



Southeast Texas Nursery Growers' Association Newsletter

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Volume 10 Issue 5

May 2010

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A Word from President... Steve Johnson

Well, another month has flown by. From what I am hearing from other growers, April has been a strong month for sales. Hopefully the month of May will be just as good.

A few weeks ago we held a dinner meeting at Luigi's Ristorante Italiano. The attendance was good and I thank everyone that showed up. We were treated to an excellent speaker in P.J. Ellison of Ellison's Greenhouses, Inc. I think that everyone who attended felt a little more inspired after hearing her speak.

Before the guest speaker we had a little time for discussion between the membership and Board Members. We discussed a few ideas that the Board Members are going to present in the next couple of months.

The first item on the agenda was the directory. After much debate and discussion, and after hearing from several members, the Board has decided to have the next directory ready for mailing January 1, 2011. This way, it will be available for our tradeshow. This will also give members plenty of time to get ads ready and to proof them before the final print.

The second item discussed was something new that the Board is piecing together. We are going to introduce a membership package for 2011. We are still in the beginning

phase, so nothing is set in stone. However, the principle of the membership package would be to include different tiers of membership. For members wishing to purchase membership and a larger directory ad space, this package would give those members a chance to pay for everything up front at a better value than if all were paid for separately. And for those members only wishing to purchase a membership, there would be a tier for that as well. — Nobody will be asked to pay for more than they want, but the option will be available to pay for several items with one check up-front. As always, if you have thoughts on this or any other items the Board is working on, we would like to hear from you. You can always call me at the farm, or call the STNGA number and Jenni will pass your message on to the Board.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Joe Davenport for his help in setting up our dinner meetings, speakers, and farm tours. I want to let Joe know that he is greatly appreciated! —And speaking of farm tours, don't forget to come out next weekend (May 8th) to Enchanted Trees of Texas. Jack Fitzgerald's nursery is one you don't want to miss!

Thanks,
Steve

Ask Texas AgriLife Extension Service

By Anthony Camerino, D.P.M.

Question:

What is causing a mysterious dieback that is occurring on my wax myrtle? It occurs on an entire stem (usually only one or two in a plant) and it dies back to the ground? There is no apparent damage from insects and no discoloration in the wood suggesting a fungus or bacteria. Unfortunately, it has not been occurring very long so death of the plant overall has not been witnessed.

Answer:

When branches start dying back to the ground the roots and/or vascular system should be inspected to determine the cause of the problem. Vascular wilts may not always produce obvious discoloration of the wood. For the sake of this article we will assume a vascular wilt is not the culprit. To check for a root system problem, pull the plant out of the container, dissect the root system and then visually inspect. I recommend gently washing away the soil to cause as little damage to the root system as possible. Do you see lots of white healthy roots with root hairs or do you have darkened slimy roots without root hairs?

Assuming the dieback started this year I would look for specific root trauma. As many of you told me at the 2010 STNGA Nursery and Landscape Show you had extended periods of freezing temperature this past winter. Many of you had plants with frozen root balls for 24 hours or more. It is likely that the root ball temperatures dropped several degrees below 32° F.

While wax myrtles are adapted to our climate, frozen root systems may not be something this plant is ready for. This is especially concerning given the fact that soil temperatures fluctuate more rapidly in containers than the ground giving the roots little time to acclimate to lower temperatures. Generally speaking roots are less able to acclimate to fluctuating temperatures than above ground plant tissues.

If you examine the hardiness range for wax myrtle and the average soil temperature fluctuations in that same area, you will find that a wax myrtle's entire root system is not normally exposed to freezing temperatures. It is possible that many small roots died because of freezing temperatures. While a reduced root system is not a problem early in the year, as temperatures warm up the plants need more water. Wilting, die back, or reduced growth rate in a plant are symptoms of root damage. A common response is to irrigate and fertilize more.

Extra irrigation and damaged roots are a combination that encourages infection by root decay fungi. Excessive fertilizer, severe drought, too much water and inappropriate herbicide application can also damage roots. Root rots, similar to vascular wilts, often show symptoms of die back on individual stems.

Other things that I have seen that can cause dieback in a plant include girdling roots and plants planted too deep in containers.

If you suspect a plant disease is the cause of dieback, I encourage you to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Plant Diagnostic Laboratory and discuss submitting a sample for analysis. Their website is: <http://plantclinic.tamu.edu/>

The North Carolina Extension Service has a publication on preparing a container nursery for winter. See: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/ag454b.html>

** Dr. Camerino answers your nursery and horticulture questions on a quarterly basis. If you have a question, send it to Jenni at info@stnga.org and it will be forwarded to him.

Marketing Meets Inspiration at the April Dinner Meeting

On April 14, 2010, twenty-five members and guests arrived at Luigi's Ristorante Italiano in Northwest Houston. Luigi's did not disappoint! The food was delicious, and the staff strived for excellence. The owner, Miguel, is a breath of fresh air in this day and age!

As Steve Johnson mentioned in his President's letter, there was a meeting before the speaker to inform the members on some topics being discussed. The directory and membership package were top on the agenda. To see more, you can read Steve's letter on the front page.

After the meeting and the meal, PJ Ellison, of Ellison's Greenhouses, Inc., stood up to deliver an inspirational message regarding the new norm in business and how it should affect your marketing strategies. The marketing that was working for your business five, ten, twenty years ago will not work for your business today. The sooner you embrace the new norm, the sooner you will begin working toward the future.

PJ places an emphasis on the value of her customers. Consumers want to feel valued and want a high level of service. If you treat your customers right, they will return. Live your life being an everyday **HERO** to everyone around you: using **H**umility and **H**onor, **E**nthusiasm, **R**ighteousness, and **O**ptimism.

In order to market your business, you need to remember why you got into this business in the first place. What was your drive back then? Find a new way to invigorate that passion in the business you love! With a bit of inspiration and drive, you can develop new ways to highlight your business and attract customers.

Directions to Enchanted Trees of Texas 30933 Waller Gladish Road, Waller Texas

From Downtown Houston:

Head west on US290 toward Hempstead. When you get into Waller, take a right on FM 362. Take a left on FM 1488, and then another right on FM 1736. FM 1736 turns into Waller Gladish Rd (continue straight at fork). Stay on this road until you see Enchanted Trees of Texas on your left. (If you run into FM 2979, you've gone too far and need to turn around!)

From The Woodlands area:

Travel west on FM 1488 until you reach FM 1736. Take a right on FM 1736. FM 1736 turns into Waller Gladish Rd (continue straight at fork). Stay on this road until you see Enchanted Trees of Texas on your left.

From Katy area:

Take I-10 west until Brookshire. In Brookshire, take FM 359N to FM 362. Merge onto FM 362. Continue on FM 362 past US290. Take a left on FM 1488, and a right on FM 1736. FM 1736 turns into Waller Gladish Rd (continue straight at fork). Stay on this road until you see Enchanted Trees of Texas on your left.

Jack Fitzgerald's Cell Phone (in case you get lost): 281-734-2174

May 2010

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Nursery Growers'
Association**

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We are on the web!
www.stnga.org



"Dedicated to the Highest Professional Standards of the Nursery Industry"

Upcoming Events/Notices...

Look forward to the following STNGA events your Board
of Directors has planned for you:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| * May 8 | Saturday | Enchanted Trees of TX Farm Tour |
| * August 20-22 | | TNLA EXPO San Antonio |
| * Sep/Oct | Saturday | TBD Nursery/Farm Tour |
| * November | Wed, Nov 10 | Dinner Meeting with Speaker |
| * December | Wed, Dec 08 | Annual Dinner Meeting/Election |

The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
