

LANDSCAPE

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NURSERYMEN

Texas short course features merchandizing

Melvin Brady of Brea, California, gave Texas Nurserymen a brief course in marketing at the nurserymen's short course at College Station.

Brady talked about meeting the challenge of the discount chains by (1) defining your target market, (2) matching your inventory to that market, (3) finding the unique selling point to make your nursery different, (4) practicing differential pricing, and (5) providing knowledgeable service.

In merchandising, stores are usually classified by what they sell, Brady said. But he proposed a different classification, by type of merchandise: convenience, shopping, or specialty items. A nursery is a specialty store, he said, and its target market is the middle income, middle-age market — the people who are established in a home, have a family, and are interested in creating a beautiful environment for that family.

Neil Sperry of Dallas praised radio as an advertising medium for the nursery industry. In the past 10 years, Sperry said, radio listenership has gone up 63 percent while newspaper readership has gone down 4 percent. The cost of radio has risen 63 percent, while newspaper advertising has gone up 111 percent.

CONVENTION

Mid-Am/81 show sets record at new site

The 1981 Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show attracted 6,240 at the new Hyatt Regency Chicago, surpassing the former record of 5,744 that attended Mid-Am/80.

Landscape architects, landscape contractors, nurserymen, garden center operators, florists, and other horticultural professionals purchased more than \$1.5 million worth of goods and services at the three-day show. Both buyers and suppliers, representing virtually every aspect of the industry, journeyed from all regions of the country to inspect products and services. Among the suppliers were sellers of plant materials, stock, all types of machinery and heavy equipment, soil conditioners, chemicals, lawn and garden accessories, watering systems, communications systems, ornamentals, tools, and data processing systems.

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CONTRACTOR NEWS

HRI publishes 1979 operating cost study

The 1979 operating cost study, tenth in a series begun in 1965 by the Horticultural Research Institute, presents operating costs for retail, landscape, and production firms.

The study presents three separate cost studies in a single volume, according to HRI president, Bob Siebenthaler. "This means that retail garden centers, landscape firms, and growers can compare their operating costs with all other firms doing the same type of business and similar operations of comparable size," says Siebenthaler.

In an annual trends section, there is a seven-year comparative history, showing information gathered from previous studies for landscape firms, a six-year comparison for growers, and a five-year comparison for retail garden centers.

The study reveals that the total cost production for landscape firms decreases as sales volume increases. Conversely, gross profit increases slightly as sales volume increases. In addition, selling expenses decrease as firm size increases.

A copy of the full report can be obtained for \$6.50 from HRI, 230 Southern Building, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Massachusetts pros discuss state topics

An expansive array of subjects and exhibits brought success to the seventh annual Massachusetts Hort Congress at Dunfey's Hyannis Resort.

The congress broke all records for attendance and exhibitors, who displayed nursery stock, sod, fertilizers, irrigation equipment, tools, chemicals, seeds, birdfeeders, and pottery.

The 1,000 registered attendees heard discussion on topics, such as gypsy moth control, guarantees, marketing, fertilizer, cost accounting for proper bidding, and trends in workmen's compensation. One speaker examined energy saving usages of plant material and another discussed horizontal and vertical solutions to difficult landscape situations.

Members of the Massachusetts Nurserymen's Association and Massachusetts Arborists Association moderated the educational sessions. These groups, along with the state's cooperative extension service, sponsored the event.

Brochure published for consumers of L.A.

The California State Board of Landscape Architects has recently published a brochure entitled, "Professional Responsibility: The Landscape Architect," authored by Nancy Hardesty, current president of the California State Board.

The brochure supports Governor Jerry Brown's policy of consumer protection and education. This policy is further reflected in the governor's appointments to the board, which now has four public members and two landscape architects, Ms. Hardesty of Northern California and Paul Saito of Southern California.

Ms. Hardesty has spent two years assembling the data for the brochure, which is written "in an easy, light style for consumer understanding," she says. "It describes the landscape architects' educational background, areas of expertise, design responsibilities and California license requirements, and includes a section on how to locate and hire a landscape architect." The board plans to distribute the brochure at local chambers of commerce, city and county building departments, and at high school career days.