



Western Kentucky Nursery Crop Update

Good Practices for Bad Times:

Surviving an Economic Slump

For most Nurseries, word of mouth has proven to be the most effective form of advertising. In the past, business was so good that there was no need for anything more. Now, however, additional steps are needed to ensure that a business will survive. So what are some of the things we could change to cope with a changing economy? Businesses that are flexible will find themselves well prepared for when the market turns again for the better.

One of the first things to consider is how you sell your product. A lot of Nurseries are wholesale and wholesale only. Whether business was good enough to not need retail or we just didn't like dealing with people, some nurseries have become set in their wholesale ways. It's a true shame when a wholesale nursery goes under without one thought of trying retail. When facing defeat, we have to move out of our comfort zones and look for new markets to sell our product. A wholesale nursery might consider putting an ad in the local paper to advertise a seasonal weekend only retail sale at retail prices. Homeowners will feel like they are saving money by planting themselves and nurseries can sell a tree instead of burning it.

Perhaps the most important thing a Nursery can do to survive is Internet marketing. Any Nursery that hopes to survive in the long run needs to have their product advertised on the internet. For most consumers, if a product is not found online, it doesn't exist. It's easy to say, "If a buyer doesn't know how to find me the old fashioned way, then I don't want their business." But as younger and younger generations get into the business, more and more will rely on the internet alone when it comes to purchasing. A Kentucky landscaper may be ordering trees from Tennessee because he doesn't know that a Kentucky Nursery could serve his needs.

It's also easy to shrug off the idea of having a business webpage as being too difficult. You have to consider the benefits you will receive and the boost in sales. An investment in a webpage designer to build your site will easily pay for itself. But it's also important to remember that a poorly designed and unattractive website may cost you business if a customer is frustrated when trying to navigate your site. If you are unwilling to pay a web designer, an alternative is the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The KDA will provide a free webpage or

host a current inventory for any Kentucky Nursery address. Even social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter can lead clients to you. When listing your product online, you need to remember to respect your wholesale customers by not making wholesale prices available to the general public. Retail customers tend not to understand the high cost of shipping and overhead related to retailing living plants.

These examples are just the beginning of the various ways to survive this economic downturn. Nurseries that are flexible in these ways and others will find themselves primed for the booming business just on the horizon. Any successful business, nursery or not, is one that prepares itself for the future. With proper planning and smart choices, Kentucky growers will find themselves prepared for the new market.



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BMP Workshop with Dr. Larry Kuhns

On March 25th, the UK Research Center at Princeton will be hosting a Best Management Practices workshop on weed control in nurseries, garden centers, and landscapes. This day long workshop will feature Dr. Larry Kuhns, Professor Emeritus of Ornamental Horticulture at Penn State University.

While this workshop will be primarily focused on nursery growers, garden centers, and landscapers, it will be good for CEUs for Pesticide applicators. A registration fee will be required and lunch will be provided. A registration form is available online at:

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/HLA/Dunwell/>

- March 25th, 2010
- 3 General CEUs 1 specific CEU
- Registration: \$35 if received by 3/19
- On-Site Registration: \$45



Top Five Woody Diseases Diagnosed in 2009

With all the wet and relatively cool weather, 2009 presented a wide array of diseases for Nursery Crops in Kentucky. What follows is a top 5 countdown of the most diagnosed woody plant diseases for 2009 from the University of Kentucky Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

5. Insect damage on Azaleas. There were 14 cases of Lace bug damage on Azaleas. Scouting for pests and proper identification of pests are the most important steps of insect control. Lace bugs can be controlled using an insecticidal spray rated for use on your specific crop.

4. Black Spot on Rose. There were 15 rose samples diagnosed with Black Spot, caused by the fungus *Diplocarpon roseae*. Keeping foliage as dry as possible is the first step in Black Spot control. Fungicidal sprays and the removal of heavily infected leaves and plants also help in Black Spot control.

3. Powdery Mildew on Dogwood. There were 16 observed cases of Powdery Mildew found on Dogwood. Powdery Mildew is caused by fungus of the genus *Erysiphe*. Powdery Mildew can be controlled by increasing airflow within and between plants to reduce excessive humidity.

2. Scab on Crabapple. There were 19 diagnosed cases of Scab on Crabapple. Apple Scab is caused by the ascomycete fungus, *Venturia inaequalis*. Control of

Apple Scab is achieved by the use of a regular fungicide spray program and planting one of many disease resistant cultivars.

1. Bacterial Leaf Scorch on Oak. The most diagnosed disease (with 21 observed cases) in 2009 was Bacterial Leaf Scorch on Oak. Bacterial Leaf Scorch is caused by the bacterium, *Xylella fastidiosa*. The removal of dead or dying branches can aid in controlling the spread of Bacterial Leaf Scorch. The use of antibiotics has provided limited success.

Information on specific pesticides can be found in the IPM for Nursery Production manual which is available free from the University of Kentucky. The UK Plant Disease Diagnosis Laboratory is also available for disease diagnosis and advice on disease treatment. Special thanks to Plant Disease Diagnosticians Paul Bachi (UKREC) and Julie Beale (UK Campus).

