

Digger

JULY 2020

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crape myrtles

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On the cover: Customers looking for a large, dense crape myrtle will appreciate Ruffled Red Magic™ (*Lagerstroemia* 'PIILAG-VII' PP27303). PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY

On this page: Left: Crape myrtle is easy to propagate and several varieties have been developed and introduced by Bailey. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY. Right: *Marchantia polymorpha*, also known as liverwort, is a nuisance on nurseries that Oregon State researchers are trying to control. PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA



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Wilsonville, OR 97070

PH 503-682-5089 PORTLAND
PH 888-283-7219 NATIONWIDE
FAX 503-682-5099 MAIN OFFICE
FAX 503-682-5727 PUBLICATIONS
info@oan.org EMAIL
www.oan.org WEB
www.diggermagazine.com NEWS BLOG

STAFF

Jeff Stone jstone@oan.org
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 503-582-2003

Beth Farmer bfarmer@oan.org
COMMUNICATIONS & WEB DESIGN MANAGER 503-582-2013

Bill Goloski bgoloski@oan.org
PUBLICATIONS MANAGER 503-582-2009

Curt Kipp ckipp@oan.org
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS 503-582-2008

Zen Landis zlandis@oan.org
EVENT & EDUCATION MANAGER 503-582-2011

Allan Niemi aniem@oan.org
DIRECTOR OF EVENTS 503-582-2005

Stephanie Wehrauch swehrauch@oan.org
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION 503-582-2001

DIGGER

Curt Kipp ckipp@oan.org
EDITOR & DISPLAY ADVERTISING 503-582-2008

Beth Farmer bfarmer@oan.org
E-DIGGER PRODUCER 503-582-2013

Bill Goloski bgoloski@oan.org
ART DIRECTOR & CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING 503-582-2009

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2019-2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jim Simnitt
PRESIDENT
Simnitt Nursery
138 NE 22nd Ave.
Canby, OR 97013
simnittnsy@canby.com
503-266-9640
FAX 503-263-6330

Kyle Fessler
PRESIDENT-ELECT
Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc.
13009 McKee School Road N.E.
Woodburn, OR 97071
sales@woodburnnursery.com
503-634-2231
FAX 503-634-2238

Josh Robinson
VICE PRESIDENT
Robinson Nursery Inc.
P.O. Box 100
Amity, OR 97101
josh@robinsonnursery.com
877-855-8733
FAX 503-835-3004

Todd Nelson
TREASURER
Bountiful Farms Nursery Inc.
17280 Boones Ferry Rd. N.E.
Woodburn, OR 97071
info@bountifulfarms.com
503-981-7494

Mike Hiller
PAST PRESIDENT
KCK Farms LLC
11483 SE Amity-Dayton Hwy.
Dayton, OR 97114
mike@kckfarms.com
503-864-9422
FAX 503-864-4412

Denece Messenger
SECRETARY
Decorative Bark Products
P.O. Box 1198
Tualatin, OR 97062
denece messenger@comcast.net
503-510-4029
FAX 503-859-3764

Wes Bailey
MEMBER AT LARGE
Smith Gardens Inc.
23150 Boones Ferry Road N.E.
Aurora, OR 97002
wes.bailey@smithgardens.com
503-678-5373

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Brewer
ASSOCIATE MEMBER
HC Companies Inc. ProCal
tbrewer@hc-companies.com
503-686-8448

Adam Farley
CONTAINER GROWER
Countryside Nursery
afarley@countrysidenursery.com
503-678-0511

Ron Kinney
CONTAINER GROWER
Monrovia
rkinney@monrovia.com
503-868-7941

Amanda Staehely
CONTAINER GROWER
Columbia Nursery
amandastaehely@gmail.com
503-810-2598

Jesse Nelson
FIELD / BARE ROOT GROWER
Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery Inc.
jnelson@hansnelson.com
503-663-3348

Chris Robinson
FIELD / BARE ROOT GROWER
Robinson Nursery Inc.
chris@robinsonnursery.com
877-855-8733

Jay Sanders
FIELD / B&B GROWER
KG Farms Inc.
jsanders@kgfarmsinc.com
503-678-3245

Lorne Blackman
GREENHOUSE
Walla Walla Nursery Co. Inc.
lblackman@wallawallanursery.com
509-522-9855

Ben Verhoeven
GREENHOUSE
Peoria Gardens Inc.
benv@peoriagardens.com
541-753-8519

Gary S. English
RETAIL
Landsystems Nursery
gary@landssystemsnursery.com
541-382-7646

OAN takes a financial hit

I miss baseball.

Due to concerns related to COVID-19, the start of the Major League Baseball season was postponed. I'm hopeful there will be some baseball games before the end of summer. I'm not a die-hard fan by any means, but I played a lot growing up. Summer was a time for batting gloves, infield practice and tournaments.

The other summer constant for me has been Farwest Show. It is always good to see customers and friends from across the country in our home state. But this year is different. Following orders from the State of Oregon prohibiting large gatherings through September, the Farwest Show had to be canceled. This will be the first time that the OAN will not produce our industry-leading trade show since it was founded in 1973.

The COVID-19 pandemic's effects have hit all industries in varied ways. For the most part, Oregon nurseries have survived the economic disruption. Wholesale nurseries have been able to work throughout stay-at-home orders, and garden centers have done brisk business as people spend more time at home.

Where the effects have been disproportionate is at the trade association level. The OAN, like many non-profit trade associations, is financially supported by trade shows and conventions. With the forced cancellation of the Farwest Show, the OAN is taking a much bigger financial hit than a lot of the members are enduring during this crisis.

The loss is similar to a crop loss in agriculture, where a lot of time, effort, and budgeting is put in, and then the fruits of that labor never materialize. We see losses like this in ag from weather events, economic downturns, or pest and disease outbreaks. Unlike nurseries, however, there is no insurance for a loss like this to the association.

The face-to-face marketing our businesses receive from the trade show is only part of the benefit the association brings to our industry. The OAN helps keep markets open throughout the country and Canadian provinces. This was most evident this past spring as shipping lanes, counties, and states were threatening to close due to the crisis. The OAN stepped up and was an integral part in keeping our shipping and selling season moving.

The OAN advocates on our behalf at the state and federal level. With this being an election year, it is imperative that we have a strong voice at all levels of government to protect our ability to work and run our businesses as we see fit. With the economy in recovery mode, every small business will need the support. The OAN brings the associated members together to collaborate and share ideas. Some of the best education can come from conversations with fellow growers and retailers.

Because of the success of the Farwest Show, the OAN is able to provide these core functions on our behalf. That's why I appreciate those who rolled their booth commitment into next year, and particularly those who turned their booth payments into a donation to the association. Some have made additional financial contributions to the OAN and I hope others will join them. Your grace and generosity will help see the association through these dark times. Thank you.

Face-to-face business interactions will return after the pandemic is under control. The Farwest Show will be back stronger than ever next year.

My friend and fellow nurseryman Mark Krautmann has said multiple times that "The Farwest Show is like a family reunion."

It truly is. Next summer it will be great to see our friends from across the country again in Oregon at the 2021 Farwest Show. ☺



Jim Simnitt
OAN PRESIDENT



Northwest News

OAN members and chapters are encouraged to send in relevant news items, such as new hires, new products, acquisitions, honors received and past or upcoming events. Email news@oan.org.



Federal regulators allow drivers to count load time as a break

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has revised the hours of service (HOS) regulations to provide greater flexibility for professional drivers.

Of the many changes, the revised rules allow on-duty periods where drivers aren't behind the wheel – such as when waiting for a shipment to be loaded – to qualify for the 30-minute break required after eight hours of driving time. The administration has also expanded the short-haul exception to 150 air miles and allows a 14-hour work shift to take place as part of the exception. Two hours were also added to the driving window during adverse driving conditions.

The rule also modifies the sleeper berth exception, where qualifying periods of off-duty rest will not count against the 14-hour driving window. Read the complete rules online at tinyurl.com/y7o3u7ts



GOV. BROWN TALKS COVID-19, ECONOMY WITH OAN LEADERS

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown discussed the current and future state of the Oregon economy and the COVID-19 pandemic during a Zoom meeting with Oregon Association of Nurseries leaders June 4. Taking part were members of the OAN Board of Directors as well as the OAN Government Relations Committee.

“I am greatly concerned about the status of our economy and what it’s going to take to literally dig our way out of this hole,” Brown said. “It’s important that iconic Oregon industries have the support and resources that you need going forward.”

Brown said that there will be a budget shortfall in the current biennium as well as the next one. “Unlike the federal budget, the state is required to balance our budget,” she said.

The main challenges continue to be the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting loss of Oregon jobs. “We have 400,000 people out of work,” she said. “It is more than double what we saw during the Great Recession.”

The state is starting the process of making budget cuts, she said, including not filling vacant positions, ending non-essential travel,

imposing furlough days at state agencies, and laying people off from lottery-funded agencies (lottery revenue has plunged).

OAN members urged the governor to consider the burdens on small businesses. “What keeps me up all night is, I’m worried about what’s ahead,” said **Denece Messenger**, OAN board member and owner of **Decorative Bark Products Inc.** in Tigard. “I’d ask you be sensitive to small, family owned businesses. We’re concerned about the accumulative burden of taxes.”

Several members thanked the governor for permitting nurseries to continue operations when other economic sectors were shut down. “We’ve made it through all right through this pandemic, thanks mostly to being allowed to stay open,” said **Ben Verhoeven**, OAN board member and owner of annuals grower **Peoria Gardens** in Corvallis.

Members also reassured the governor they take worker and customer safety seriously.

“We all want the best,” said **Barb Iverson**, owner of **Wooden Shoe Bulb Company** and **Iverson Family Farms** in Woodburn. “We want our employees to be safe, our families to be safe, our customers to be safe. It’s always in the back of our mind that what we do may not be good enough.”

More COVID-19 coverage online

Further updates on how the COVID-19 virus is impacting the greenhouse and nursery industry is online at www.diggermagazine.com/category/coronavirus. We are reporting on the most current information as of press time, but please check online for the most up-to-date information.



Previous page: Oregon Governor Kate Brown met with members of the OAN Government Relations Committee and OAN Board of Directors over Zoom.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OAN

KOTEK, OAN LEADERS DISCUSS COVID-19 REGULATIONS

In a meeting with OAN leaders June 5, Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) said that Oregon has successfully kept COVID-19 infection rates lower than neighboring states, thanks to strong leadership and cooperation.

“It’s not just the people at the state doing this,” she said. “It’s every Oregonian who has stepped up and taken ‘stay home, save lives’ seriously.”

The meeting took place over Zoom, and included members of the OAN Board of Directors as well as the Government Relations Committee. It gave members the opportunity to talk about the issues they are encountering during the pandemic.

Josh Robinson, OAN board member and co-owner at **Robinson Nursery** in Amity, noted that his nursery has lost

many of its inefficiencies due to social distancing requirements. This makes a difference because the nursery has five crops in rotation at any given time.

“If things don’t get done on time within each of those plants destined for shift up or sale, the plants become unusable for shift or sale, so they become junk,” he said. “One foot of growth lost on a tree is \$3-4, and we do 600,000–700,000 a year.”

Robinson said that the nursery does as much as it can to protect employees, and for that reason, he is tired of seeing an employer vs. employee narrative in some quarters.

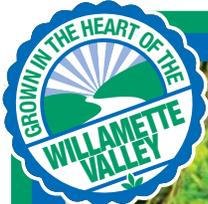
“I feel like we are one of the biggest assets these guys have,” he said. “They are safer than they would be out in the general public.”

Kathy LeCompte, co-owner of

Brooks Tree Farm in Salem, produces seedlings in bulk, with low margins. She said during the recovery, protecting small businesses will be essential.

“We have already brought up our concerns about additional taxes, higher fees, higher licensing costs,” she said. “I’m more than a little concerned we’re going to hear, ‘You’re still alive, let’s tax you more.’ I know how desperately the state needs us, but many of us, we are just getting crushed with one devastating blow after another.”

Wes Bailey, an OAN board member who manages the **Smith Gardens** location in Aurora, noted his operation has gone to great lengths to meet requirements. The greenhouse operation has five break rooms and numerous restrooms. To clean these before and after each break, it has doubled its janitorial staff, and to protect



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Northwest News

IGC Show canceled the 2020 experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTO COURTESY OF IGC

employees it has put them on different shifts. Use of cleaning supplies has skyrocketed.

Smith had curtailed its use of conveyor belts as part of streamlining its production processes, but had to pull them out of storage in order to socially distance the workers.

Bailey asked Kotek to consider a review of scheduled minimum wage increases due to the recessionary impact of the pandemic. “I would rather see more employees working than less employees working and businesses going under,” he said.

OAN President **Jim Simnitt** told Kotek about the shipping challenges nurseries encountered this spring. The OAN and the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association led the charge in creating a national map showing which industry segments were open or closed in each state or Canadian province, and that’s not all the OAN has done. “It’s been huge how nurseries have turned to the association for information,” he said.

Simnitt mentioned that the OAN took a financial hit from COVID-19 due to the cancellation of the Farwest Show.

“We feel strongly about the association and it’s now more important than ever to be able to lean on a group,” he said.

Kotek said she appreciated hearing the specifics from growers. She also alluded to the fact that COVID-19 isn’t the only challenge Americans are facing these days. There also have been widespread protests over policing issues following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

“It is a transformative time and the stress level is way, way up,” she said.

“Anyone living in the United States is feeling it, no matter what. We are only going to get through this if we listen to each other and collectively come up with good ideas.”

CAP AND TRADE OFF THE TABLE FOR 2020 SPECIAL SESSION

Any prospective short session of the Oregon Legislature in 2020 to deal with the fallout of COVID-19 is likely to also touch on substantive policy issues, but proposed cap and trade legislation will not be one of them, Oregon House Minority Leader



Christine Drazan (R-Canby) told Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) leaders in a Zoom conference on June 1. The meeting included members of the OAN board and Government Relations Committee.

Drazan said she’s been assured by Democrats the cap-and-trade proposal will not be brought up. Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) confirmed the same in a conference with OAN members June 5, saying that majority Democrats will instead let Gov. Brown’s climate change executive order play out.

The climate change legislation derailed the Legislature’s February session, with Republicans refusing to be present and provide a quorum to do business.

According to Drazan, Democratic leaders are looking at borrowing money to keep programs going, including what she called “pet projects,” and have not ruled out additional taxes. Drazan said that she would prefer to make “surgical” cuts to the government. “We can’t tax our way to prosperity,” she said.

Members provided Drazan with a legislative want list, which included technical fixes to the corporate activity tax to allow for cash accounting, a freeze in the scheduled minimum wage hikes, no legislation to ban the pesticide chlorpyrifos, and just generally an end.

“I feel like we’re working harder for less and we already had a pretty small margin,” said OAN President Jim Simnitt, who is an owner at Simnitt Nursery in Canby, Oregon. “Costs, meanwhile are going up ... The economy next year is an unknown. We’re trying to plan this year for next. Our crops are even further, three

or four years down the road. I’m really starting to get nervous for next year.”

Drazan said she expects a true economic depression as a result of the pandemic. “Pent up demand for consumer spending will provide a bit of a float, but we need to avoid permanent damage,” she said. “We can’t mess around with the fundamentals.”

2020 IGC SHOW IN CHICAGO CANCELED

The IGC Show 2020, originally scheduled for August 11–13 in Chicago, Illinois, has been postponed until next year, according to a report from GIE media. State regulations that limit large gatherings prevent the possibility of any convention or trade show in Illinois to take place. IGC Show management will update attendees and exhibitors through their website, www.igcshow.com, with important information regarding the change as they negotiate next year’s show with the City of Chicago, McCormick Place, and other partners.

OSU DISCOVERS SOURCES OF GALL DISEASE STRAINS

In partnership with USDA Agricultural Research Service, **Oregon State University** (OSU) researchers have sequenced 140 strains of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* — the bacterium that causes crown gall disease — and discovered the plasmids all descended from only nine lineages, according to a release from the university. More than 100 commercially sold species of nursery trees



Lumpy, rough growths on the grape trunk are symptoms of crown gall disease.

PHOTO BY LYNN KETCHUM, OSU

ARTIFICIAL SNOW BACTERIUM DAMAGES BLUEBERRY CROPS

Researchers from **Oregon State University** have found evidence that *Pseudomonas syringae* — a commonly found bacterium used to create artificial snow — has damaged many of spring's blueberry blossoms in Western Oregon. Used by ski resorts, a protein in the outer bacterial membrane quickly helps ice form at low temperatures. The spring's cold, wet nights caused freeze damage on blueberry crops in production fields. Read more details on the OSU Plant Clinic blog at osubpp.com/plant-clinic.

down to below normal levels by late summer, leading researchers to believe there is a 65% chance of neutral weather for the winter season, according to a report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center. Forecasts for an El Niño event — a period causing drought conditions and crop damage in the Pacific Northwest — drop to 10% by the end of the year. The conditions of the La Niña phenomenon grow to 45% toward the end of the year. Read the report online at tinyurl.com/w6qn3y3.

and products are susceptible to the disease, and this discovery teaches growers how bacteria move through nurseries and how the plasmids move among bacteria.

The study was published on the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) website and is available for download for a fee from tinyurl.com/y9s9g8py.

NO EL NIÑO/LA NIÑA EXPECTED FOR WINTER

The Pacific Ocean equatorial temperatures are forecast to steadily cool

LOW WATER LEVELS EXPECTED THIS SUMMER

Despite a wet May, most waterways in Oregon will remain low this summer, according to a report by *Capital Press* >>

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Northwest News

(Salem, Oregon). The final water supply outlook by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) stated that by June, most basin areas received 75–99% of total precipitation averages. Northeastern basins of Grande Ronde, Powder, Burnt, Imnaha, Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Willow received more than of their average rainfall, whereas Klamath, Lake County, and Goose Lake basins only received between 67–68% of their average. Warm temperatures in April accelerated snowpack melting, so water levels will likely remain low through September.

Announcements

BAILEY HIRES BRAND REPRESENTATIVE

Heather Poire has been appointed as a brand representative for **Bailey's** brand management team, according to a release from the company. The new position will provide independent garden centers with consumer marketing resources and tools for Endless Summer® Hydrangeas, First Editions® Shrubs and Trees, and Easy Elegance® Roses products. Her goal is to streamline the use of Bailey's consumer brands with licensed growers and retailers.



Poire was previously the territory sales representative for the Northeastern U.S. for Bailey for eight years.

HRI LAUNCHES RESEARCHER INTERVIEWS, WEBINAR SERIES

The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) is offering a series of online interviews and webinars with researchers to help businesses connect grow and develop. The free series, tHRive, will cover HRI- and federally-funded research and will remain available all year. Five pre-recorded mini-webinars are available now on www.hriresearch.org/thrive-web-series.



ASABE PUBLISHES NEW IRRIGATION TEST STANDARDS

The American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) recently released a new standard for testing soil moisture sensors used to control landscape irrigation, according to a report by the Irrigation Association.

The new standard has been published as ANSI/ASABE S633 Testing Protocol for Landscape Irrigation Soil Moisture-Based Control Technologies. This standard defines a procedure to test a soil moisture sensor and interface device's response to changes in soil moisture conditions. The test procedure covers soil water content (volumetric) and soil water tension (matrix potential) sensors. The new standard provides a method using two different soil media — one to represent moderately coarse soils such as sandy loam and the other to represent moderately fine soils similar to a silty clay loam or clay loam soil. To obtain a copy of the standard, contact ASABE headquarters at orderstandard@asabe.org.

JACKLIN SEED SENDS WRONG GRASS PRODUCTS

Jacklin® Seed, a business unit of **J.R. Simplot Company**, learned that they had been sending out incorrectly labeled grass seeds for many years and will be compensating customers for the error, according to a release from the company. The company has launched an investigation and has terminated the employees responsible for the mislabeling.

The mislabeled seeds were of similar grass varieties or comparable quality to the ones that were distributed. Jacklin Seed has inspected their inventories for accuracy and made sure labels meet state and federal regulations. The company will refund distributors and customers who received the wrong seeds. The incorrect labeling also impacted the shipments of turf seed products to four countries in the European Union. All sales have ceased, and the company will work with each country's regulators to resolve the problem. ©

Search engine optimization: Helping customers find you

PREVIOUSLY, I OFFERED some tips on putting your website to work for you. This month, I'm back to help make sure your website can be discovered by search engines, such as Google, which is vital to helping both customers and other businesses find you on the internet.

The primary goal of search engine optimization (SEO) is to make sure that when users are looking for your nursery or wholesale business, your name comes up high on the search engine results page (SERP). This makes you more visible to a greater number of internet users and, generally, increases the traffic to your site. It's organic, there are no fees or payments involved, and it can drastically improve your business.

Here are five things you can do to help the search engine bots, spiders, and crawlers locate and index your site to ensure the best results possible when customers are looking for the specific services you offer:

Add a site map to Google search console. As a rule, search engines won't have any idea that your site exists unless you give them access to your site map. This allows search engines to crawl and index your website, which is crucial to having your site appear in search engine results. You can use a tool, such as the Yoast plug-in for WordPress, to create the sitemap, then index it through Google Search Console.

Always add meta titles and meta descriptions to all of your pages. In order for Google to present the best possible search results to a user, it needs to know what content you have on your page. This is why your metadata is important — it's the high-level information that Google looks for when they connect users to your site. The key metadata elements you'll need to address are:

Title: This title will be displayed at the

top of the browser window and will also appear as the headline on the SERP. The length limit for a meta title is 60 characters.

Description: The description shows up on the SERP and tells users what the page is about. Ideally, some of your keywords should be used, but only if they are an accurate part of the page description.

The length limit for a page description is 160 characters.

Add alt-tags to all your images. Alt-tags are alternative text descriptions that are used to describe any images, videos, or visual media on your pages. They

tell Google what your images are about, which benefits you on the SERP and also increases your chances of showing up in image search results. Additionally, alt-tags visually allow impaired customers to access your site via screen readers. This is an important part of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and can also enhance your SEO efforts.

Improve your site speed. Believe it or not, Google actually cares how long it takes your site to load. There's data that shows if your site takes longer than 3 seconds to load, you might be losing almost half of your visitors.

Here are a couple of things that can affect your load times:

Image file size – Large images take longer to load than compressed images and can slow your site loading time. Compress and optimize your image files to make your site load faster.

Use a CDN (content delivery network). CDNs are groups of servers that are distributed geographically. Working together, they're able to speed up the delivery of your content.

Script handling – Certain types of scripts, such as JavaScript, can add substantial weight to your site's speed. However, JavaScript can also be important



Shelly Weasel

Shelly Weasel is the web lead for Pivot Group, a Portland-based marketing and customer experience (CX) agency that helps clients engage their customers through research, marketing, and training.

to your site for a variety of reasons, both aesthetic and functional. Your goal should be to make sure you minify its use as much as possible.

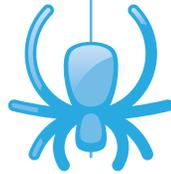
Make your website mobile responsive. You may remember this suggestion for improving your website for users from last month. Guess what? It's also important for SEO.

Google penalizes sites that aren't optimized for mobile devices because more than 55% of all Google searches originate from mobile devices. Consequently, Google reviews your website's mobile responsive behavior and adds that to its ranking calculations. If you want to find your customers or, more importantly, have them find you, making your site mobile responsive is a must.

Good SEO practices are changing all the time — sometimes five tips just aren't enough. For that reason, I'm including a sixth bonus tip you should keep in mind:

Update your content regularly. Search engine crawlers are always looking for new content and improvements. Letting your content grow stale is a sure-fire way to lose ground in the SERP. Make sure that you're touching, adding, tweaking, and improving your pages regularly — at least once a week for your most frequently visited pages.

Follow these seeds of advice and you'll be well on your way to growing your web presence and enhancing the digital side of your business. ☺





Purple Magic™ (*Lagerstroemia*
'Purple Magic' PP23906

PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY

Rikki Tikki Rouge (*Lagerstroemia*
indica 'SMNLING' PPAF)

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Creative crape myrtles

Covering many climates and color options, *Lagerstroemia* is a reliable seller for growers

BY TRACY ILENE MILLER

LAGESTROEMIA (CRAPE MYRTLE) IS thought of as a southern U.S. plant, yet it is on the City of Portland street tree list and has grown in Oregon for more than a century. A pair of crape myrtle Portland Heritage Trees can be viewed at **Van Veen Nursery** in Portland.

Southerners cherish it for its blooms, heat tolerance and four-season interest, according to Paul Bonine, co-owner and grower at the retail nursery **Xera Plants** (Portland, Oregon). It is a valuable addition to the landscape and garden, especially for those interested in late-season blooming plants. More recently, gardeners and landscapers of both the northeastern and southern U.S. are finding more uses for existing crape myrtle. The plants that made their mark a generation ago and those introduced recently by breeders are serving the market by showing a wide palette of forms and growth habits, proven disease resistance, extended bloom period and suitability for colder climates.

In exploring the plant's best uses and the varieties that are receiving attention, no discussion is possible without first mentioning the woes of *Lagerstroemia*'s common name.

Is it one word, crapemyrtle?

Or two words with an "e" in "crepe" or an "a" in "crape" instead? There is no definitive ruling right now, although "crape myrtle" and the one word "crapemyrtle" seem to dominate, and "crepe" creeps in, depending on what you're reading.

Some references that have settled on one word can end up either splitting the one word into two in different places, or mixing

up the "e" version with the "a" version — often on the same page. Media sources tend to use more "crepe" than the horticultural and research sources, which tend toward "crape" or the one word "crapemyrtle." For the purposes of this article, we're using two words and an "a."

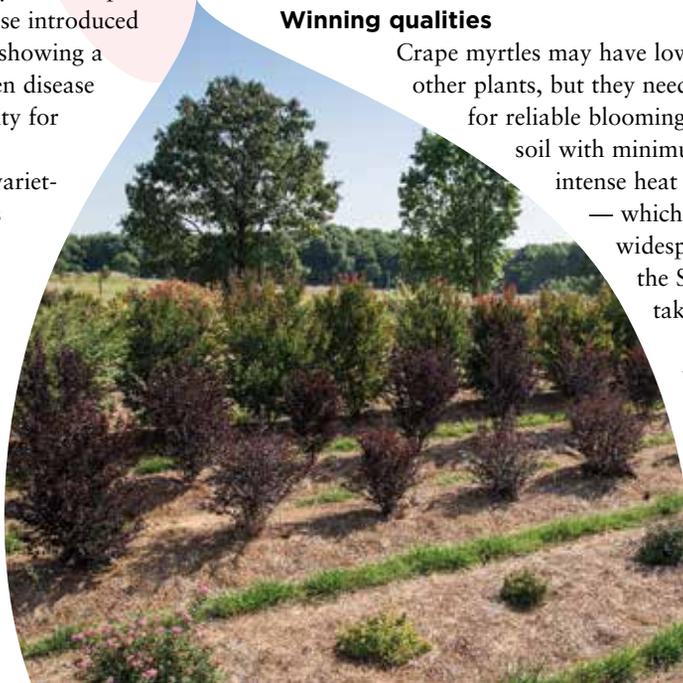
The confusion with crape myrtles may lie not only with the name, but their habit as well. The same hybrid can be listed in one source as a tree and another as a shrub. Crape myrtle can be trained to a single or multibranched habit. Many varieties are identified as being candidates for gentle pruning to keep them smaller, even as they naturally mature to be a larger tree.

Winning qualities

Crape myrtles may have lower water needs than other plants, but they need regular irrigation for reliable blooming. They thrive in soil with minimum nutrition and in intense heat and sun conditions — which accounts for their widespread popularity in the South — but only take off with watering.

"They need water for best performance," Bonine said. "They are not drought-tolerant like *Manzanita*."

"Slowly designers and other pros are



Previous page, bottom: Bailey propagates and trials crape myrtle for desirable traits.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY.

learning how these trees grow and what they need in the Willamette Valley,” said Carol Lindsay, a Portland-based residential landscape designer. “They have so much to offer.”

Lindsay said the heat- and sun-loving qualities help clarify crape myrtle’s winning attributes. From a designer’s point of view, in competition with other trees for sun, like *Styrax* (snowbell) or *Heptacodium* (seven son flower), crape myrtle is a winner, especially for its four-season color and year-round interest. Clients know those terms and use them when filling out her questionnaire, she said.

“This tree has got it all: blooms, bark, amazing sinuous beauty when mature and when bare, the beauty of the shape, plus so many sizes and shapes of the tree,” Lindsay said. Crape myrtle also works with other plants, allowing for an

understory design, unlike other trees such as *Magnolia*.

“And if that isn’t a good enough selling point, we can talk about the leaves that just evaporate,” Lindsay said. The leaves degrade in place after dropping in fall; they just “melt.” Other attractive qualities: Crape myrtle have a shallow, fibrous root system so they don’t lift sidewalks; they have a svelte caliper; are magnets for pollinators; and the older they get, the freer they bloom, blooming earlier in the year.

They just need heat — the hottest location possible in Pacific Northwest gardens paired with regular water. Each crape myrtle needs a certain number of days above 85 F to bloom reliably here, according to Bonine. Xera Plants only sells ones that are on the lower end of that spectrum. Plus, they pair well with other

heat-loving plants because they don’t have greedy roots.

“The average homeowner, they think they need arborvitae, by why not crape myrtle?” Lindsay asks.

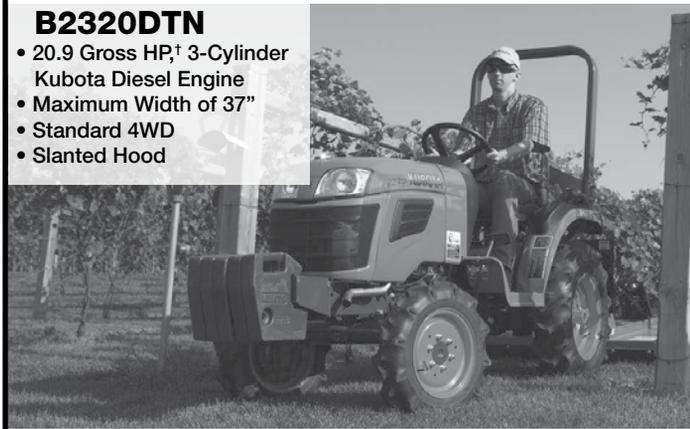
Placement of crape myrtle can also be versatile. With mature heights ranging from a few feet up to 20–25 feet, and putting on a show during all four seasons, crape myrtle can work as a focal point, outside a kitchen window, for example, or as a screen between small urban plots. Crape myrtle overall tend to be fast growing, at about 1–3 feet per year minimum, until they reach their ultimate height, when they slow down.

As trends go, “we’re seeing a lot of interest in smaller varieties, which makes sense as a lot of the new developments are packing more houses into the same spaces,” said Justin Hancock, senior direc- ➤

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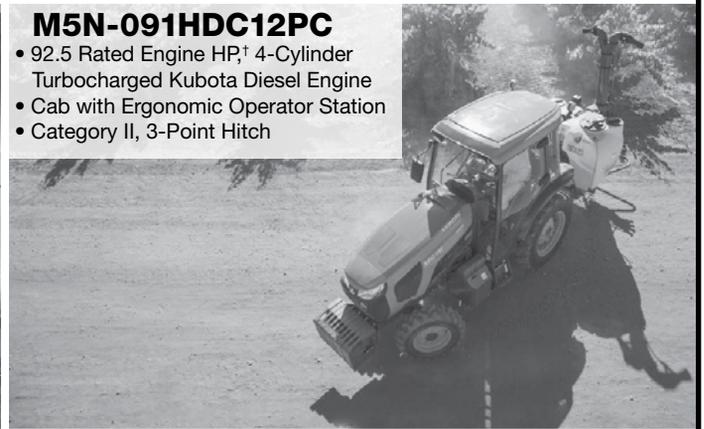
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Creative crape myrtles

tor of marketing at **Monrovia Nursery** (Dayton, Oregon). His nursery sells 20 varieties of crape myrtle.

The Monrovia Petite series (USDA Hardiness Zone 7–9) of fast-growing shrubs fills that niche, maturing at a manageable 5-feet by 4-feet and ranging in bloom colors from white (*Lagerstroemia indica* ‘Monow’ Petite Snow™ crape myr-

tle) to deep rosy-red (*Lagerstroemia indica* ‘Moners’ Petite Embers™ crape myrtle).

Bellini® Grape (*Lagerstroemia indica* ‘Congrabel’ PP28975) is another dwarf variety that deserves a second look, according to Hancock. It has many early-blooming dark lavender flowers on a compact, cold hardy (down to Zone 5), low-mounding 3–4 feet tall and wide habit.

Groundbreaking Egolf hybrids

The top selling varieties at Monrovia are *Lagerstroemia indica* × *fauriei* ‘Tuscarora’ (dark coral pink bloom; 20–20-feet by 10–15 feet; Zone 6–9); *Lagerstroemia indica* × *fauriei* ‘Natchez’ (white bloom; 20–20 feet by 10–15 feet; Zone 6–9); and the semi-dwarf *Lagerstroemia indica* × *fauriei* ‘Tonto’ (fuchsia; 8 feet by 8 feet; Zone 6–9).

All three varieties were released between 1980 and 1990 from the breeding program at the National Arboretum (Washington, D.C.) run by the late Donald Egolf. In the interest of creating more disease-resistant and cold-hardy plants, Egolf crossed *L. fauriei* from Japan for its cold hardiness with *L. indica* from the Himalayas in Asia. Egolf’s work led to 20 introductions, named after Native American tribes. When introduced, they almost instantly began to dominate the market, and still do today.

“All the old varieties were mildew prone,” Bonine said. The hybrids were not.

‘Natchez’, a straightforward white bloom with attractive bark, joins *Lagerstroemia indica* × *fauriei* ‘Muskogee’ (another introduction by Egolf, in 1978) as continual bestsellers. ‘Muskogee’ has a light lavender bloom, and a bigger, taller form at 30 feet, ‘Natchez’, ‘Muskogee’, and ‘Tuscarora’ are all highlighted on the City of Portland street tree list.

With its very low heat requirement for blooming, *Lagerstroemia indica* × *fauriei* ‘Cheyenne’, the last release in the Petite series, is matched well to the western Oregon climate, according to Bonine. Raspberry-red blooms grow on large trusses from July to September. Bred with *L. indica*, *L. fauriei* and *L. limii*, the globose tree matures 8 feet tall and wide over 12 years. It displays reddish to chocolate-brown exfoliating bark as it ages, and orange to red leaves in fall. Another in the series, *L. fauriei* ‘Pecos’, larger at 15 feet, is equally well-adapted to western Oregon. It bears large pink flower trusses with the same showy bark and fall foliage of maroon to red.

Monrovia has had an uptick in production in the last few years of two others from the National Arboretum series: *Lagerstroemia indica* ‘Catawba’ (dark purple blooms with bronzy spring foliage; 15 feet by 14 feet; Zone 7–9), and ‘Arapaho’, (red blooms and maroon-tinged foliage; 20 feet by 10 feet; Zone 6–9), which Lindsay uses in her designs



Lagerstroemia indica × *fauriei* ‘Natchez’
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More recently, for its white bloom, Lindsay has specified a sister seedling of 'Natchez', *Lagerstroemia* 'Sarah's Favorite' (introduced by Tom Dodd Nursery in Semmes, Alabama), which some are calling an improved 'Natchez'. The mature height is smaller, reaching 18–20 feet tall. Its fall foliage comes in earlier and is more orange-red, the flowers are upright and the bark is more orange than rust.

Whitcomb introductions

According to Bonine, newer introductions have capitalized on Egolf's success with mildew resistance, yielding cultivars with varying forms and brighter bloom colors of *Lagerstroemia indica*.

Such varieties include the true red Dynamite® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit II' PP10296, 15–20 feet by 10–15 feet),

introduced in 1997 by another prolific crape myrtle breeder, Carl Whitcomb (Lacebark, Inc. in Stillwater, Oklahoma).

"When that came out, it became the second most popular crape myrtle, second to 'Natchez'," Bonine said.

Then came Red Rocket® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit V' PP11312, 15–20 feet by 10–15 feet, Zone 6–9), another Whitcomb introduction. It is a fast grower at approximately 5 feet per year, but a smaller tree that makes it a good option for smaller plots, according to Lindsay. The same goes for the newer and also smaller *Lagerstroemia indica* 'Centennial Spirit' (18 feet by 9 feet, Zone 6), introduced by Oklahoma State University. It blooms into October; rose-red blooms in cooler weather and richer red at hotter temperatures.

For a smaller stature, the popu-

lar semi-dwarf Double Feature® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit IX' PP23559; 4 feet by 4 feet; Zone 7–10) sports wine-red spring foliage that turns to green. It starts showing blooming ruby-red flowers in July and then continuously through frost off the same scape. "They're popular, relatively new and work in the Northwest," Bonine said.

"The industry sees a high demand for red flower color," said Megan Mathey, ornamental plant breeder at **Spring Meadow Nursery** (Grand Haven, Michigan), a wholesale shrub liner nursery and developer and distributor of Proven Winners® ColorChoice® shrubs.

Spring Meadow continues to add new Whitcomb varieties to ones it already >>



Red Rocket® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit V' PP11312)

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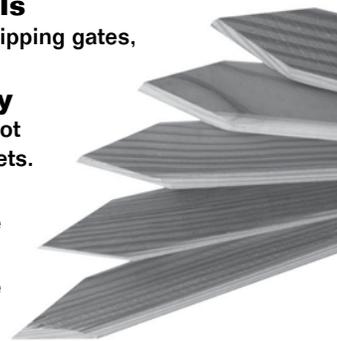
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Creative crape myrtles

sells, like the recently introduced Double Dynamite® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit X' PP27085), with vibrant flowers in a cherry-red color (8–10 feet by 8–12 feet, Zone 7-10) that never seeds, so it blooms all season.

Spring Meadow breeding efforts

In 2007, Spring Meadow embarked on its own breeding program, interested in matching disease resistance and full-flower coverage with winter hardiness, to bring crape myrtle farther north.

By 2014, the Proven Winners Infinitini® series of compact shrubs, 2–4 feet tall and wide, was introduced from genetics developed by Mike Uchneat of Garden Genetics (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania), the inventor of the Wave® petunia.

"He was doing something different," Mathey said. "He was making harsh selections, and everything had to bloom that first season."

As a result, Infinitini plants — in white, pinks and purple — can handle the heat and the cold, even dying back in winter and coming back in spring.

"We conservatively list these varieties as Zone 6, but they have survived over seven winters in one of our Zone 5 test sites," Mathey said.

Then came the Rikki Tikki® series, in pink and ruby-red (with more colors to come later), developed by Mathey. It is in an intermediate size of 3–5 feet tall and wide — still compact — with burgundy new growth in spring, summer-long blooms, and a cold tolerance down to Zone 6. As well, Rikki Tikki Rouge (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'SMNLIMG' PPAF) summer foliage matures to a contrasting red, silver and green.

High demand for crape myrtle is still centered in the southern U.S. up to the D.C. area, according to Mathey. However, these colder, hardier types are creating some demand as far north as Ohio. Mathey expects that northern market will continue to develop.

"People in the North just don't believe they can grow crape myrtle," Mathey said. "But they will."

Even as the nursery focuses on breeding cold-hardy types, there is the duality of crape myrtles like Infinitini Watermelon® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'G2X133181' PP29007). It is a favorite of Mathey's for its bright fuchsia-pink flowers, that works as a good foundation plant in the heat of the South, as well as a good dieback shrub in the North that returns each spring.

Bailey breeding efforts

In Kansas at one of Bailey's locations, Natalia Hamill, brand and business development manager, also promotes crape myrtle as a dieback shrub. "It is used as summer color, blooming in the absolute heat of summer, in fierce conditions, when others have cycled out of bloom," she said.

Bailey has locations in Kansas, Minnesota, Illinois, Washington and Georgia, and two in Oregon. While liners and cuttings of crape myrtle are grown at various locations, all crape myrtles sold as finished plants are produced at the Yamhill, Oregon nursery, said David Roberts, general manager and head breeder at Bailey Innovations™ (Winterville, Georgia), home of Bailey's breeding and trialing programs.

Bailey uses "crapemyrtle," one word, the same adopted by the National Arboretum and breeder Michael Dirr

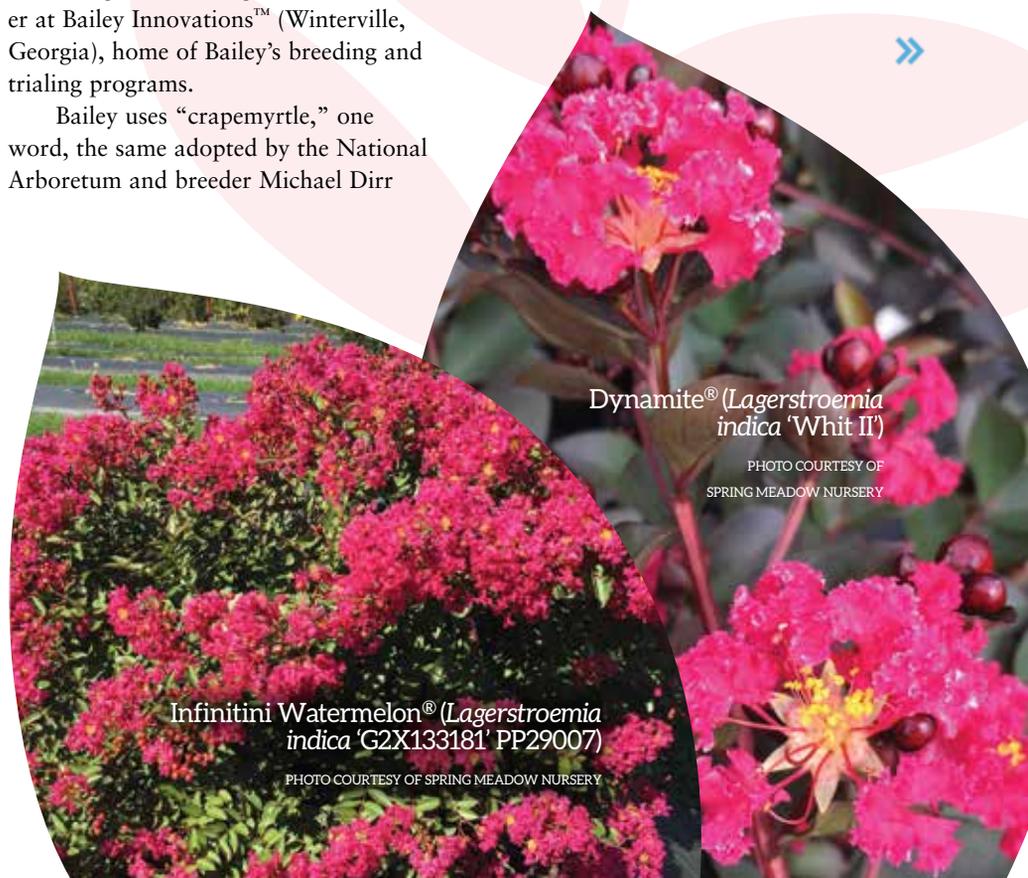
of Plant Introductions Inc. (PII) in Watkinsville, Georgia. Bailey in 2015 acquired PII, where several crape myrtles had been developed and introduced between 2013 and 2016 under the Bailey First Editions® Magic line.

Since the PPI purchase, Bailey has retained several crape myrtles in its line that were steady sellers and replaced others. According to Hamill, it included a mix of green-leaf and dark-leaf varieties.

"Crape myrtle is easy to propagate," Roberts said. "You can take a cutting, and within a season have a saleable plant. They're susceptible to a few diseases and pests, but nothing like rose."

One determination for whether Bailey will add more varieties going forward is disease resistance, especially to *Cercospora* leaf spot, which crape myrtle is susceptible to, as well as powdery mildew. They also want better or different features, like dark leaf, reblooming, and a longer bloom season.

"For anything we introduce, we want to be able to talk about how this plant is significantly better and why," Hamill said.



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

PHOTO COURTESY OF
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Infinitini Watermelon® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'G2X133181' PP29007)

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Creative crape myrtles

Roberts believes the market is still focusing on a few forms and types of crape myrtle, like ‘Natchez’, which is used widely because it is one of the most popular ones grown to large sizes. But the diverse sizes and forms — including egg, umbrella and fastigate, and a wider range of leaf and flower colors in the last 10 years — offer the opportunity to better fit crape myrtle to a specific space.

‘Natchez’, for instance, is much taller than other varieties. According to Roberts, this leads some homeowners to commit what’s commonly called “crape murder” — the unceremonious lopping off of the tree’s top. Sometimes it’s done to maintain a smaller size and other times under the mistaken belief that this hatchet job increases the number of blooms, when in actuality it weakens the plant and ruins its shape.

Black leaf crape myrtles

With the Magic series, Bailey worked to provide a range of sizes and habits to choose from, including several with leaf color so dark they are almost considered black — a trend in crape myrtle breeding.

Black leaf varieties gained a foothold in breeding beginning with a Mississippi State University discovery that was patented in 2009 as *Lagerstroemia* × ‘Chocolate Mocha’ PP21540. With dark leaves that did not fade into summer, it first came to market as Delta Jazz™ after licensing by Plant Development Services Inc. (Loxley, Alabama).

Cecil Pounders then developed the unpatented Ebony series, which is the source of the Black Diamond® series developed by J. Berry Nursery (Grand Saline, Texas). The combination of jet-black foliage and a ketchup-red flower in the series is a dramatic combination, according to Bonine.

The white-bloomed, vase-shaped Moonlight Magic™ (*Lagerstroemia* ‘PIILAG-IV’ PPAF; 8–12 feet by 4–6 feet; Zone 7–9), one of Bailey’s currently sold crape myrtles, also originated from the open-pollinated seed of ‘Chocolate Mocha’ and was developed by Josh Kardos at PPI. Lunar Magic® (*Lagerstroemia* ‘Baillagone’ PP30360), intro-



Center Stage™ Red
(*Lagerstroemia indica*
‘SMNLICBF’)

PHOTO COURTESY OF
SPRING MEADOW NURSERY

duced just three years ago, is rounder and shorter in stature. It grows to a maximum of 10 feet with prolific white blooms, dark foliage and trials show incredible disease resistance and cold hardiness.

The other two dark-leaf cultivars in the series, Sunset Magic™ (*Lagerstroemia* ‘PIILAG-IX’ PP29325; red blooms; 5–10 feet by 4–8 feet, Zone 7–9) is the compact choice, and Twilight Magic™ (*Lagerstroemia* ‘PIILAG-VIII’ PP27194; 16 feet by 8 feet; Zone 7–9) is the full-size offering, reaching as high as ‘Natchez’ with dark pink blooms.

Purple Magic™ (*Lagerstroemia* ‘Purple Magic’ PP23906; 7–8 feet by 7–8 feet) is Bailey’s best-selling green-leaf variety, a mid-size offering that reblooms heavily with purple blooms if stage pruned. Ruffled Red Magic™ (*Lagerstroemia* ‘PIILAG-VII’ PP27303) is larger (12 feet by 8 feet), with dense branching, upright habit, high disease resistance and red carnation-like blooms.

Spring Meadow’s focus on developing a black leaf crape myrtle led to the recent introduction of Center Stage™ Red (*Lagerstroemia indica* ‘SMNLICBF’ USPPAF; 6–12 feet by 8 feet), developed by Mathey, with its dramatic match of very disease-resistant velvety black foliage and rich red blooms.

“In our minds, it’s kind of revolutionary,” Mathey said. “Because there are already many black-leaved varieties, we wanted to make sure that it is better or different [than others out there].” Center Stage has been extremely disease-resistant in trials and was selected for its highly branching habit and earlier blooming — in the first year after being potted up.



Twilight Magic™
(*Lagerstroemia*
‘PIILAG-VIII’ PP27194)

PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY

This success has Spring Meadow looking at a black-leaf tree form type, but there are no plans to introduce one at this point.

Growing interest in Oregon

Brian Bradshaw of Bradshaw Nursery (Forest Grove, Oregon) is a grower and a plant broker of crape myrtle, bringing in plants from the southern U.S., where larger caliper trees grow to size quicker.

“It takes eight to nine years [in Oregon] to get to two-inch caliper, where it takes four years in the South,” he said.

Bradshaw usually buys the larger caliper material, although he grows some varieties to size and also focuses on larger multibranching plants. He shapes and grows them for the best results for his landscaper customer base.

Shipments from the South, he learned, are best received locally in late winter, before they leaf out and bloom there, to better acclimate to local temperatures and weather here. The smaller the size, the more the crape myrtles need



Lunar Magic®
(*Lagerstroemia*
‘Baillagone’ PP30360)

PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY



Sunset Magic™
(*Lagerstroemia*
'PIILAG-IX' PP29325)
PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY

greenhouse storage to protect them before setting them outside.

Bradshaw added crape myrtle to his inventory about 10 years ago, and the inventory and varieties have evolved over time as he learned which plants grow and sell best. A changing climate and migration from California and the South have contributed to increased interest in crape myrtle in the area, as well as newer plants and the black leaf varieties.

He buys varieties that are proven growers and reliable bloomers in the cooler summers of the Pacific Northwest. His landscaper customers request bush types and tree types equally; it's the bloom color that is usually the deciding factor.

His top sellers that he stocks continually read like a patriotic list of red, white, and blue: 'Tuscarora', 'Natchez', and 'Muskogee'. Bradshaw is continually looking to stock red bloomers, but they're harder to source in larger sizes. He has supplied *Lagerstroemia indica* 'Watermelon Red' (which is more a pink, but it has the word red in it, so it is requested) and Dynamite® (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Whit II').

"There are darker colors," he said, "but they get fungus, and I hate doing that [to customers], so I steer away them from them."

With a growing interest by breeders, landscapers and home gardeners in crape myrtle, the hope is that, over time, inventory of larger sizes will increase to meet demand and increase diversity of types in landscapes and gardens. ☺

Tracy Ilene Miller is a freelance writer and editor who covers several topics, including gardening. She can be reached at tracyilenemiller@gmail.com.

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Any additional experience in welding and/or fabrication is a plus as well as familiarity with diverse farm/nursery implements or tire repair and replacement on vehicles/tractors. Candidate will have good communication and organizational skills, be highly motivated and goal oriented as well as being aware of and practicing safety in the workplace. Candidate must also possess knowledge of electronic diagnostic equipment and be open to further training and use of electronic data and labor management software platforms. The ability to maintain accurate records by recording service and repairs completed with parts and product usage is vital to the position. Must be able to handle and carry objects up to 80 lbs.

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This position will have a lot of day-to-day interaction and require coordination with our production team. Having strong technology skills is important as this position will be responsible for data entry and having a key role in the documentation of the production processes.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Production – Coordinate all production schedules, activities, and training with the Production Manager and Production Supervisors. Prepare and submit a variety of weekly reports to support managers in carrying out the production plan. Build and monitor a quality inspection process.
2. Materials & Supply Management – Maintain materials, supplies and small tool inventories including a check-out/check-in system, all production reporting related to the production plan, purchase orders and management direction.
3. Manage Workflow – Coordinate workflow and track productivity with metrics set by the company. Monitor attendance and headcount against budget. Assist with determining labor needs, allocation and deployment.

Required Education and Experience:

- High school diploma or equivalent
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- To submit your application for this position, please visit www.dcaoutdoor.com/careers
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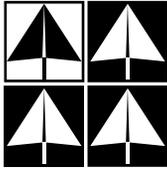
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The liverwort, *Marchantia polymorpha*, is a difficult pest in nursery production in Oregon. PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA.

Pest management tools for minor crops

How IR-4 and OSU are working for you

BY DANI LIGHTLE

WITH A 2018 FARM gate value just shy of \$1 billion, it is no secret that the ornamental plant industries in Oregon (nursery and greenhouse) are important and viable enterprises that contribute greatly to the state's economy. Controlling insect, disease, and weed pests is an important part of keeping these industries viable and profitable.

However, private agrochemical companies that register pest control products — while capable of generating the efficacy and crop safety data necessary to get a crop added to a pesticide label — often have different needs and priorities that do not overlap with those of Oregon growers.

This problem, known as the “minor use problem,” was recognized in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Funding was approved to start a project known as the Inter-regional Research Project #4, more commonly known as IR-4.

IR-4 began with a focus on pesticides for food use. One of the program's first big successes was conserving use of 38 pesticides on 129 crops when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to cancel a substantial number of registrations. To date, the Food Use program has provided data to EPA on over 16,000 uses for specialty crops.

The Environmental Horticulture program was added in 1977 to directly address the needs of the ornamental plant industry. Over time, this program has expanded to cover not only ornamental horticulture plants grown in greenhouses and nurseries, but also landscape plantings, Christmas trees, sod farms and interiorscapes.

The Environmental Horticulture program develops data on crop safety and efficacy to support the addition of new ornamental species or pests to existing product registrations. Since 

Pest management tools for minor crops

1977, the Environmental Horticulture program has developed data to support 44,000 crop uses.

IR-4 partners with land grant universities, such as Oregon State University (OSU), and private research contractors nationwide to conduct the research required to support new uses of pesticides.

For several decades, IR-4 has worked with the North Willamette Research and Extension Center (NWREC) and other OSU researchers to conduct efficacy, crop safety, and magnitude of residue trials. Currently, the Food Use program is directed by Dr. Dani Lightle, and the Environmental Horticulture research leader is Dr. Lloyd Nackley. Other OSU scientists involved with IR-4 food use or horticulture research include Dr. Luisa Santamaria, Dr. Ed Peachey, Dr. Kristie Buckland and Dr. Marcelo Moretti.

The OSU IR-4 research program receives funding from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and a wide range of commodity funding groups. The end result provides growers with new, effective, and safe pest management options that enable them to remain economically viable and competitive in the national and international marketplace.

Needs-driven research

IR-4's continued relevance and success is because the prioritization of research is directly influenced by specialty crop producers. One long-running project that directly benefits Oregon producers is control of the liverwort, *Marchantia polymorpha*, which was regarded as the Number 1 container nursery weed problem in 2007.

Liverwort has several qualities which make it difficult to control. Asexual reproduction of small clones may be water-splashed to a new location, encouraging spread of the weed. Similarly, fragments of the liverwort may survive and establish when broken away from the mother plant.

Cultural controls, including hand weeding or mulches, are expensive and don't provide long-lasting control. As a nationwide pest with few control options, liverworts made an ideal candidate for research by the IR-4 program.

At national IR-4 workshops, post-emergent liverwort control was prioritized in 2004 and 2009, which provided funding for efficacy trials across the U.S. Thirteen researchers tested 28 diverse products, and documented efficacy in at least three trials from Champ DP (copper hydroxide), GreenMatch (d-limonene),

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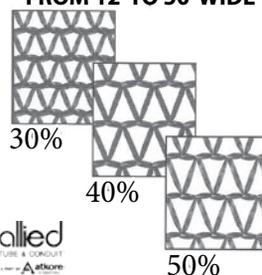
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Continued concerns with liverwort management led to additional prioritization of liverwort efficacy research in 2017 and 2019. Ongoing efficacy research, led by Dr. Marcelo Moretti, is screening additional materials including the different formulations of the preemergent herbicides Pendulum (pendimethalin) and Marengo (indaziflam) and the postemergent herbicides Basagran (bentazon) and a numbered compound, BW133.

Crop safety projects are also an important component of the Environmental Horticulture program. From 2016 to 2019, IR-4 ran 146 crop safety trials on 83 plant genera or species to determine phytotoxicity of Fiesta (iron HEDTA) at 1-time, 2-times or 4-times rates during over the top applications. Phytotoxicity trials of Fiesta conducted in Oregon by Dr. Moretti include boxwood (*Buxus* sp), *Cotoneaster* sp., Fountaingrass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*), and *Hydrangea* sp.

Producer involvement with IR-4

IR-4 has limited time, money and personnel to conduct studies for all the needs throughout the United States, so advocating for projects that are important to Oregon growers helps ensure the most pressing pest management problems get met.

The definition of a high priority project is one where a number of growers from various regions around the nation have clear needs, and the tools are available but have not yet been registered for those needs.

Prioritization for the Environmental Horticulture program is done at a national workshop conducted on a biennial basis. It is important for us at OSU to be aware of your critical pest management issues and needs so we can relay those needs to IR-4 and get such projects onto the national IR-4 docket.

For specific project requests, you can contact the Western Region assistant >>

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Pest management tools for minor crops

Pete Sturman applies a fungicide to basil in a magnitude of residue study.

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coordinator, Mika Tolson (mptolson@ucdavis.edu). A more formal way to register needs is by participating in the National IR-4 Ornamental Horticulture Program Survey, which can be found online www.ir4project.org/ehc/ (scroll down to the bottom of the page and select 'Grower Needs' to access the survey).

In the Food Use program, project requests are submitted on an on-going basis and prioritized annually at a national prioritization workshop, typically held in September. All that is needed to begin a project request is a crop + pest + desired pesticide combination. If your industry has an unmet pest management need, you can reach out to Dr. Lightle to discuss how IR-4 can help and begin the request process. ©

Dani Lightle is the pesticide registration research leader at Oregon State University. She can be reached at danielle.lightle@oregonstate.edu.



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America needs our vote

At a time of national challenge, we can either look at what divides us or what unites us.

Our nursery community is a critical ingredient in the great American experiment. We are a blessed and privileged few.

America is only as strong as her citizens. Our nation is a cauldron of different perspectives, ideologies and passions, all part of a hard-fought notion: a democratic republic.

The other day I watched the 1995 movie “The American President” starring Michael Douglas as President Andrew Shepherd. The crescendo of the movie was about the country itself and it resonates:

“America isn’t easy. America is advanced citizenship,” he says. “You’ve gotta want it bad, ’cause it’s gonna put up a fight. It’s gonna say, ‘You want free speech? Let’s see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil, who’s standing center stage and advocating at the top of his lungs that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours.’”

The right to vote has been hard-fought from Revolutionary times to the present day. Our founding fathers fought for American self-determination, but they didn’t trust the voting public. The battles to guarantee all citizens the right to vote would take decades of blood and tears.

America, you are not perfect. The journey has not always been something to be proud of. But when we look at America, the reflection in the mirror is you — the voter.

“The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.”

— Sir Winston Churchill, prime minister of the United Kingdom.

Our nation had to create its own meandering path toward democracy. Over the course of more than 200 years, lawmakers eventually ceded the franchise to all Americans — regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age or any other factors — through lawful amendments and rules.

It took a long time to assure voting for all. The U.S. Constitution originally left it to states to determine who was qualified to vote. Our founding fathers established severe limits on voting. They limited it to white

men, who often had to be property owners to boot. Many states also required religious tests — voting was for Christians only.

Following the Civil War, African American men were guaranteed the right to vote by the 14th amendment, which made them citizens, and the 15th amendment, which banned voting discrimination based on race, color or past servitude. However, southern states found ways around this with Jim Crow laws, using a range of barriers — poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses — to suppress the black vote.

“Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it.”

— Susan B. Anthony, American women’s rights activist.

Women fought for more than 100 years before securing the right to vote. While some states allowed it, others did not until the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1920. Anthony is one that most historians point to. She and Elizabeth Cady Stanton led the National Woman Suffrage Association, but sadly, they never saw the fruits of their labor. Each passed away 14 and 18 years before the right was secured.

Disagreements over strategy threatened to cripple the movement more than once. History is full of trailblazers from Abigail Adams to Harriot Eaton Stanton Blatch, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Lucretia Mott and Carrie Chapman Catt who pushed the issue over the finish line.

“I have been beaten, my skull fractured, and arrested more than 40 times so that each and every person has the right to register and vote.”

— U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Georgia), Civil rights activist, former Freedom Rider

Shamefully, in 1965 — 100 years after the Civil War ended — African Americans still were effectively denied their voting rights. Civil rights leaders including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin, John Lewis, and Rosa Parks led a series of marches, culminating in one from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. For this the peaceful marchers were viciously attacked.

That summer, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, which was signed into law by President Johnson. The vote was



Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

decisive and bipartisan: 79-18 in the Senate and 328-74 in the House. It barred many of the policies and practices that states had been using to limit voting among African Americans and other targeted groups. Additionally, it required states and local jurisdictions with a historical pattern of voter suppression to submit changes in their election laws to the U.S. Department of Justice for approval.

In 2013, portions of the act were weakened by the Supreme Court decision in Shelby County v. Holder. The nation continues to struggle, but that is her beauty and her flaw — America is complicated.

“We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate.”

— Thomas Jefferson, Founding Father and 3rd President of the U.S.

Generations have fought and bled to give everyone a voice. Voter suppression is still a problem today, but its greatest ally is our own indifference. There is a palatable sense of powerlessness, anger and, with some, a glaring lack of accountability. Some still will not accept personal responsibility to cede the course of our great nation to others.

Look inside and take an inventory when ballots are cast. Our industry has a tremendous voice. Let’s not waste it.

“Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.”

— Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States. ©



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