



2013 Joint Winter Meeting Recap

The annual Joint Winter Meeting, sponsored by the New Hampshire Plant Growers' Association (NHPGA), New Hampshire Landscape Association (NHLA), and UNH Cooperative Extension, was held on January 16th at the Grapone Center in Concord. The meeting drew about 145 attendees despite the wintery weather. Twenty-two vendors participated and they represented a variety of products and services related to the horticulture industry. The day began with informal group discussions on a variety of subjects. These "Table Topics" provided a venue for people to share ideas and learn about current issues related to our industry.

Delilah Onofrey delivered the keynote address titled "Investing in Consumer Success...What are we doing as an industry to make our customers more successful?" Delilah is currently Director of Flower Power Marketing for the Suntory Collection. She is also the former editor of *Greenhouse Grower Magazine* and a founder of the America in Bloom Program. She drew on her background in all these areas as she addressed the audience. She was sponsored by NHPGA through a grant from the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food. Concurrent sessions on a wide array of topics filled the day. Laura Kuhn spoke on "Naturalistic Planting Design" and Peter Schmidt discussed "Building Healthy Soils: Understanding and Managing Landscape Soils". Several sessions focused on business-related topics and financial planning and analysis. The concepts of Lean Flow and Benchmarking were discussed by Jean Wilson of NH Manufacturing Extension Partnership and Erin Pirro of Farm Credit East. Additionally, there were two separate sessions tailored to business owners and employees that focused on key points of financial planning. The USDA Risk Management Agency and UNH Extension sponsored the latter sessions. The meeting provided ample time for networking and allowed NHPGA and NHLA the opportunity to update members on current happenings in both organizations.

NHPGA Welcomes New Board Members

The NHPGA has recently welcomed 2 new members to the Board of Directors. Jeffrey Meulenbroek of Studley Flower Gardens in Rochester, NH and John Gedraitis of Van Berkum Nursery in Deerfield, NH have joined the Board and bring to it a combined 22 years of working in the NH Green Industry to the Board. The Board now has 8 members, including head growers at NH greenhouses, owners of NH garden centers, the UNH Cooperative Extension Greenhouse & Floriculture Specialist and a Credit Specialist at Farm Credit East.



Jeffrey Meulenbroek of Studley Flower Gardens.

Jeffrey joined the NHPGA Board in August, 2011 and has focused on improving the NHPGA's website and marketing opportunities. The website, www.NHPGA.org, has become more current and reflects the Plant Grower's mission of supporting the ornamental horticulture industry in the state of NH. Jeffrey is the co-owner and head grower at Studley's, a family-owned Rochester florist and garden center since 1928. Jeffrey said, "I enjoy the daily challenge of running a florist and garden center and love the seasonal changes of growing plants in New Hampshire. I never know what my day will bring. I look forward to using my skills developed managing day to day operations at Studley's to expanding membership in NHPGA and communication between members."

John Gedraitis joined the Board in December, 2012 and has an interest in expanding the NHPGA membership and promoting the NHPGA annual scholarship. "I see the NHPGA as a great tool for connecting New Hampshire folks in the green industry with each other and getting new members more involved. I really hope to bring another perspective and perhaps some new ideas to the group." said John. He is Operations Manager at Van Berkum Nursery and though he loves the plants, he really loves the management aspect of working with a diverse group of people in a beautiful setting.



John Gedraitis of VanBerkum Nursery

I like the challenge of working with the different departments each with their own issues and goals to achieve the common goals of the nursery. I also love the seasonality of the work. Just when you're getting tired of what you're doing the weather starts to change and so does the work.

The NHPGA also has volunteer opportunities on Committees. If you are enthusiastic and involved in ornamental horticulture in NH, then please email NHPGA at executivedirector@nhpga.org.

Student Scholarships

Announced

The NHPGA is pleased to support the future leaders of our industry by providing a scholarship to an eligible student. The NHPGA provides an annual scholarship to a full-time environmental horticulture student. Applications are read by the NHPGA Board of Directors and selection is based on a written essay and references. The NHPGA is currently accepting applications which will be awarded in January 2014. Applicants should be a full time student attending a 2 or 4 year New Hampshire college or university program with a focus on a career in horticulture, or the child of an NHPGA member currently attending a 2 or 4 year green industry program.

The scholarship award is presented at the annual Winter Educational Meeting held annually in January in Concord. Please share the availability of this award to any eligible students you may know. For more information, see the NHPGA website or email executivedirector@nhppga.org.

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