and theory.

The school will be offered for three different sessions: June 11-15, June 18-21 and June 25-29. The tuition of \$390 covers classroom and laboratory experience, evening speakers, a plant book and other course materials.

No previous training in landscape design experience is required to participate in the course.

Dr. Neil Odenwald, director of the LSU School of Landscape Architecture, heads the program. To register or for further information, contact LSU Short Courses at (504) 388-6621 or (800) 234-5049.

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Contracting or Gambling?

BY WARREN PURDY

Ever since man and woman were created on this planet, gambling has preoccupied the spare time of many people. From Adam, who was encouraged by Eve when he took a chance on the forbidden fruit and gambled against the Lord, to today's men and women who have spent their spare time (and for some their full time) attempting to beat the "odds." Not by bettering the "odds" but by accepting the "odds" as they exist. Now then, let's take a look at the word "Contracting," which could be a direct derivative of the word gambling, and see how it applies to our particular business.

Russian Roulette

First of all, if residential contractors' work is slow in that particular field. When they see a small commercial job for bid they immediately assume that they can handle it because their competitor down the street has been doing it, so why can't they? With no prior knowledge of this type of work, they jump in with both feet. Enthusiasm and optimism, which are the creed of the contractor as well as the professional gambler, are not the words for this situation; gambling is! A better description is "Russian Roulette" with all chambers of the gun loaded.

There are vast differences between residential and commercial contracting. A quick conclusion at this point is that if you don't know the game, the costs and the timing, the bid usually turns out to be a pure "guesstimate." You might be lucky on the first try to receive the job, just as the gambler usually wins on the first attempt (that's how one gets hooked), but in the long run it usually ends in disaster. In this particular scenario, you will also find that without cost accounting on

each job, there is no way of actually telling whether the commercial job made a profit or not.

Far too often you'll find that one lush residential job in that particular month will make enough profit to conceal the loss on the commercial project; so one good job subsidizes the other. The worst part is that you are not even aware of the situation. This is especially true where contractors operate a retail nursery in conjunction with their landscape operation. This same analogy can also be applied to a commercial landscape contractor who suddenly decides to try his hand on a state freeway construction job which is far different than straight commercial projects.

Decrease the Risks

The next question has been asked many times during my seminars

around the country." How can I get larger in my scope of operations, so that I can do commercial contracting and know that I am not gambling or undercutting the existing marketplace?"

First of all, make sure your existing business is on a sound footing by having the following:

1) Have a good accounting system with a Statement of Profit & Loss formatted for the landscape contractor. From this you can make sound and solid management decisions. Do not use the system that is usually proposed by accountants who were taught manufacturing and retail accounting.

2) Have a good reporting system from the field to the office, so that accurate information can be gathered into the financial statements.

3) Have a foolproof system of purchasing, so that materials, equip-

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ment rentals, etc. may be applied to the statement of Profit & Loss and accounted for in each individual job.

4) Add to the above a filing system where the above items may be retrieved immediately upon request.

5) Last, and most important of all, is putting in place a Cost Accounting System that will inform you of exactly how you are performing in the various field operations. Most firms that I have counseled have nothing but a running total of the jobs in progress.

This does not inform management as to how the firm is doing in the planting operations versus grading operations.

Remember, as I mentioned earlier in this article, one operation can easily subsidize another. Also, if one operation is estimated incorrectly (and it happens to be a small part of this project) it can in turn be a major factor in another—which may lead you right into the bankruptcy courts.

Increase Your Odds

Now that you have accomplished the above five points, you can approach the step up to the different types of projects with both feet planted on a firm foundation. Let's see how we approach the situation of going from residential to commercial with the least amount of problems. Putting it another way, let's reduce the "Odds" of failure by unloading all of the chambers of the gun in the game of Russian Roulette. When this is done, success is almost assured.

Research the following items before making your first estimate:

1) Talk to your competitors and tell them what you are thinking about. As long as they surmise that what you want to do will be as a good competitor, they usually will be very helpful, especially, if you both belong to the same association. After all, they have everything to gain from a good competitor rather than one who knows nothing about their field of operations and

who would undercut the existing market.

2) Go out to your competitors' jobs, and see for yourself how they perform their operations. This can be a real revelation to you and may, in fact, change your mind about entering this particular field. Ask questions, and find out the peculiarities of the projects, and why and how certain things are accomplished.

3) Ask your banker about the owners and general contractors, particularly their financial condition and their payment history to subcontractors. Also, ask your competitor at association meetings about the general contractors in town. You will usually get the correct scoop on most of them in this manner.

Now you are ready to prepare the estimate with a great deal of the gamble removed. Remember, the above points require time and study. Do not take them lightly. It might be a matter of staying in business or working for someone else! Good Luck and — No Russian Roulette!

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Nursery Festival

Beautiful weather and good crowds turned out for the annual Forest Hill Nursery Festival, March 17 & 18. The event included a parade, dance, story telling and an auction, as well as booths selling plants, arts and crafts and nursery equipment. Cathy Polakovich was crowned queen of this year's festival.

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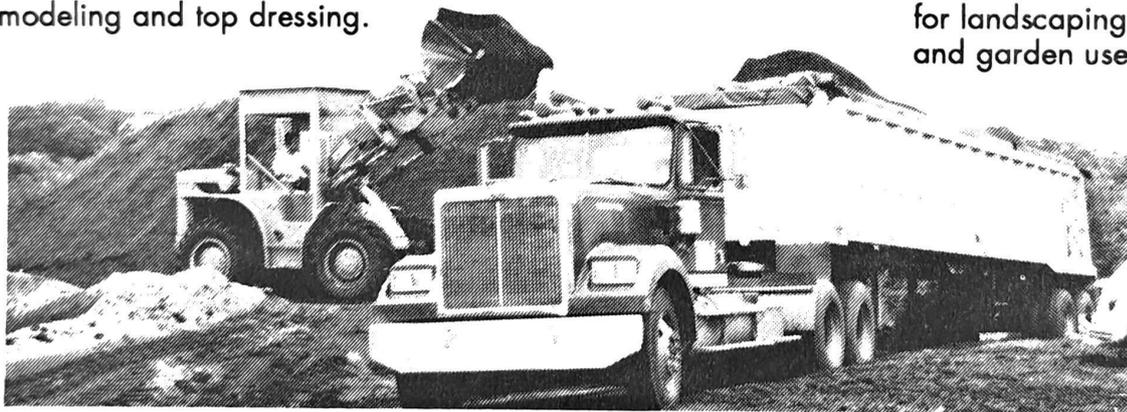
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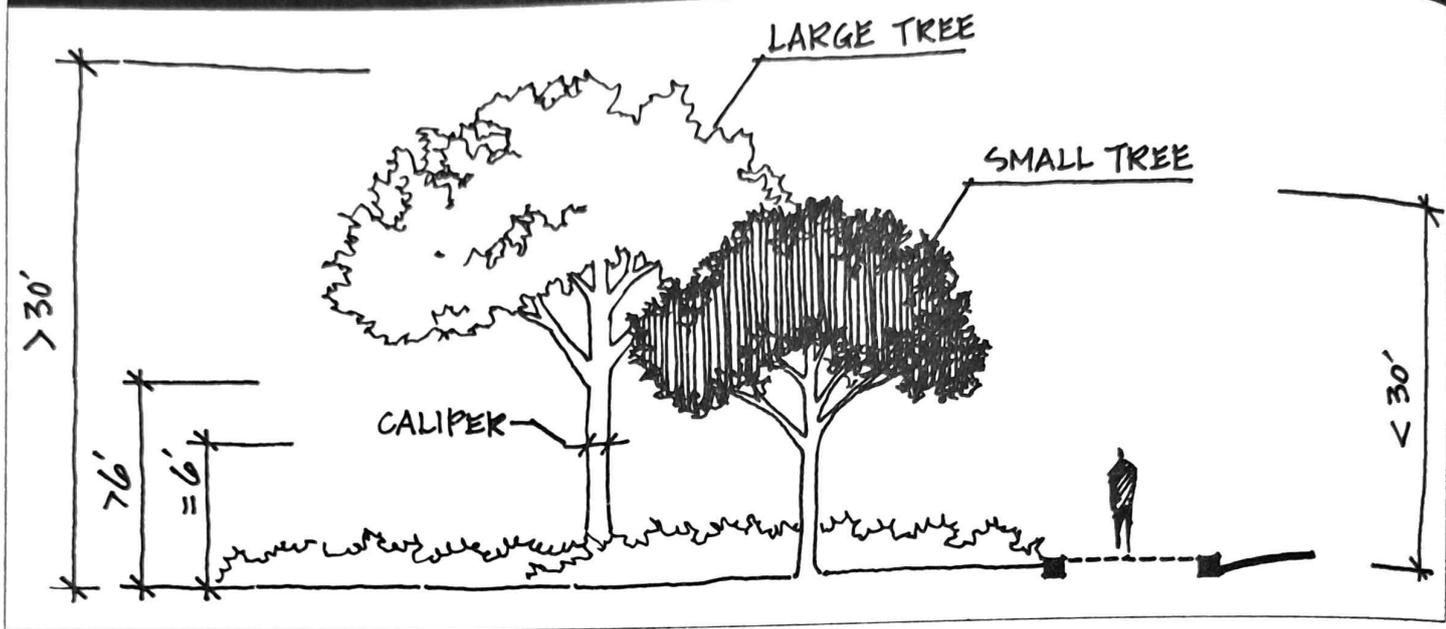
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY LI ZHU

Figure 1. Tree Definitions, Section J, No. 2., Caddo Parish/Shreveport Landscape Ordinance



Green Laws in North Louisiana

BY BUCK ABBEY, ASLA

Most of the Louisiana communities in with landscape ordinances in effect are in south Louisiana. Landscape ordinances originated in Louisiana in St. Tammany Parish in 1984. But a recent survey by LSU shows that north Louisiana has two ordinances in Caddo Parish and in the City of Shreveport. A new ordinance is also being developed in the town of Ruston.

Caddo Parish enacted a standard landscape ordinance in 1987. This green law is defined within Ordinance No. 2445, Article IX, of Chapter 51 of the Caddo Code of Ordinances-Zoning Ordinance. (2.)

The basis of the law is founded upon environmental issues such as stabilizing the "ecological balance by contributing to the processes of air movement, air purification, oxygen regeneration, ground water recharge, and storm water runoff control, while at the same time aid-

ing in noise, glare, heat and dust abatement." Enhancement of beauty, quality of life, visual buffering between land uses, and protection of the public health, safety and general welfare are secondary concerns of this ordinance.

The ordinance sets standards for acceptable tree sizes and plant spacing to safeguard and protect property values (Fig. 1). By addressing existing developed areas, street frontage requirements (Fig. 2), off-street parking facility requirements (Fig. 3), and acceptable landscape materials, the ordinance helps protect private and public investment.

Alternative compliance provisions acknowledge that achievement of the intent of the law is more important than the letter of the law itself.

Caddo Parish also defines very general standards for plant material. Though requirements for plants materials are minimal, they require the use of certain standard sizes, and encourage the use of high quality, hardy and drought-tolerant species.

Enforcement of this ordinance is achieved by withholding the certificate of occupancy or granting a temporary certificate good for a six-month period until the landscaping requirements are completed. No penalty provisions are provided.

Maintenance needs and responsibilities of the property owner are defined in the law. The Metropolitan Planning Commission, administrators of the ordinance, provide limited technical assistance to developers and property owners when necessary to help them comply with the provisions of the ordinance. The parish does not require the seal of a landscape architect on the landscape plans. The plans can be prepared by local landscape architects, according to Townsley Schwab, ASLA, of the firm Townsley Schwab Associates Landscape Architects-Planners of Shreveport (3).

City of Shreveport

The Shreveport ordinance is almost an exact copy of the land-

scape ordinance for Caddo Parish. This indicates that conformity between city and parish law is important for continuity of the visual effects in the community. In Louisiana's city-parish form of government it is important to have uniformity between the landscape ordinances in the city and of the parish.

Two sets of regulations from Shreveport are considered relevant environmental laws and are noted here.

The primary set of regulations are landscaping requirements contained within Ord. 136 of 1987, which amended the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. III, Item J. 4. Its intent is very similar to the parish ordinance. It addresses parking and street yard requirements, and requires that a landscape plan (Table 1) be submitted. It does not state who is qualified to prepare the plan. This ordinance also addresses alternative

compliance, adding flexibility to the regulation.

As to plant material, this regulation is somewhat weak. No plant list is required; a minimum size, but no control over the quality of the plant material, has been established. Maintenance of all new plantings is required.

Drainage and erosion

A companion ordinance No. 34 of 1987, amending Chapter 14 1/2 of the Code of Ordinances, deals with issues related to drainage, storm water runoff, topsoil loss and erosion (5). This is the only ordinance of its kind that the researchers uncovered that deals with drainage and flooding problems as related to land-altering activity.

This ordinance is included in the category of landscape ordinances because its pertinent issues should be part of the justifiable basis for green laws in Louisiana communi-

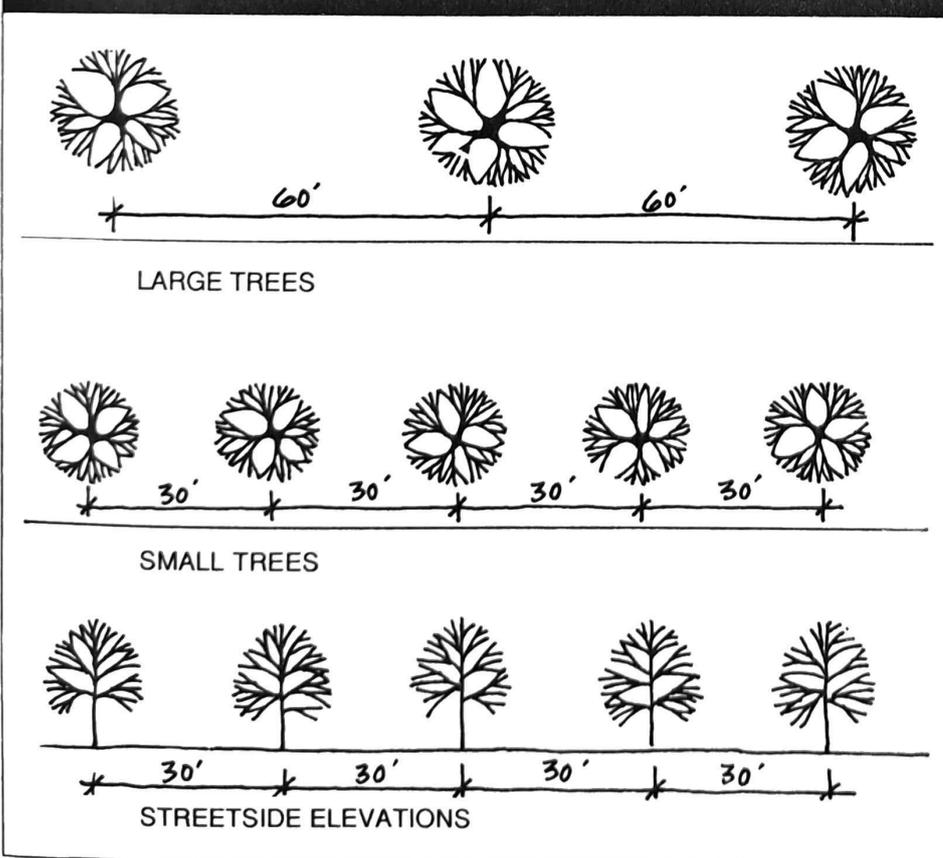
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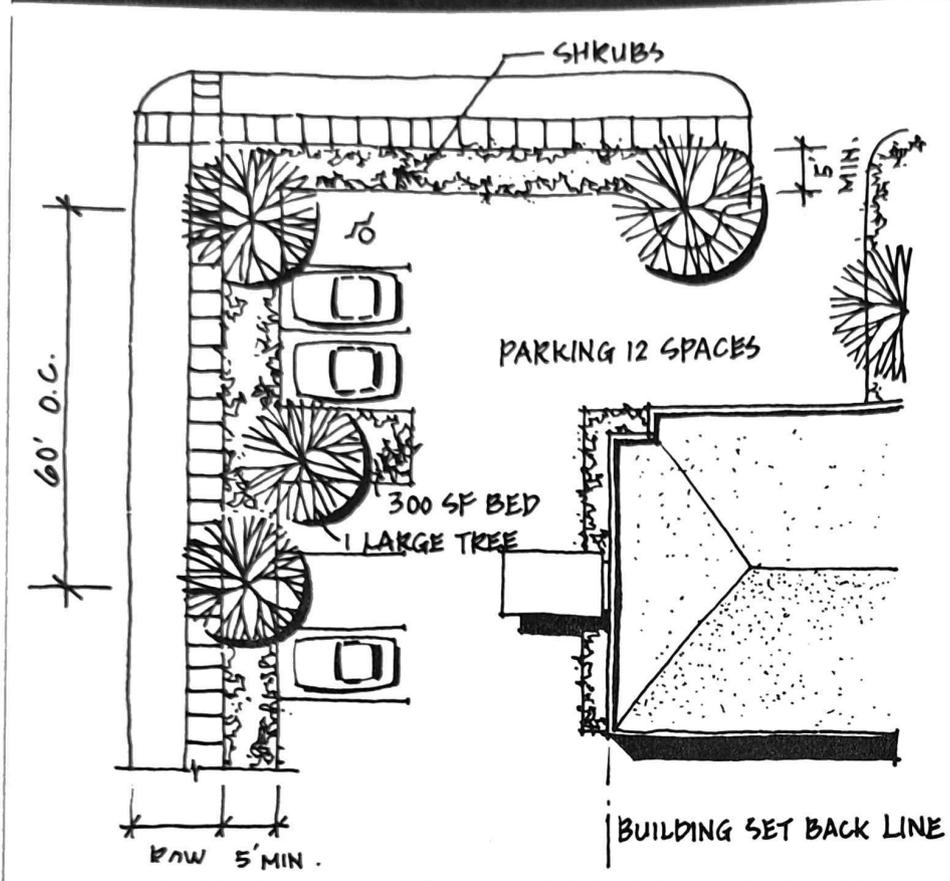
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Figure 2. Street Frontage Requirements, Section J, No. 7



Shreveport green laws require one large tree for every 60 lineal feet of the required landscaping strip, or one small tree for every 30 lineal feet.

Figure 3. Off-Street Parking Requirements, Section J, No. 8

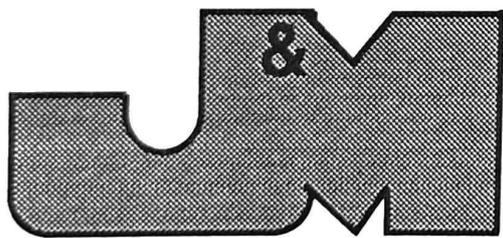


(Continued from page 9)

ties. When new DEQ non-point runoff pollution standards emerge in the future, they are sure to include requirements such as this to prevent site development erosion and excessive storm water runoff (6).

Site development permits are required, and erosion control plans and grading and drainage plans

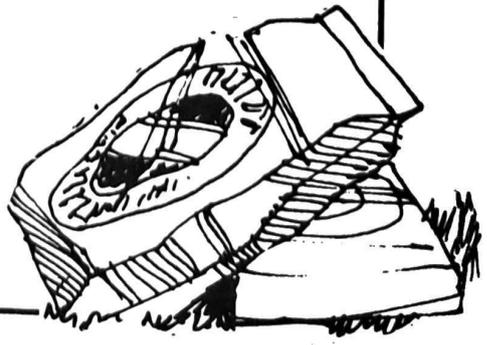
"A minimum of 25 square feet of landscape area shall be provided in the parking area for each required off-street parking space. "Large canopy trees shall be provided in the parking area at a minimum average density of one tree for each twelve required parking spaces. "Landscaping shall consist of a combination of lawn grasses, ground covers, shrubs, trees and non-living durable material such as brick, stone, rocks, pavers, etc. Eighty percent of such material shall be living."



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must be submitted to the City Engineer in the Department of Public Works. Other provisions of the ordinance include maintenance, standard definitions, appeal procedures and a penalty clause including a fine of up to \$500 on a day-by-day basis, and 60 days in jail.

Guidelines for plan preparation require that a registered professional civil engineer must stamp and sign that the plans are complete and that the technical data they contain are accurate. Landscape architects are not excluded from preparing grading and drainage plans and erosion control plans for single family detached dwellings.

With the problems of drainage and erosion found in Louisiana, more of this type of regulation is needed to protect the environment in developing areas.

Landscape ordinances in Shreveport and Caddo Parish are slowly changing the face of Louisiana. They show great promise for increased economic and social benefits for the north part of the state. Visual effects and an increased role for the green industry are already apparent. All ordinances mentioned in here come under the authority of a commission that may be contacted for assistance at the following addresses and telephone numbers:

**Caddo Parish Commission
Caddo Parish Courthouse
Shreveport, Louisiana
71101**

**Jerry Spears, Commission
Clerk
(318) 226-6900**

**Shreveport Metropolitan
Planning Commission
P.O. Box 31109**

**1234 Texas Avenue
Shreveport, Louisiana
71130**

**Charles Kirkland, Sharon
Swanson
(318)226-5766.**

Table 1

LANDSCAPE PLAN REQUIREMENTS, CITY OF SHREVEPORT

The landscape plan should indicate on the drawing the following information:

- Location and dimension of the proposed landscaping strips adjacent to the public right-of-way including a description and location of the trees and plant materials to be placed within the landscaping strip.
- Locations and dimensions of the proposed landscape areas within the parking area including a description and location of the trees and plant material to be placed within the landscape area.
- Locations and calipers of existing healthy trees to be retained and counted as part of the landscaping requirements.
- An indication of how existing healthy trees proposed to be retained will be protected during construction.
- Visibility at intersections if applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Abbey, D.G., Landscape Ordinances In Louisiana, School of Landscape Architecture/LSU, Baton Rouge, LA, 1989.
2. Caddo Parish, Code of Ordinances Article IX Chapter 51 Landscaping Requirements, 1987.
3. Personal conversation, Townsley Schwab of Townsley Schwab & Associates Landscape Architects, March 1990.
4. City of Shreveport, Code of Ordinances - Zoning, Section J, Landscaping Requirements: 1987.
5. City of Shreveport, Code of Ordinances Chapter 14 1/2 Drainage and Erosion Control: 1987.
6. Personal conversation, C. Critton-Meeker of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, March 1990.

Editor's note: LAN provided grant support to the LSU dept. of landscape architecture for research conducted by Assoc. Prof. Buck Abbey and graduate students, to research and formulate feasible green law ordinances for Louisiana. This is the third of a series on green laws in the state. Illustrator Li Zhu is a graduate student at LSU



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Below, Bill "The Farmer" Meadows entertained a standing-room-only crowd with tales of how he made his millions in the nursery industry.



Margins vs. Mass Marketing

Marciel, Meadows, present different philosophies of retailing

Those who attended the 1990 LAN-MNA Short Course and Trade Show heard details of two dramatically different nursery management philosophies from keynote speakers Ron Marciel and Bill "The Farmer" Meadows.

Marciel, a columnist for *Nursery Manager* magazine, stressed that nurserymen should seek higher profits, not higher sales volume. But in a presentation titled, "How I made \$1 million a year in the nursery business," Meadows said, "We're volume-oriented. We struggle to keep price down."

Between the two, Marciel had the most practical advice for most conference-goers, as The Farmer had made his millions by becoming the Sam Walton of the Washington, D.C., green industry. He owns 24 nurseries; Meadows Farms is one on the three largest privately owned nursery operations in the U.S.

Marciel gave nurserymen a new tool to use in seeking higher profits: market research about price barriers.

"Psychological price barriers are check points that consumers use to determine relative value of items," Marciel said. "They are based on need, desire for the product, and consumers' discretionary income."

Marciel distinguished need from desire by pointing out that items like food and clothing are need-driven. "I need a belt, but I don't have a lot of desire for it, so I'm not going to pay a lot for it. In our industry we have an incredible amount of desire-driven purchases."

Price barriers exist for any product. Generally accepted barriers are \$1, \$5, \$10, \$15, \$20, \$25, \$30, \$40, \$50, \$75, \$100, \$150, and \$200. "The higher the price the greater the spread," Marciel said.

In addition to these major price barriers, Marciel said many minor barriers exist in green goods sales. These

are \$1.50, \$2, \$3, \$4, \$7, \$7, \$13, \$17, \$18 and \$23.

If you're selling plants, that means your prices should edge just up to these barriers but remain below them: \$1.49, \$3.98, \$12.98 and so forth. "If someone's going to pay \$8, they'll pay \$10. So why force them to be disappointed and pay only \$9?" Marciel asked. "You will sell as many plants at \$22.98 as you will at \$20.98."

He proposed similar minor price barriers for hard goods.

Using price barriers was but a tool to achieve Marciel's overall strategem: greater profits. Marciel had tested these barriers as owner of a California garden center, before he became full-time consultant to the nursery industry.

"Some will say, 'You won't sell as many at \$3.98 as you will at \$2.98.' I don't care how many I sell; I care about how much money I make. Understand—I want to sell as many plants as I can, but within the range that gives me the profits I need."

"In all the years I've tested prices, the hardest is going from \$4.98 to \$6.98. I found that, under \$10, I would capture 92 percent of the sales I would have had at a lower price. And over \$10, I captured 100 percent of the sales I would have had. For customers who are solely motivated by price, you have to say no, so you'll have the time and resources to devote to those who will allow you to make a profit."

Marciel told nurserymen to set prices as high as the market would bear. "Almost all of us use some mathematical formula based on the grower's catalog. No one asks, 'What is this worth to the consumer?' We're always saying people won't pay us what our product is worth. Of course they won't. We're afraid to ask them!"

Marciel admitted he had had trouble asking them, and almost lost his business. "I was going broke and figured I'd go out in a blaze of glory." He raised prices. "I asked them and they disappointed me. They gave me a profit.

"Marciel's rule is, 'When in doubt, go up.' The secret is, your customers will tell you when prices are too high. They don't buy."

The exception to Marciel's rule is pricing items that are advertised competitively, or on items that have a high public price awareness.

On sale items, Marciel advised nursery owners to use irregular endings. "If your usual price is \$22.98, mark down to \$20.77. Otherwise the customer won't perceive it as a sale."

He offered a number of other specific tips, among them:

- a customer appreciation day in which everything in the store is 10 percent off;

- on bidding landscape jobs, figure in special handling characteristics of some plants, for example, bougainvillea;

- your gross profit should be at least 55 percent;

- regularly throw out poor quality plants. "I used to demand that our people throw out six to eight percent of a plant display every day. I want customers to reach into a bunch of four-inch petunias with their eyes closed, and get a quality plant every time."

- guarantee your plants by replacing those that don't make it. "In 25 years we replaced less than \$25 in bedding plants."

The "Farmer"

For the final session of the LAN-MNA conference, an overflow crowd sat and stood along the edges of the meeting hall at the Jackson Ramada Inn on a Sunday afternoon. Perhaps they were there to hear how to make a million dollars in the nursery industry. On the other hand, perhaps they were there to make two thousand dollars on the drawing that culminated the meeting.

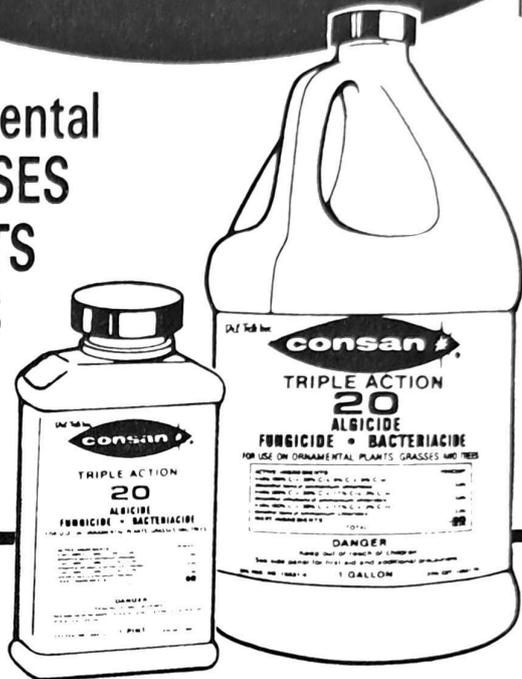
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Nursery magnate Bill "Farmer" Meadows took the microphone and disappointed no one. The title of his talk was, "How I made \$1 million a year in the Nursery Business."

"I really didn't make a million dollars a year in the nursery industry," he began. "Last year I made more than two million. But if I had said two million you wouldn't have believed me and you might not have stayed to hear this talk."

The "Farmer" allowed that he had a need for a lot of attention, and among the slides that illustrated his talk were:

- himself in a full-length mink coat, next to his chauffeur-driven limousine;

- his prize bull posed on halter next to a suitably bovine lass, in front of his 13,000 square-foot home;

- his staff on the beach at Puerto Rico and in a ski lodge, for planning retreats.

"My situation is so much different than all of yours, because I make

so much more money than you do," Meadows said. "Don't copy everything I do, but take some ideas home," Meadows advised.

The "Farmer's" background was not farming but coaching. He said he loved coaching and lost only three football games in 10 years, "but I realized that, if you love it all, perhaps you should go with what pays the most."

He got a start in retailing by opening vegetable stands in the summers, staffed by students. He made more over the summer than in a whole year of teaching. This led him eventually to the nursery business.

"From coaching I knew that, as long as I was full of surprises, I always won." He created some surprises with his approach to garden centers.

"Every business should offer a quality product, price and service. But everybody was doing that. I decided to kick out service. We have the best plants and the best

price, and the worst service in the D.C. area.

"We're volume-oriented. We struggle to keep prices down."

Of Marciel's stratagem to seek margins, not volume, Meadows smiled, "He's got his way to win and I've got mine. He almost convinced me to raise prices. But he'll come to the D.C. area and I'll kick his —."

Meadows' two dozen nurseries are almost entirely self-service. Customers are given huge shopping carts—at least four times the size of a large grocery cart—and turned loose to fend for themselves.

"I like big carts, narrow aisles, and people fightin' and pushin' and shovin'," Meadows said. He allowed that "I wouldn't shop at a place like this. I'd go down the road where I'd get better service. Too often we run a business as we'd like it personally."

If Meadows doesn't push a cart around, plenty of others do. He showed several slides of completely

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full parking lots, and sales areas packed with people. "I like it when a big tall dude with a stick meets cars at the entry and waves them away because the lot is full.

"You've got to have a happening at your nursery; let people dream. At Christmas we have a Santa walking around, and high school choirs that sing carols. We sell hot dogs and hamburgers, and encourage people to stay and have a picnic with us."

More than 90 percent of the stock at Meadows Farms Nurseries is green goods; less than 10 percent hard goods. Meadows moves so many plants, representatives from the big wholesale growers hang out at his garden centers to see what people are buying: instant market research.

On his office door Meadows has the words: *Thinking, Planning, Winning*. He offered many ideas that have worked for him:

- Have fun with your employees.

The crazier you act, the more likely your employees are to offer that good suggestion they might not offer to a more conservative manager.

To that end, he showed slides of a belly dancer he hired to cheer up the troops who had to work an extra Saturday morning.

- Evaluate ads with coupons to see if they're working.

- Put an extra \$20 in a cash register to see if your register checker returns it to you.

- The secret of good management is to take the management out of management. Do all your decisions at the corporate level and let managers follow them through memos, manuals and printouts.

- Pay managers according to production.

- When politicians offer to buy your property, don't take the offer.

Meadows said he wanted to take a \$300,000 offer on a nursery, but held out. He received several more offers and learned that a planned development would eventually raise his property value significantly. He later was offered \$3.3 million.

- Hire nervous, enthusiastic excitable people; business majors, not horticulture majors.

- Make your customers feel a part of your success. "I stop them as they're about to leave the parking lot and say, 'Thank you for being a Meadows Farms person.'"

Meadows advises doing this only near the exit of the parking lot, lest you get locked into a long discussion.

- Put your parking lot behind the nursery, so customers will have to drive by all the plants on their way to park.

- Do a lot of copying. Never do trial and error. "We copy successful people, like Pike's in Atlanta.

- "We close our nurseries in January and February, rather than lose money keeping them open."

Meadows said he has been so much in love with everything he's done, "I don't remember ever going to work."

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Silverbell

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If you would like a great, medium size tree with plenty of pendulous white flowers in spring and golden autumn leaves, try Silverbell. You won't see it planted much, but it should be. Odenwald and Turner (1987) indicate that it's an excellent substitute for dogwood where dogwoods won't grow.

Silverbell has several other common names including Two-winged Silverbell, *Halesia*, Snowdrop-tree and Cowlicks. Brown (1945) also reported that it's one of several plants called "Possum Haw" because the fruits are "pleasantly sour and ed-

ible when green."

It belongs to the *Styracaceae*, or Storax, family and is scientifically known as *Halesia diptera* Ellis. (*Hortus Third* 1978). Formally it was known as *Mohrodendron diptera* Britt. (Rogers 1924), but probably more correctly spelled *M. dipterum* Brit. (Bailey 1950). Older references may list it as *Mohrodendron* rather than *Halesia*.

It is primarily a Gulf Coast species, ranging from East Texas, throughout Louisiana and including a small grove in Southwestern Arkansas. The range continues eastward through Southern Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Northern Florida and finally extending into South Carolina. A few groves also extend into Northern Alabama and Geor-

gia (Little, 1977).

With such a southern range, one might expect it to be relatively cold sensitive but Dirr (1983) reported that it withstood - 25°F temperatures in Cincinnati. Bailey (1950) and Rogers (1924) reported that it is hardy no farther north than Philadelphia, and both Krussmann (1984) and Vines (1976) indicated that it has been cultivated in Europe. Foote and Jones (1989) also reported that the silverbells are commonly seen in gardens in the British Isles.

Silverbell prefers a rich, moist, acid, sandy soil along streams or bottom lands or on sandy slopes. It's not naturally found along the Mississippi River floodplain, however (Brown 1972). It can grow in

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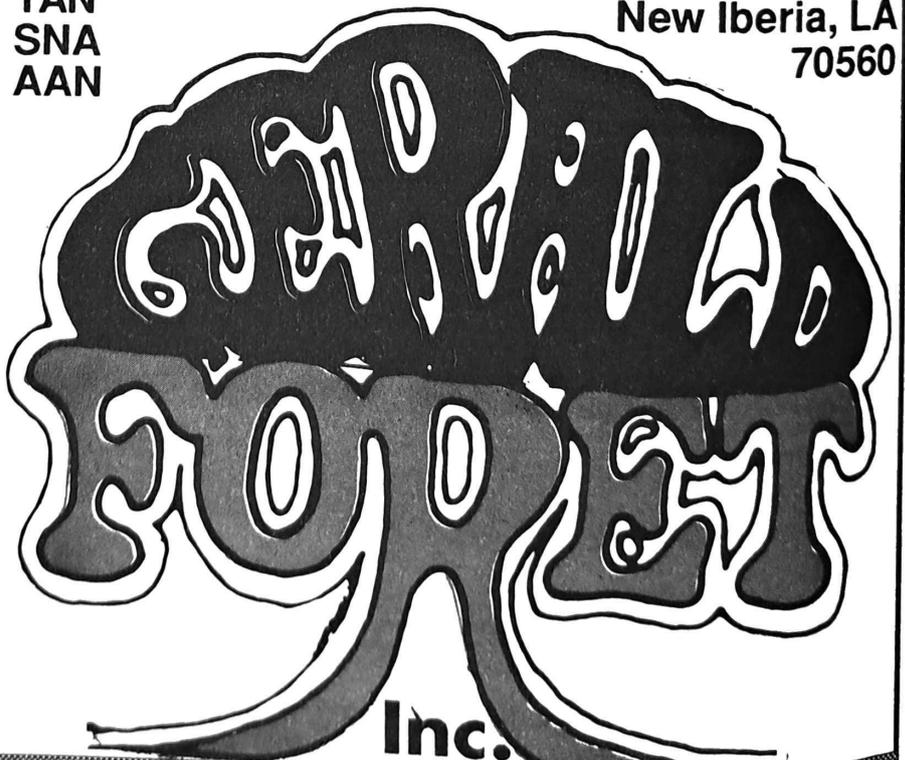


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full sunlight, where it'll bloom best, or in shade. Obviously flowering will be sparse in dense shade. I've seen plenty of them growing along the sandy Pearl River banks and several are growing quite well in heavy soil in the Wild Garden at Longue Vue House and Gardens in New Orleans. Apparently it's not too fussy about soil type. Also they transplant easily (Bailey 1950, 1978, Dormon 1965, Odenwald and Turner 1987).

Do not prune Silverbell until after it has flowered. Flowers are formed on previous year's wood and pruning them during the dormant season will reduce flowering.

It expresses a medium to fast rate of growth and will reach about 30 feet high and spread to around 25 feet (Odenwald and Turner 1987). Cocker and Totten (1937) reported a tree at River Junction, FL that measured 8 inches in trunk diameter and 35 feet tall. However, several authors reported that it often is little more than a shrub. I observed this shrubby nature along the Pearl River due to extensive damage done by beavers. They were spindly plants.

From a landscape point of view, it has a rather rounded crown, it's often multi-trunked and it's a relatively clean tree. According to Odenwald and Turner (1987), another outstanding feature is the "special effect created below the canopy when sunlight strikes the thin, translucent foliage." It often blooms before the foliage and the drooping, white, bell-like flowers are a treat to behold in spring.

Silverbell displays irregular branching and a medium, coarse texture with medium to light density. It can be used as an understory or a specimen tree. Or it can be massed to create a grove with open, filtered light below—a great canopy for naturalizing bulbs.

The deciduous leaves of *Halesia diptera* are alternate, simple and are usually 2 1/2 to 5 inches long and 1 1/2 to 4 inches wide. The elliptical to ovate leaves are abruptly long pointed at the apex, or they may be rounded. The margins are finely saw-toothed or finely and irregu-



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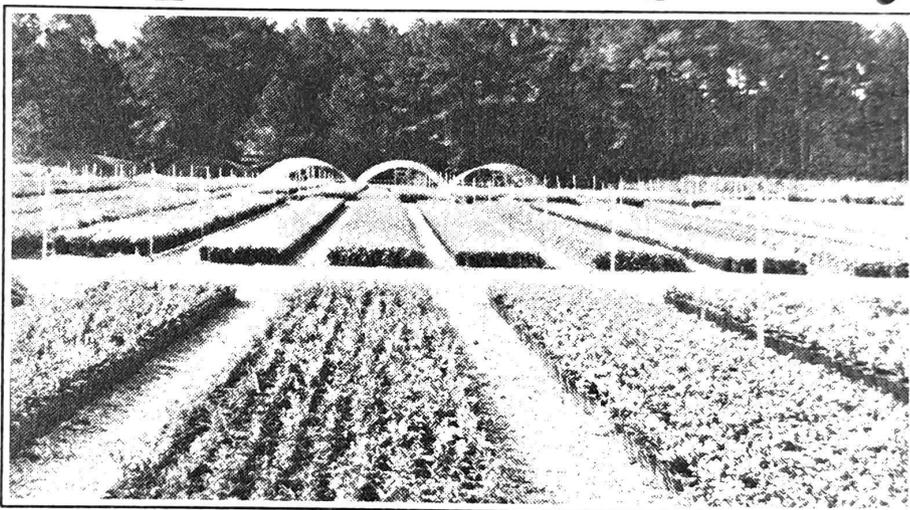
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larly serrate—sometimes entire. The leaf color is bright green above and more or less glabrous. Below it is pale green and soft-pubescent with tiny, star-shaped hairs. The veins on the above side are pale, raised and very conspicuous.

The leaf petioles are $1/2$ to $3/4$ inch long, slender, light green and hairy.

The bell-shaped, deeply 4-lobed, one inch long, white, perfect flowers arise from the axils of the leaf scars before or at the same time as the leaves appear. Flowers form in clusters of 2 to 6 on slender pedicels from previous year's twigs just in back of new leaf buds. The white corolla is covered with fine hairs and the style equals the corolla which separates it from other *Halesia* species. Brown (1945, 1972) reported that they typically flower in Louisiana from February to April.

The fruit is two-winged—thus the name Two-winged Silverbell. It is ellipsoid or oblong and pod-like. It is usually $1\ 1/2$ to 2 inches long and green during summer, but later turning brown and hard in autumn. The fruit is botanically a drupe (Dirr 1983, Vines 1976).

The seeds are stony, closed, ellipsoid, rigid, about $3/4$ inch long, tapered at the ends and maturing in autumn. The haploid chromosome number is $n=12$ according to Radford et al (1976).

Silverbell twigs are slender, light green and hairy when young, later turning gray to brown. The leaf scars are raised and heart-shaped. The bark is thin, brown to reddish brown to sometimes gray with irregular fissures and scaly ridges.

For color photographs of bark, flowers and leaves consult Brown (1972), Duncan and Duncan (1988), Little (1988) and Timme (1989).

You can propagate Silverbell by seeds, layers, root cuttings or soft-wood cuttings in spring or fall (Bailey 1950, Vines 1972). If seed propagation is the method of choice, it will take two years or longer for germination due to immature em-

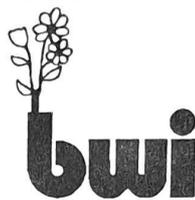
bryos and a long after-ripening, followed by cold to break dormancy. Collect seeds in late fall or early winter. The wings may be removed but it's not necessary. According to Nokes (1986), air drying after harvest prevents mold and storage may be accomplished by placing seeds in a sealed container and stored in the refrigerator. To initiate treatment, Vines (1972), recommended stratification in sand or peat at tempera-

tures between 56° and 86°F for 60 to 150 days. This should be followed by a 2 to 3 month cold storage at between 33° and 40°F .

With this procedure Vines (1972) indicated that the average germination was 53% and it took from 30 to 80 days for completion.

Dirr and Heuser (1987) also indicated that if seeds are planted in fall, it would take two years for germination. They recommended

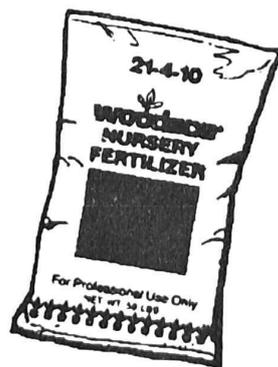
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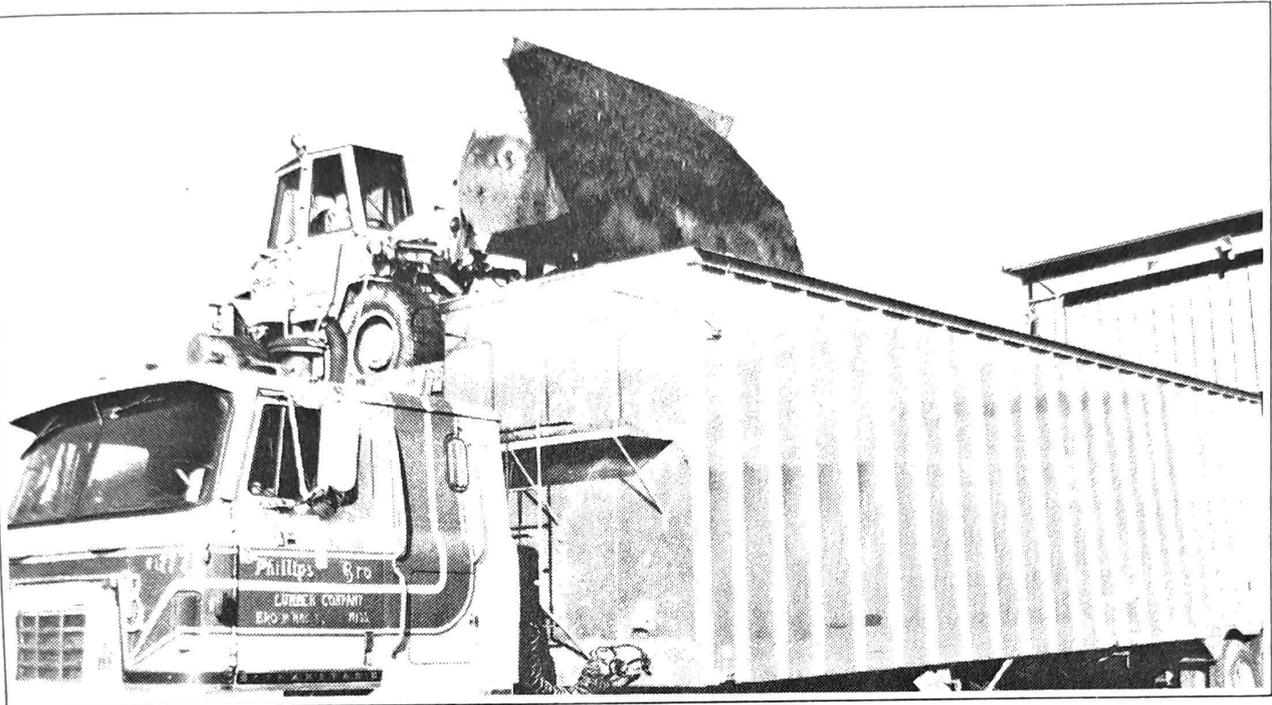
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a 3 month cold period followed by 6 months of warm temperatures followed again by 4 1/2 months of cold. According to them, radicles develop during the last cold period.

Nokes (1986) recommended pretreating Silverbell seeds to warm moist stratification at temperatures between 60° and 75°F for three months followed by three months of cold storage at temperatures between 33° and 41°F. Nokes (1986) also indicated that cold stratification alone may be sufficient for germination.

For root or softwood cuttings, Nokes (1986) recommended soaking them in IBA (25 mg/l for 20 hours) then placing them under intermittent mist in a part sand, part peat medium.

Several varieties of Silverbell were described by Duncan and Duncan (1988). *H. diptera* var. *diptera* has corollas 1/3 inch to 2/3 inch long. Two references, Duncan and Duncan (1988) and Krussmann (1985), described *H. diptera* var. *magniflora* Godfrey. Duncan and Duncan stated that the corollas of this variety were 2/3 inch to 1 1/4 inches long. Krussmann (1985), on the other hand, stated that the flowers were 3/4 inch to almost 1 1/5 inches long. He further indicated that it was found in North Florida in hilly woodlands and was more attractive and floriferous than the species. Krussmann (1985) has a lovely black and white photograph of it taken at the Hillier Aboretum in England.

The green, immature fruit is eaten by squirrels and other wildlife (Little 1988, Vines 1976). Thill (1983) found that neither deer nor cattle browsed on Silverbell foliage at any time of year. So it apparently is not a preferred browse species. Odenwald and Turner (1987) indicated that Silverbell attracts hummingbirds while in flower.

Very little information was found on insect attack other than Vines (1976) stating that it was not subjected to attack. In pursuing it further, Dr. Dale Pollet, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service entomologist, stated that he had not

observed an insect problem on Silverbell.

The *Index of Plant Diseases in the United States* (1960, U.S.G.P.O. Washington, D.C.) listed *Halesia* spp., especially *carolina* and *H. tetraptera*, with no mention of *H. diptera*. However, a *Cercospora* leaf spot was reported, as well as about seven branch and twig infections and a wood rot. None seem to be very serious. Dr. Clayton Hollier, Louisiana Cooperative Extension

Service plant pathologist, reports not observing a disease problem with Silverbell.

As far as availability is concerned, it's scarce. Heather Taber at Oak Haven Farms Nursery and Garden Center, 18377 Blythe Rd., Prairieville, LA 70769 (504)622-1058 has one and three gallon containers of them.

We need more nurseries in the state to propagate this plant because it is often recommended as a

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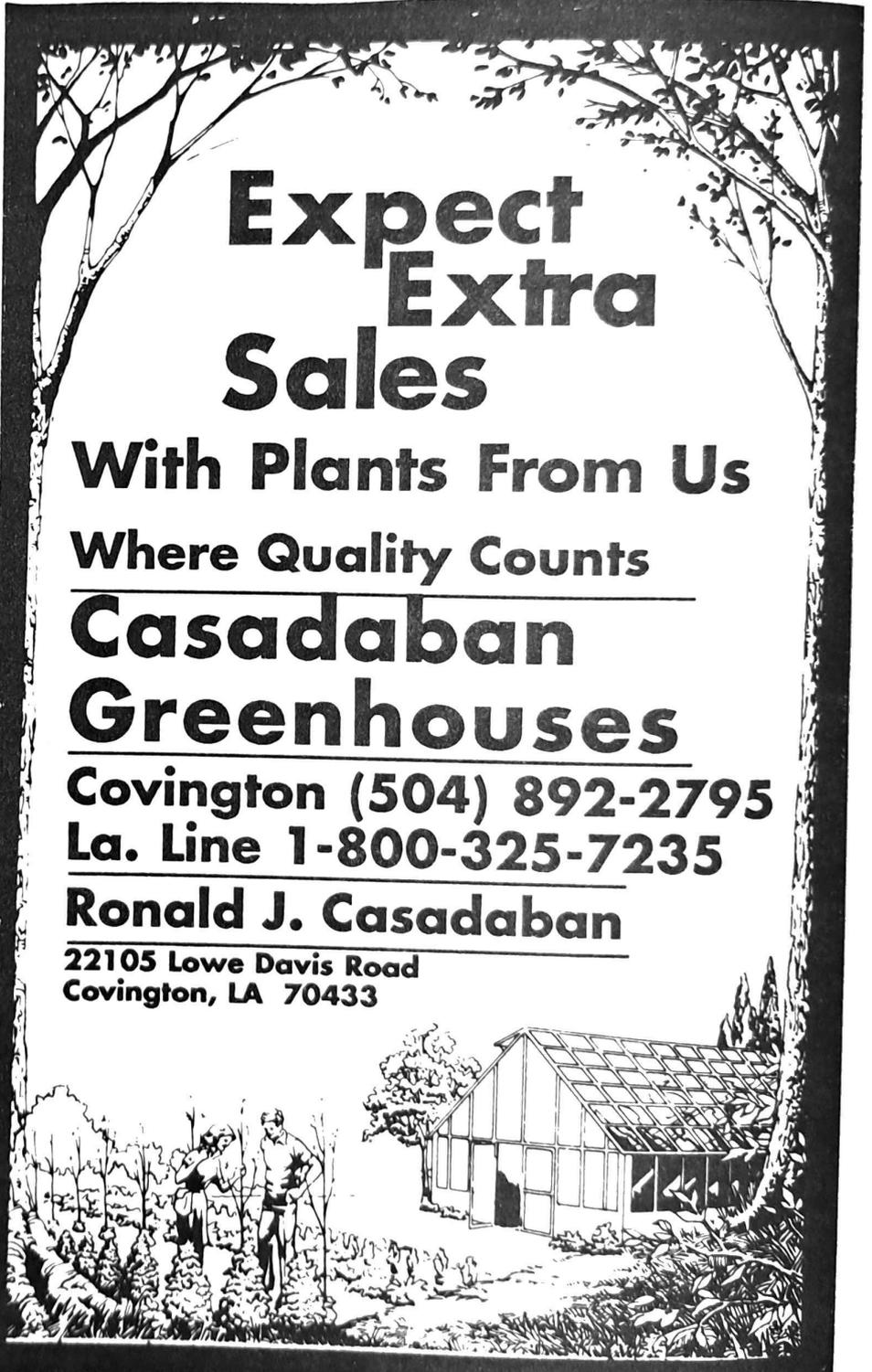
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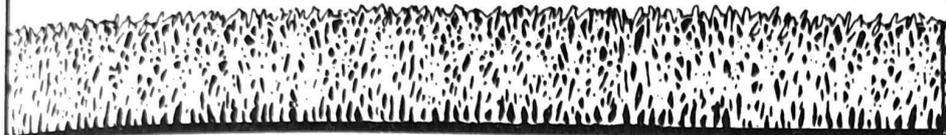
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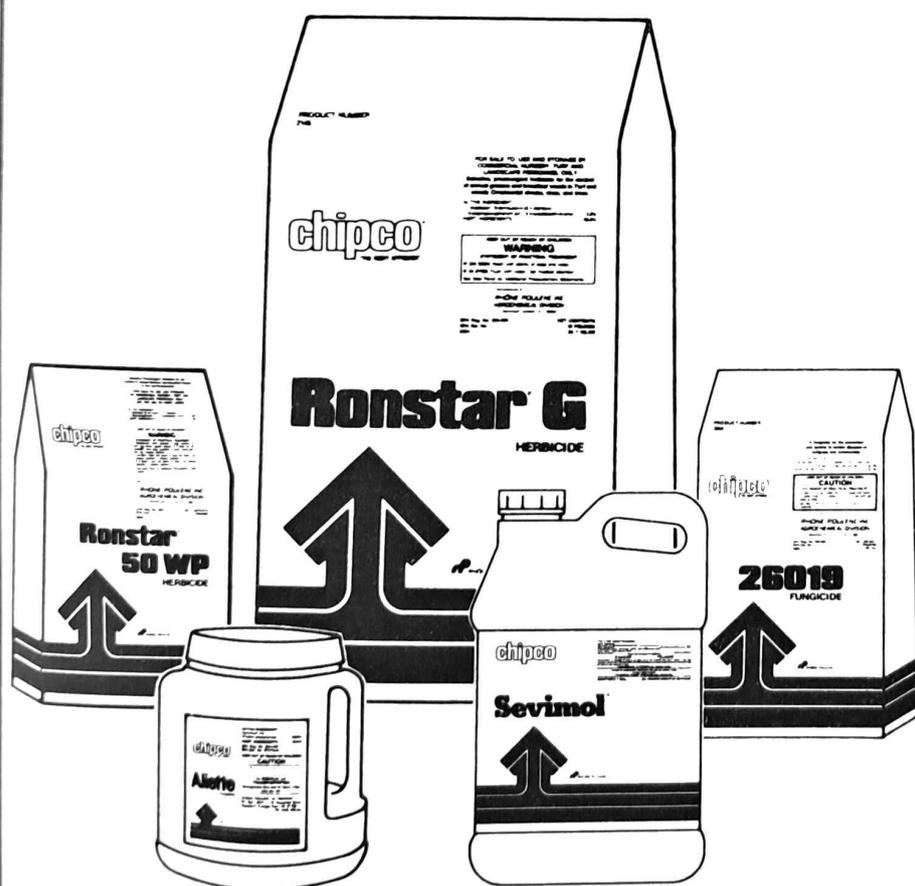
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small tree. Many landscape architects specify this plant but often have to substitute another one in its place because of no availability. If you would like to see a mature specimen of it, come visit Longue Vue House and Gardens. Several are planted in the Wild Garden and they look simply magnificent.

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Mrs. Annie LeBlanc



Dr. Warren Meadows

D. A. LeBlanc wins Nurseryman of the Year award

D. A. LeBlanc of Abbeville won the Nurseryman of the Year award posthumously. Mrs. Annie LeBlanc (above) accepted the award on her late husband's behalf.

An enthusiastic plant lover who enjoyed his work immensely, LeBlanc made his mark both in horticulture and in the military. Only a month before the LAN award, he was honored by the Louisiana National Guard by having the Abbeville Armory renamed the LeBlanc Armory.

D. A. served in Europe with the Army during World War II, after which he devoted almost 30 years to the National Guard.

His love of plants began while he was working for the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. He began his nursery by moonlight, while serving in the National Guard by day. He studied horticulture at

the University of Southwestern Louisiana, and apprenticed under Youngville nurseryman Joe Vallor.

D. A. made his first lath house with chicken wire and Spanish moss, but by 1950 he could afford to build an eight- by sixteen-foot greenhouse.

In the early years Annie managed the nursery by day, and D. A. took over in the afternoons and weekends.

After he retired from the Guard in 1981, he was able to devote full time to the nursery. Two years later he was joined by his son Leslie and daughter-in-law Denise.

D. A. is survived by Annie and by four children and five grandchildren. He once said, "I can't remember a time in my life when I didn't like flowers and I've rarely met a person who didn't get hooked on gardening once they've tried it."

J. A. Foret Award goes to Dr. Warren Meadows

Dr. Warren Meadows won the Dr. J. A. Foret Award for his long years of unselfish, unassuming, practical, helpful service to the nursery industry. Meadows, who took over as LAN secretary following Foret's retirement from that post, is head of the LSU horticulture department and director of the Burden Research Center. In 1989 he received the Researcher of the Year award from the Southern Nurseryman's Association.

Under his leadership LAN merged its annual short course with the Mississippi Nurserymen's Association. Attendance at that annual conference has more than tripled.

The conference included concurrent sessions for growers, retailers, landscapers, greenhouse growers and, in 1989, landscape architects.

LAN has grown in total assets to more than \$100,000. Two sizable endowments fund annual research projects and scholarships.

Meadows hosts the annual nursery field day at the Burden Research Center, and directs much of the nursery-related research there.

At the 1990 LAN-MNA short course, Meadows indicated he would continue in his (unpaid) secretary's role for at least a few more years.

Meadows is a native of Ennis, Louisiana. His brother, the late Sidney Meadows, was also a leader in horticulture in the South.

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