

by Bruce F. Shank, executive editor

## Weather changes standards for cold hardiness in Texas

*Tip of the Month*—Ft. Worth, TX, Plant Pro Rich Pluenneke has reported plants currently rated to survive Texas winters are suffering severe damage this winter.

Some zone 7 and 8 plants are having trouble with the December low temperatures in the 20's. Ligustrum and oleander have been hit hard. "Losses were expected to reach 15 to 20 percent in December," Pluenneke said. "Recent checks indicate losses may go as high as 70 percent in Ft. Worth."

Turf has also been hit. Pluenneke said "Raleigh" St. Augustine appears winter-damaged in his area. "Raleigh" is a variety developed in North Carolina to withstand colder winter temperatures than other types of St. Augustine.

Although this winter may not be matched for years, Pluenneke thinks Texas landscape architects and contractors should take note of the losses and reevaluate the problem plants for their area.

## Pinkus claims colleges care more about grants than students

Outgoing Associated Landscape Contractors of America President Dave Pinkus blasted colleges for caring more about grants than preparing students for the business world during a speech at ALCA's annual conference in Phoenix.

"Higher educational institutions are more interested in research grants and protection of tenured faculty than they are in producing marketable students," exclaimed Pinkus. "Our industry's number one problem is finding qualified people."

Pinkus outlined four areas where colleges fall short. Few schools require business courses for landscape contracting students, encourage students to gain industry exposure, have faculty with exposure to the landscape industry, and know individual needs of the landscape market or students.

"You could say colleges are cheating the students, fired Pinkus. ALCA is trying to help colleges to develop landscape contracting curricula by visiting them and explaining the needs of the market.

## Changing technology creates shortfall in new talent

If your son or daughter is wondering what career to pursue, Dale E. Wolf thinks he or she should look into agricultural technology.

Wolf is group vice president, agricultural chemicals for Du Pont. "Technology is literally racing ahead in numerous fields today," Wolf points out. "We (agriculture) may be sidetracked simply because we cannot organize and train the necessary army of talented and highly trained scientists, technicians and managers. Too few American students recognize there are dozens of careers in agriculture which will place them on the leading edge of major scientific developments."

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3091 Maple Drive  
Maple Center One Building  
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(404) 233-1817

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7500 Old Oak Boulevard  
Cleveland, OH 44130  
Editorial: (216) 243-8100

**CHICAGO**  
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