

To

Date

Friday August 31, 2007

*3 pages from Mario Lanthier*



The “2007 Farwest Show” was held in Portland August 23 to 25.

This meeting is held every year since 1973 and attracts a large crowd from Western United States and Western Canada. The target audience is nursery managers, retailers and landscapers.

Technical seminars are held every morning. The trade show is large (1200 exhibitors of which 60% are wholesale nurseries) and attracts 14,000 visitors.

For more information, visit <http://www.farwestshow.com/>. Electronic copies of talks will be posted on-line at <http://www.farwestshow.com/seminars.s>

### ***The trend is to talk about “trends”***

*There were 6 talks focusing on “trends” in consumers and the plant industry.*

- The word “trend” must have been used a record number of times during the Seminars.
- “Sustainable landscaping” is a major trend in Europe and the West Coast.
- Even containers have trends (containers going vertical / add perennials and shrubs).

*Outdoor living is “the #1 mega trend”, according to 3 different speakers.*

- Susan McCoy: “There has been a shift from inside the home to the outdoors”.
- Dr. Charles Hall of University of Tennessee: “The shift inside-out has only just begun”.
- Kip Creel, Standpoint Marketing: “Outdoor living is not a trend but a fundamental shift.”

*Can garden centers benefit from the “sustainable trend”?*

- Customers want help and guidance with their “vision” of outdoor living.
- Customers enjoy in-store displays where they can interact with the product.
- Demand for earth-friendly products “could quadruple in the next few years”.

## **"GREEN" GARDENING**

**"Mega Trends & Garden Trends", Susan McCoy, [www.gardenmediagroup.com](http://www.gardenmediagroup.com)**

*The presenter reviewed the 10 "mega trends" of the last 5 years.*

- Mega #1: outdoor living (backyard and patio now serve as kitchen, living room, office).
- Mega #2: exterior decorating (mostly containers, lighting, outdoor upholstery fabric).
- Mega #3: container gardening (instant colours where wanted, use plant combinations).
- Mega #4: colour (the more the better, instant colour + no fuss, flowers must last long).
- Mega #5: water (water gardening is down, demand is now for fountains).
- Mega #6: small space garden (vertical gardening, container gardening, dwarf plants).
- Mega #7: annuals are back ("improved" cultivars of standard plants, also edibles).
- Mega #8: big and branded (ready-to-wear plants, super-sized rather than seedlings).
- Mega #9: eco-chic (healthy lifestyle to sustain the environment, plants off pesticides).
- Mega #10: double-income families (willing to pay for landscape services).

**"Trends affecting young homeowners", Kip Creel, Standpoint Marketing**

*This company does surveys for the American Nursery Landscape Association.*

- Studies, presentations and free electronic newsletter at [www.standpointgroup.com](http://www.standpointgroup.com).

*Results of focus groups in 2004 and 2005 with young affluent persons.*

- #1: young homeowners place considerable value on personal time.
- #2: young homeowners want projects done promptly (if necessary by a professional).
- #3: access to money is not a barrier (they can borrow on the home line of credit).
- #4: homes are investments (homes to build personal wealth, not to live for years).
- #5: they want to be hip and contemporary ("just acceptable" is not good enough).

**"Understanding sustainable gardening", Carl Grimm, Portland Metro Plant Clinic**

*From the publication "Natural Gardening" (available for download at the website <http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?articleid=645>).*

- "The goal of the program is to educate home gardeners about less toxic pest management practices to reduce the volume of pesticides entering the waste stream".
- Practices recommended include building healthy soil / growing appropriate plants / using non-toxic pest management / attending "Natural Gardening" seminars.

*Other publications are available at the website <http://www.metro-region.org/>.*

- "Simple steps to a healthy lawn" <http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?articleid=565>
- "Green from the ground up" <http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=24723>
- "Grow smart, grow safe: A consumer guide to lawn and garden products" is available from King County Hazardous Waste Management, Oregon (I have 3 extra copies, ask).

## **NURSERY PRODUCTION**

### ***Watering of nursery plants***

*Using container weight, Dr. Jim Owen, Oregon State University*

- How much water to apply?  
Use leaching fraction (stop watering when leaching is 20 to 40% of applied).
- When to irrigate?  
Irrigation in early afternoon results in bigger plants (rather than morning or night).
- How to determine the need to irrigate?  
“Just weigh it” (such as simple concept!).  
1 gram of container weight lost = 1 gram of water lost = 1 ml of water to apply.  
Method: add maximum water to container. Drain 2 hours. Measure weight.  
This is “container capacity”. Measure container daily to measure water loss.  
Recalibrate weight regularly (monthly) to account for added plant growth.  
Set-up 1 or 2 plants per block / maintain 92 to 98% weight / watch outside rows.

*Soil moisture sensors, Marc Van Iersel, University of Georgia*

- Using volumetric water sensors (electromagnetic field to align water molecules).  
“You probably need less water than you currently use to grow your plants.”
- Potting mix with 20 to 25% water-holding capacity delivers “best” shrubs and annuals.  
Wasted irrigation add cost for water but also cost for electricity to operate pumps.
- Impact on water need (highest to lowest): light / temperature / humidity / air movement.  
“Plants use much less water during overcast days.”
- How much of the irrigation water is retained in the container vs leached at bottom?  
Presenter argued that little leaching is required to grow good plants.
- Protocols to test water sensor meters, see [www.irrigation.org](http://www.irrigation.org).
- Prediction: “future containers will have built-in sensors for water, pH, EC (fertilizer)”.

### ***“Mechanization for hardy nursery stocks”, Dr. Heinrich Losing, Germany***

*Presentation on equipment displayed at a 2006 trade show in Germany.*

- The Ellerhoop conference, held every 5 years, attracted 10,000 visitors in 2006.
- Over 1500 pictures can be viewed at the website [www.nurserymachinery.com](http://www.nurserymachinery.com).  
*The need for mechanization is high in European nurseries.*
- Two factors: wages (\$17 to \$25 per hour) and lack of non-specialised labour.
- The bulk of mechanization is in field production (flat land allows computer navigation).
- Growers looking for equipment that is self-directed: no driver= one less employee.  
“Eye drivers” (computer steering and speed control) cost \$15,000 to purchase.