



ROOTMAKER[®]
PRODUCTS COMPANY

newsletter

S U M M E R 2 0 0 5

RootMaker[®] News

We have had a very busy spring and are now looking forward to the summer show season, seeing many of you again and hopefully meeting some of you for the first time. We also enjoy hearing from all of you, so please call or e-mail anytime. If you have any pictures you would like to share, please send them as well.



RootMaker[®] Growers Association. We (Dr. and Mrs. Whitcomb, and Gay and Wayne Hinton) attended the first meeting to establish a RootMaker[®] Growers Association in March. It was held at Rennerwood in Tennessee Colony, Texas. Mike Richardson, owner of Richardson Farms and Susan Smith, owner of Rennerwood organized the meeting. It was well attended for a first meeting. Many of the attendees were from Texas, but others came from Oregon, Virginia, Alabama, and Florida. The responses from growers at the meeting were positive and all agreed that the concept had merit.

There were several ideas that were discussed relative to the direction that such an organization should take, but there was no consensus. However, one important decision was made. This was to establish an online forum for anyone to comment, good or bad, on the idea of such an association. The forum can be found online at www.ezboard.com. Simply enter "RootMaker" in the search field., click on "RootMaker Products" and then on "register here". After you have entered your personal information you can enter the forum.

Creating a Demand Market. RootMaker[®] Products Company is continuing to search for ways to educate the end user on the importance of using root pruned plants. Our efforts in advertising the benefits of root pruning to the end user are beginning to show results. Recently we have received calls from landscape contractors bidding for jobs in which the landscape architect has specified the use of RootMaker[®] plants. In addition, our website gets a large number of hits each day. This is one of the reasons, we establish the RootMaker[®] Certified Grower program.

Being listed as a Certified Grower is an effective way to advertise your name to those people looking for RootMaker[®] plants. When we receive calls from people asking where they can buy RootMaker[®] plants, we simply refer them to the Certified Grower list. If you are using RootMaker[®] containers exclusively, you are qualified to become a RootMaker[®] Certified Grower. For more information on the Certified Grower program, please call or e-mail us or visit our website.

Product Announcements: We have inventory ready for shipment of the 18-cell and 32-cell Single Cell (individual containers). Each of these will use the RII18 18-cell or the RMII32 32-cell trays as the holding tray. This will provide the benefit of consolidating when these container are used for direct seeding or for propagation from cuttings.

The RootBuilder[®] II High 5 is in stock. This container incorporates a solid root-directing bottom with the great root-pruning capability of the RootBuilder[®] material.

We now have RootCaps[™] in stock for 10" and 12" diameter containers. This material is made from all synthetic fibers. Test results at Lacebark, Inc. have proven that the new RootCap[™] is effective for moisture retention, weed control, and temperature reduction. All of these help to promote root development in the top portion of the root ball. It is recommended that they be used with the dark side up.

The Up-With-Pots[™] container system is also in stock. Standard sizes are 12", 14", 18" and 22" diameter rings. Ring size determines the spacing for the plants. Please see the full information on how to use this system on page 2 of this newsletter.

Summer Shows. We want to invite everyone to visit us at the up-coming summer shows. Direct links to the shows can be found on our web site, www.rootmaker.com.

July

PANTS, Ft. Washington, PA,
July 26-28, Booth # 2615

August

SNA, Atlanta, Aug 11-13,
Booth # 2741

Nursery/Landscape Expo, Dal-
las, Aug 19-21, Booth # 1145
(Lacebark, Inc. Booth listing)

FarWest, Portland, Aug 25-27,
Booth # 12053

September / October

FNATS, Orlando, Sept 29-
Oct 1, Booth # 2706

MTNA, McMinnville, TN,
Sept 30-Oct 1, Booth # 252

December

Great Southern Tree Confer-
ence, Gainesville, Dec 1-2

Dr. Whitcomb will be conduct-
ing education sessions at the
FarWest trade show this year.
He will be speaking on
Wednesday afternoon and
Thursday morning. The sub-
jects for his talks will be *Is
Native Better?* and *Plant Pro-
duction in Containers; Roots,
The Next Step Forward*. Please
see page 3 for more informa-
tion. In addition, he will be in
the booth on Thursday and
Friday from noon until 6.

Up-With-Pots™ (Patent Pending)

A Simple Procedure to Prevent Container Blow Over and Protect Plant Roots.

Just follow these simple steps:

1. Drill one 3/8-inch hole just below the top lip of each of the support pots
2. Select the desired diameter wire ring: 12, 16 or 22 inch diameter (Figure 1).



Figure 1

4. Repeat step 3 by inserting an additional support pot into each of the original pots. Add an additional wire ring and secure with cable ties. The second set of support pots is properly spaced around the wire ring. Repeat this process as many times as desired (Figure 3).



Figure 3

6. The Up-With-Pots™ system is ready to use and inserted production pots will not blow over short of extreme winds (Figure 5). When wind blows from lower left to upper right, for example, as the pot at upper right begins to tilt, the load is transferred as downward pressure on the pot at lower left. When wind blows from left to right, as the two pots at right begin to lean, the load is transferred as downward pressure on the two containers on the left.



Figure 5

8. Insulated support pots are now ready to accept production containers and can be used over and over. Under especially windy conditions and to insure that the Up-With-Pots™ units stay in place during intervals when no production pots are in place, six-inch galvanized nails can be driven through the bottom and into the ground.



Figure 7

3. Attach four support pots to the selected size wire ring. Insert a cable tie through the 3/8-inch hole, around the wire ring, across the top of the pot, insert into the locking end of the tie and pull (Figure 2). When all four containers are attached, make sure the containers are spaced equidistant around the ring, and then snug the cable ties. This first unit serves as a guide for building others.



Figure 2

5. Lay out the Up-With-Pots™ units in rows with the desired spacing between the double rows of containers (Figure 4). Note that there are no wires, stakes or cables to interfere with employees.



Figure 4

For even greater access to crop plants in long rows, a wider space can be left between Up-With-Pots™ units at desired intervals.

7. Adding RootSkirts® to support pots reduces summer root zone temperatures 20 to 25 degrees F and moderates winter root zone temperatures. Once the Up-With-Pots™ units are positioned in rows, to add RootSkirts®, simply rotate one support pot 180 degrees (Figure 6), slip the RootSkirt® onto the pot (Figure 7), then rotate the support pot back to the original position (Figure 8).



Figure 6



Figure 8

Lacebark News

PLANNING AHEAD – WAY AHEAD

Lacebark Research Farm will be giving a tour to invited guests on **September 27, 2006**. This is **not** an open to the public function. Anyone wishing to attend must apply ---- by email or fax only (**NO PHONE CALLS**) ---- and request an invitation. We want to know ahead of time how many will be attending and who they are so that we can plan accommodations and prepare materials accordingly. We began an assortment of experiments and demonstrations this spring so that by September 27, 2006, we will have a number of things for a good show and tell session. There will be a variety of notices of this event next year, and more details about how to get invited and registered, so do not start yet. This notice is for those folks that plan things several years in advance.

The Oklahoma Nursery and Landscape Association will have their annual meeting and trade show in the Payne County Fair Grounds on September 28 and 29, 2006, in Stillwater.

PLANT BREEDING

The plant breeding is beginning its 20th year and the intrigue continues. Desert willow seedlings planted in the field in July 2003 flowered last summer three times and some of the plants were spectacular. Lots of promise here. We have several 14-year-old shantung maple, *Acer truncatum*. One limb on one tree (do not ask me how this happens) has produced seed with some viability the last three years. From a 2002 seedling population of about 250, following heavy culling, 39 seedlings remain. Several of these young trees have fantastic wine new growth that changes to other colors with age or stays wine. One tree produces new growth cardinal red, or the same red color as Dynamite crapemyrtle, then slowly fades to dark green, then “blooms” again with each additional flush of growth. Fantastic!!! It is likely that you will be hearing more about some of these cultivars as evaluation continues.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. and Mrs. Whitcomb are proud to announce another grandchild. Drew Elizabeth was born June 13, 2005 at 11:39 am to Shannon and Andy.

Far West Show – Talks by Carl Whitcomb for 2005

Educational Session #1: Plant Production in Containers; Roots, The Next Step Forward.

Wednesday, 4 pm to 5 pm

Large strides forward have been made in container growth media, micronutrients, slow release N-P-K fertilizers, weed control, watering systems and more. The next ‘frontier’ is improvements in root branching and root development throughout the growth medium and not just a thin layer of circling roots in side the pot sidewall. Having a fibrous root system throughout the growth medium improves water use efficiency, absorption of nutrients and reduces nutrient leaching, plus roots are more insulated from extremes of heat and cold and plants establish more rapidly for your customer. Root pruning to stimulate branching can be safely and effectively accomplished by air-root-pruning, constriction pruning and root-tip-trapping. Very young and actively growing root tips respond by producing many more secondary roots compared to pruning of older roots. With plants grown from seed, the critical time for most effective root pruning can be in as little as 3 to 5 days following germination.

Educational Session #2: Is Native Better?

Thursday, 9 am to 10 am

Where a plant is growing native, has often been *assumed* to be what the plant *requires* to grow best. In a few cases this may be correct, but in many cases this is far from being correct. Where a plant is growing native simply indicates that it will *tolerate* those conditions sufficiently well to survive and reproduce. An azalea has a very narrow tolerance, in effect saying ‘give me these rather precise low pH conditions or give me death’. On the other hand, most any juniper species has an enormous tolerance range. Junipers grow well in Seattle, WA, Portland, ME, San Diego, CA and Miami, FL, and everywhere in between and in soils with pH 8 to pH 4 or below. But, when an assortment of species, native and non-native, were planted in an assortment of growing conditions, they all grew best in the same conditions. What I believe is that we should focus on plants that are well adapted to a site or region *and that have good manners*, native or non-native.

Another Best Buy at Lacebark, Inc.



In 2003 we purchased a Power Trac model 1460. This is a totally hydraulic low-profile articulating tractor with 60-hp air-cooled diesel engine. We opted for extra wide, low-profile turf tires to reduce soil compaction, and with four-wheel drive at all times it is quite versatile. All attachments quick-connect to a simple but effective assembly on the front of the machine. The driver sits in the center and moves with the front portion of the tractor keeping visibility optimal. Unlike skid steer machines, this unit does not tear up the ground or make ridges as it turns.

We have now purchased a grappler bucket, auger with 12, 18, 24, and 36-inch diameter bits, four-inch wide trencher, fork lift tines, rough cut 80-inch wide mower, tree ball lifter and dozer blade. In addition, we purchased a separate base quick-connect plate. The plate was welded to a pallet mover frame that had been fitted with a 200-gallon water tank. The tank was fitted with a one-inch spring valve (made for a stock watering tank) with a cord so the 1600 pounds of water can be controlled from the driver's seat. With hydraulics to raise and lower or tilt the tank and the maneuverability of the articulated tractor, we can water-in plants with precision.

By putting the fork tines close together and driving them into the ground, a four-inch diameter tree is lifted from the soil in a few seconds. We love it for harvesting trees in the field grown in 12, 18 or 24-inch Knit Fabric containers. The machine is made by Power Trac Inc. Tazewell, VA Phone 1-800-THE-YARD

GROWER QUESTION AND ANSWER — Dr. Carl Whitcomb

Q: I am growing Japanese maples from seed. Since the seed must be cold stratified I am looking to sow the seed in cell packs and place the trays in a large refrigerator or walk-in cooler. The trays need to be covered to retain moisture. Do you have a cover or dome for the trays for the 60-cell pack?

A: What I use is clear stretch wrap, much like you would use around a stack of boxes or other items to be shipped. It stays put, is inexpensive, and you can see through it in order to know when germination starts. I find this works better and takes up less space compared to a plastic dome unit.

Q: About how long from propagation can a Dynamite crapemyrtle stay in a five-inch in-ground bag before it needs to be moved to a larger container?

A: If you placed Dynamite crapemyrtle in five-inch bags in summer 2004, the question is how much have they grown since that time. If they have not grown much since transplanting into the five-inch bags, then let them make a vigorous flush of growth in the spring and continue to allow them to grow all summer 2005. Then during the early spring 2006, dig them, remove the fabric and place in five- or seven-gallon containers. Soon after the spring flush of growth begins, the plants will be rooted out and ready to sell during the summer while in full bloom.

On the other hand, if the plants made good growth during the summer and fall of 2004 and attained some reasonable size, then you may want to consider taking them out this spring, just before the time of normal beginning of growth, and place in a container of suitable size.

One point to be aware of, if you are not already, is that with the much cooler temperature in the soil versus in above-ground containers, you need to use a different slow release fertilizer combination. For above ground containers, my favorite is still Osmocote 17-7-12 at a rate of 15 to 16 pounds per cubic yard. But, for five- or eight-inch bags in the cooler ground, my favorite is Osmocote 18-6-12 at a rate of eight pounds PLUS Osmocote 19-6-12 at the rate of four pounds. These are thinner coatings and release nutrients at a rate that more nearly matches plant needs in the cooler conditions. Using the Osmocote 17-7-12 in the ground does not release sufficient nutrients to support good growth, even though it will last two years or more under these much cooler conditions.

RootMaker®, RootBuilder®, RootTrapper®, RootSkirts®, RootCaps™, CitySlicker™, EasyStreet™, and Up-With-Pots™ are trademarks of Lacebark, Inc., Stillwater, OK.

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The #1 name in root pruning technology!