

Quill & Trowel



The Membership Newsletter of the Garden Writers Association of America

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FINAL CALL FOR 2002 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS

The Symposium Committee is interested in your ideas for topics and speakers at the 2002 symposium in Seattle, Wash., on August 2-6. There is particular interest in proposals that address core competency topics developed by the GWAA Education Committee. Presenters will be selected based on:

- A. Core competency topic (see list on page 20)
- B. Balanced presentation — If you have been a speaker in the last few years, please give another member a chance for his/her presentation.
- C. Professionalism, including integrity and reliability
- D. Presentation, style and content
- E. Handout if necessary.

The committee works hard to present programs that represent the diversity of all members' horticultural interests and professional development. Professionalism is critical for the success of the program. We seek speakers who prepare and present documentation in the absence of a "hard sell" or aggressive campaigning.

If you are interested in speaking at this year's symposium or would like to recommend a speaker, please complete the form on the GWAA Web site (www.gwaa.org/symposium/proposal.html). You may also send any ideas you may have to Cathy Barash at edibleflowers@qwest.net.

Symposium continued on page 20

DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR ELECTIONS

If you are interested in becoming a part of the GWAA governing board or know someone who is, please submit your nominations for national and regional directors. National director terms in Regions II and VI, as well as a Regional director term in each region will become available at the annual symposium in August. Please send your nomination(s) to the GWAA office at 10210 Leatherleaf Court, Manassas, Va. 20111, fax 703.257.0213, e-mail membership@gwaa.org. If you have any questions concerning eligibility or the nominating process, call Monica Miranda at GWAA (703.257.1032).

SAF PUBLISHES RESEARCH

The Society of American Florists (SAF) has completed two groundbreaking university research studies in partnership with Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, which scientifically prove that flowers improve our emotional health. The following address will take you to the page at SAF's consumer Web site for more information on the Emotional Impact of Flowers Study (www.aboutflowers.com/happier.html) which proves that the presence of flowers makes people happy, enhances life satisfaction and enjoyment and leads to increased contact with family and friends.

The most recent study (completed in late 2001) focuses on the effects of flowers on senior citizens. The results show that flowers ease depression, enhance social contact and refresh memory as we age (www.aboutflowers.com/seniorstudy.htm).

In This Issue:

Allied News	13	FL Nursery/Landscape Soars ..	17	Photographer's Corner	5
2002 Annual Symposium	15	Hot Off the Press	22	President's Message	2
Beetle Quarantine	16	Mail Irradiation	15	Regional Meetings	24
Contracts Watch	16	Member Survey Data	21	Regional News	6
Dates and Events	23	New Federal Organic Rule	18	Scotts Announces Winners	14
Exec. Director's Report	3	New Members	12	Sponsors	3
		On the QT	11	Take Control...Financial	19
		PAR Report	4	USCC STA Program	17

USCC SEAL OF TESTING ASSURANCE PROGRAM

Preparing for Year Three

In March (2002), the US Composting Council (USCC) will begin taking applications for participation in the 2002 Seal of Testing Assurance Program (STA). Begun in 2000, with assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the STA Program already has over 1.7 million cubic yards of compost under certification throughout the U.S.

The overall purpose of the STA Program is to improve customer confidence in compost selection and utilization. The program requires participating facilities to sample and test their compost products on an ongoing basis using uniform sampling protocols and testing methodologies. The test methods used in the STA Program are outlined in The Test Methods for the Examination of Compost and Composting (TMECC), jointly published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and USCC (2002 publishing as a part of the USDA National Resource Conservation Technical Bulletin Series). "Without using uniform testing methods, end users of compost will not be able to make proper purchasing decisions," notes Alexander, manager of the STA Program. It also requires the disclosure of test analyses and product ingredient data, as well as end use instructions to compost customers. All of this data is available to customers on a uniform product label, called the 'Compost Technical Data Sheet.' Participating composters have the ability to use the program's logo (seal) in their promotional efforts, and will be included in various national promotional activities managed by program management (including initiatives with departments of transportation, landscape architects and garden writers).

Why should composters participate in the STA program and why should consumers demand it?

- **Improves field results** — provides compost users with the product quality and application information they need to use compost properly, and with



US COMPOSTING COUNCIL

Seal of Testing Assurance

- optimum results
- **Promotes customer-oriented composters** — assists composters who are rigorously testing their compost products and providing end-use information to their customers to differentiate themselves from composters who are not
- **Improves customer satisfaction** — assists compost customers and specifiers in making more informed purchasing decisions
- **Reduces the chance of additional regulation** — reduces the trend of state/national organizations towards the creation of additional compost regulation. This keeps operational and distribution costs down!
- **Becomes an internal quality control program for composters** — allowing the composter to market their product and end users to purchase and use that product with confidence
- **Standardizes laboratory test methods used to evaluate compost products** — allows composters, regulators, researchers and compost buyers/specifiers to better compare products being produced throughout the country.

For additional information on the STA Program, contact the STA Program Managers, Al Rattie at 215.258.5259, turflife@aol.com, or Ron Alexander at 919.367.8350, alexassoc@earthlink.net. To locate STA composters in your state, check out the USCC Web site at www.compostingcouncil.org.

FLORIDA'S NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY SOARS

Preliminary results of the 2000 Economic Impact Study conducted by the University of Florida show the nursery and landscape industry's total sales at \$8.5 billion, a 44 percent jump since 1997. Total industry sales translate to a value-added economic impact of \$4.38 billion annually to Florida's economy, a 31 percent increase from a similar study done for 1997.

Moreover, the study shows total wages and salaries at \$2.91 billion and employment within the nursery and landscape industry at 170,000 jobs in 2000.

According to the 2000 study, the nursery and landscape industry had the potential to net an additional \$245 million in sales had the ongoing severe drought and water use restrictions in Florida not been factors.

For more information on the economic impact study, contact Jacqueline DeSousa, Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association, at 800.375.FNGA or jdesousa@fnga.org.