

## Landscape Council, Editorial and Content Comments

I recently spent two weeks of the most rewarding and most frustrating times of my nursery career. I attended two conventions at which the underlying current concerned the Landscape Council.

Most nurserymen seem to agree with the program, but have hesitated to put their signatures on the application card.

Why? Either procrastination, unanswered questions, or just plain conservatism are the most apt reasons. It can't be fear of losing money, because no money is asked for at this time. And nurserymen have a reputation of always being willing to spend money for something that *might* help them.

The most common excuse I have heard is that "I have all the business I can handle." Truer words were never spoken, BUT will this situation remain static? I doubt it. The mass merchandisers, right now, sell somewhere around 50% (and this is conservative) of the total plants sold. How much did they sell in 1959? Maybe 10%. At this rate, in ten years they will sell upwards of 90% of the plants, *leaving us with 10%!*

*Would you be willing to have more business if you could handle it?*

No one that I have talked to has answered that question negatively. How can we handle more business? By getting more competent help.

This program is going to put the squeeze on both wholesalers and retailers alike. There won't be enough plant material available to meet the demand. According to the economic axiom of supply and demand, prices of nursery stock will rise from the producer. Carrying the normal markup, the retail prices will also rise, resulting in a higher dollar profit. With the higher dollar profit, you can pay higher wages to attract more and better people.

The increased wage scale and the status of a large industry will attract labor to our industry that heretofore would feel degraded to do "farm work." The increase in the dollar profit and the image of the industry will also stimulate other suppliers, such as the machinery manufacturers, to the

market we will create by our demands for better mechanization.

Let's face it, the nursery industry has never been loud enough or worth a manufacturer's time and dollars to develop something *just for us*. Almost always, we have had to adapt some piece of machinery to our needs that was really developed for an entirely different job.

All of these theories are, of course, predicated on the success of The Landscape Council. The question is (although no one has really voiced the opinion that it wouldn't): *Will it work?*

I can only answer this question with a question. Is this program so different from the ones used by the Florida Citrus Commission and, closer to home, the florists with F.T.D., that they could not be compared? Everyone has seen the tremendous growth and profits of the florist industry under F.T.D. Also, the phenomenal growth and success of the Holland Bulb producers came after a program such as this was instituted.

Although all the details have not been announced as yet, I understand that the S.A.F. (Society of American Florists) is instituting a national sales program late in 1970 using, as their media, the larger mass merchandising magazines, and the services of the N.B.C. Monitor program on radio.

This program *will* work but it needs the backing and support of the entire industry to get off the ground. If it doesn't get started, we will always wonder whether it would have worked.

The disposable dollar is shrinking due to surtaxes and inflation, and, if we don't get our bid in for the amount of that dollar that's left, we may have plenty of time to wonder about it. To paraphrase an old saying, "he who hesitates has lost it for others as well as himself."—**DANIEL S. CAPPER**, Capper's Nursery, McLean, Va.

### Accurate Reporting

We wish to thank you for the excellent coverage of the Central Plains Turfgrass Field Day in your July issue. It contained some of the most accurate reporting where I knew the story from ac-

tual experience that I have had the privilege of reading.

In your insect report, you may wish to report rather serious damage to fringes and fairways and occasional greens and other turf areas in Kansas due to Beet army worms and some unidentified lepidopterous larvae in mid and late July.—**RAY A. KEEN**, Department of Horticulture, Kansas State University, Manhattan.

### Government Interference

I write for the first time to comment upon the content of two recent editions. But first, a word about myself.

I am a small independent Milwaukee area tree surgeon. I spent 14 years as an employee of the city of Milwaukee in the forestry department and five years as an independent. I operate alone, hiring help only when necessary. This gives me independence and saves the federal red tape regarding employees and record-keeping.

In a recent editorial, you objected to the federal government providing nursery stock at lower than prevailing free enterprise prices. I feel you have every right to be concerned, and if you speak on behalf of most nurserymen, those concerns are well justified. However, you address yourself to only a small part of the total problem. The list of citizens who are being offended by the central government grows longer each day. You should be concerned about all restrictive federal legislation.

Few of us see that the problem is not that which confronts us as individuals. The problem lies in that we are all divided and concerned with our very limited area, when we should all be concerned with federal usurpation of power.

In a more recent issue of WTT, you had an excellent article on the Federal Reserve System, and while I hardly expected to find that subject examined in a journal such as yours, I do commend you for speaking so forthrightly. You have made a good start, I feel, in going in the proper direction of an issue of vital concern to every American. I commend you.—**ROBERT W. JOHNSON**, Milwaukee, Wis.