

Growing



OKLAHOMA GREENHOUSE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

400 N. PORTLAND

March 2007

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK. 73107

GROUND BREAKING FOR OSU/OKC'S AGRICULTURE RESOURCE CENTER

OSU-Oklahoma City broke ground Thursday, Jan. 25, on its new Agriculture Resource Center. This event will allow OSU-OKC's to expand its growing agriculture program. Hosted by OSU-OKC President Dr. Jerry Carroll, guest speakers included OSU System President and CEO Dr. David Schmidly, OSU-OKC Agriculture Division Head Dave Edwards, and Christian K. Keesee, grandson of John E. Kirkpatrick.

Construction should be completed spring 2008, and was made possible by a \$1 million gift from John E. Kirkpatrick. The Kirkpatrick family's support for the OSU-OKC campus has a long history. The 33,000 square foot Agriculture Resource Center, will include horticulture, agriculture and veterinary classes on the OSU-OKC campus.

The need for increased space is due to thriving classes, particularly in "urban agriculture" – an emerging field of study that expands traditional agriculture to activities for an urban lifestyle. OSU-OKC offers programs in urban agriculture including floral design and turf grass management. Included in the facility are state-of-the-art



*OSU-OKC's New
Agriculture Resource Center*

classrooms, labs and offices split into two wings, joined by an open area that will serve as a conservatory for indoor plants and exhibits.

"This new building will help us reach our potential as leaders in urban agriculture. It will allow our Horticulture department to potentially increase enrollment by 50 percent – and double enrollment in our Veterinary Technology department.", said Dr. Jerry Carroll during the ceremony.

Graduates will be prepared for a variety of careers with retail floristry, parks, greenhouses, zoos, golf courses, or veterinary clinics. And local organizations, community groups and businesses also will benefit from the center. The space will be used by garden clubs and various other groups within the agriculture industry.

The total cost of the Agriculture Resources Center will be \$5.5 million. Capital bond money from the Oklahoma Higher Education Promise Act of 2005 will provide \$3.7 million of the project's funding.

For more information on the agriculture programs offered at OSU-OKC, visit www.osuokc.edu/agriculture/.



OSU-OKC- Breaking ground on the new Agriculture Resource Center are: (LtoR) L.E. "Dean" Stringer, Dr. David Schmidly, Dr. Jerry Carroll, Christian K. Keesee and Dave Edwards.

G W G

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Hello OGGA Members,

Spring should be almost upon us when you receive this newsletter. The ice and cold left damage in it's wake for many greenhouse growers and establishments. Hopefully new structures have been built and plants are showing the signs of awakening. Spring always reminds be of the renewal of earth's spirits and new beginnings. New plants, new products, new ideas, new and familiar customers is what we want to see in the coming months.

In the OGGA we want to help our members. The OGGA is working on the June Shortcourse at Oklahoma State University in OKC. The dates are June 17th and 28th. Are there any educational seminars you are interested in having? Are there speakers or topics you would like to see at any of the OGGA events? Please drop us a line either by mail or email. We would like to hear from you!

The "Oklahoma Rising" Convention and Trade Show is September 27th and 28th at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City. Keynote speaker Rick Darke will be discussing the "Livable Landscape" and Lee Manzer will return on business practices. You need to be at the convention and trade show. There is education, a luncheon for all attendees, your vendors and networking among your industry peers. Mark your calendars now.

The Fall Update will be Wednesday November 7th at the Holiday Inn in Stillwater, details to be following. There is a lot of planning going on and the OGGA welcomes ideas and help.

Give OGGA a shout and join in the fun.

Thank you,

Wendy Gerdes

OGGA Executive Director



2007 CALENDAR

JUNE 27th & 28th

OGGA Shortcourse; OSU/OKC
(405) 942-5276

SEPTEMBER 27th & 28th

ONLA/OGGA "Oklahoma Rising" Convention
& Trade Show; Cox Convention Center
Okla. City, OK (405) 942-5276

JULY 19th

ONLA's Landscape Contractors Day ;
Sanders Nursery & Distribution 9-3 pm
(405) 942-5276

AUGUST 9-11

SNA... The World's Showcase of Horticulture®
Georgia World Congress Ctr, Atlanta, GA

SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 2

Garden Writers Association Symposium
Oklahoma City, OK

www.gardenwriters.org

ATTENTION:

If your company is holding seminars or classes that OGGA members could attend, please contact the OGGA office so it can be posted in the newsletter at no cost for OGGA members.

No Charge!

call (405) 942-5276

OGGA website

<http://www.ogga.org>

Merchandising Displays That Work

One of the best strategies for increasing perennial sales at retail garden centers is through the use of creative and innovative merchandising displays. Admittedly, they do take more effort than simply loading up sales benches with perennials organized in alphabetical order or according to their sun-shade requirements, but the benefits will be realized almost immediately in increased sales.

Color

An effective merchandising display is one that generates lots of impulse sales and as such, the focus should always be on the effective use of color. Color provides the WOW factor that drives sales. Providing you have an arrangement with your suppliers for the ongoing delivery of fresh perennials, there should always be lots of material on hand from which to choose. At those times of the year, especially in early spring, when color is not yet plentiful, substitute with giftware or other accessories that are accumulated over time expressly for this purpose. Supplier-provided signage and POP materials are another good source of background color.

Accessibility

A golden rule for the creation of effective displays is to ensure that all plants are easily accessible. Assume there will be no staff on hand to grab those hard-to-reach plants. Make sure your customer can reach every plant that's displayed. Customers always want the plant in the back – that's just the way it goes. And we all know that a frustrated customer represents a lost sale.

Simplicity

The construction of the display does not need to be complicated. In fact, it is always best to keep it simple. Once you have some basic ideas and the materials are on hand, it should take two people no more than three or four hours to assemble a display.

Step one in the actual construction of the display is to get organized. Make sure the area is neat and tidy. Start by raking up all leaves and other debris. Determine the size of the display and the plants to be used. Have fresh plants easily accessible. Ensure that the "bones" are appropriate to the size of the display and the size and types of plants to be displayed.

Get creative

Step two is the assembly of the structure. For obvious reasons, ensure it has a stable base. Wooden crates of various sizes and dimensions are ideal, as are retired benches or pieces of outdoor furniture. Antique and even yard sale items can make interesting display fixtures. Occasionally, furniture and accessories that did not sell in previous years get a second chance to be useful when pressed into service as display props.

For Sale items do not need to be limited to plants. Garden accessories such as arbors, trellises, statues and benches can all add interest to displays while still carrying a for

sale sign and price sticker. Be sure, however, that if you plan to sell items such as benches from your display, that they are not damaged by heavy plants or wet soil, etc. which will detract from their salability. The props in a display can provide inspiration for catchy slogans.

The most effective displays are those with well-massed plants. Unless it's a larger plant, one of a kind doesn't work well. Always showcase a minimum of three or more larger pot sizes and at least five or more of smaller pot sizes. The assortment of plants and the number per variety really depends on the size of the display.

Nothing will detract from a display as quickly as some poor quality plants; ongoing maintenance and watering must always be a priority. A good policy is that whoever creates the display is also responsible for its maintenance, as that person is most familiar with its structure and design intent. It is the responsibility of all staff, however, to immediately remove any unsightly or wilted plants.

The real key to effective merchandising displays is creativity and it is management's responsibility to encourage their staff to be imaginative. Trial and error is a must. Give the staff a chance and some time to develop their creativity. Ask other people what they think and be open to other ideas.

To be effective, you must be prepared to change displays every two weeks, although in the very busy spring season, this can be stretched to once every three weeks. Customers learn that you will have something unique and different for them to look at every few weeks. They take home our ideas and use them in their own gardens. Selling perennials through displays is effective, but it requires an ongoing commitment.

DR. CARL WHITCOMB AWARDED THE HENRY A. WALLACE AWARD

Dr. Carl Whitcomb was awarded the 2006 Henry A. Wallace Award from Iowa State University College of Agriculture. This award was established to honor Iowa State University alumnus who have made an outstanding contribution to national and international agriculture in writing, teaching, research or leadership.

His many accomplishments include his development of air-root pruning of trees. Currently millions of plants are now grown in an assortment of air-root pruning containers marketed under the name Rootmaker. Also, he patented the formula for a micronutrient fertilizer (Micromax) for use in the unique environment of a container. Many now known cultivars of crapemyrtle were patented by Dr. Whitcomb. He has authored numerous books, including the "Know It and Grow It III", lectures and consults on nursery issues and is the recipient of many awards.

CONGRATULATIONS, DR. WHITCOMB!



Trials-Oklahoma State University Oklahoma City

Date planted: mid-late May, 2006

Top 5-10 cultivars through mid-July, 2006:

1. **Nemesia Berries & Cream Sachet** (Paul Ecke) carried a wonderful fragrance in its abundance of flowers. Plants were about seven inches tall bearing their delectable blooms. In moderate shade, they thrived despite the heat.
2. **Lobelia Hot Lilac** (Cohen c/o Agrexco) was likewise a surprise for summer performance. The compact plants were about twelve inches across and six inches high, profuse with bright petals. These were trialed in shade.
3. **Osteo Sunscape Daisy Crescendo Primrose** (Paul Ecke) crescendoed from pale near the disc to a cheery intense yellow at the tips of the ray. The centre itself was loudly coloured. The ensemble was three inches across, supported twelve to sixteen inches high. This plant (and others in the series) played an amazing performance in the shade and in the sun.
4. **Angelonia Serena Mix** (PanAmerican) excelled in the hot sun with a beautiful complement of four colours, nearly matched for height. The look was always completely poised and immaculately fresh.
5. **Petunia Happy Mini Sivan** (Cohen c/o Agrexco) achieved a quick and convincing coverage. The foliar look was clean, pert and glimmering. Plants were five to eight

inches high. The purple flowers, which continually appeared as though they were still opening, were one-and-a-quarter inches in diameter.

6. **Vinca Pacifica Burgundy Halo** (PanAmerican) electrified us with its vibrancy and depth of colour. Flowers were generous in number and in size, exceeding two inches diameter. Plants were sixteen inches tall.

7. **Celosia Prestige Scarlet** preserved a great deal of honour by producing plumes numerous and quite bright. Consistency and durability were excellent, keeping it a summer favourite.

Weather conditions:

There was no rain in the last three weeks of May. Rains in June and July were few but mostly substantial. Temperatures ran warm with many triple-digit days.

Unusual occurrences:

The heat and drought were pronounced, but the number of entries doing well despite those conditions was remarkable.

Haldor Howard, Manager, Greenhouses and Gardens
Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City
John E. Kirkpatrick Horticulture Center

"Oklahoma Rising" Brings Rick Darke Convention and Trade Show

This year we are proud to announce that **Rick Darke** is the Keynote Speaker for the Trade Show. RICK DARKE LLC, is a widely published author, photographer, lecturer and consultant focused on regional landscape design, planning, conservation, and enhancement. Blending art, ecology, and cultural geography, Darke is dedicated to the design and conservation of *the livable landscape*. He has studied and photographed North American plants in their habitats for nearly 30 years, and this work is reflected in his articles and books including The American Woodland Garden, which has received the American Horticultural Society's Book Award, the Garden Writers Association Golden Globe Award for book photography, and the National Arbor Day Foundation's Certificate of Merit. Check out his website at www.rickdarke.com.

HELP US KEEP YOU UPDATED

on all your Association's educational events, by sending us an email for our records to:

OklahomaONLAOGGA@aol.com

We can notify you of our happenings !

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