RIP Dr. Paul Thomas, Where's Fall? and Squishin' Bugs



News and commentary for the nursery & landscape market

GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE greenPROFIT MAGAZINE

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

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Nursery & LANDSCAPE INSIDER

News and Commentary for the landscape and nursery market





COMING UP THIS WEEK:

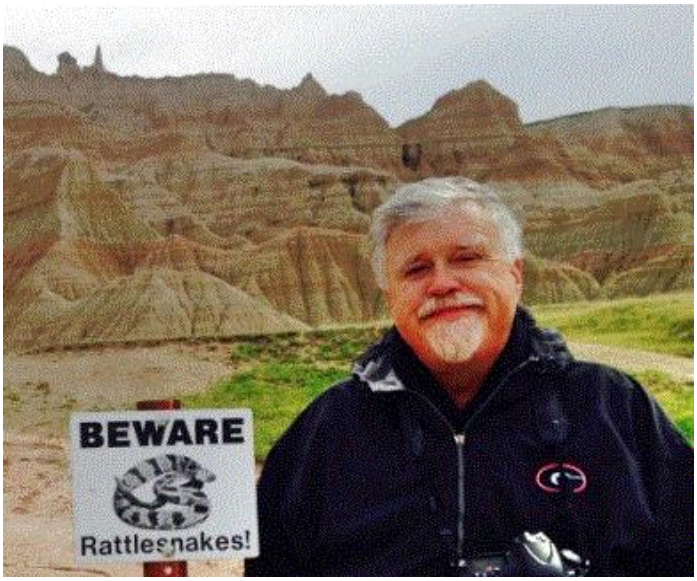
RIP Paul Thomas
Going Out On Top
Fall – Another 4-Letter Word
Rainbow Circus Mum
Wage & Benefit Survey Time
TreeTown's Open House
Electric Lights Azalea
Notes from the Edge of Sanity





In Memoriam: Professor Paul Thomas

Early on the morning of Saturday, September 14, I received a call from a Delaware number. I dismissed it as a telemarketer. The same number called again … and then I answered on the third attempt. The gent on the other end announced that he was from the Delaware State Police. Being that I knew Dr. Paul Thomas was in Delaware visiting students and colleagues, I naturally asked if they had finally arrested Paul for texting while driving … the answer I received wasn't so humorous. A legend in academia and floriculture production was gone. He fell asleep on Friday night and didn't wake up Saturday morning—an apparent heart attack stealing him away from family and friends. He had retired from UGA two weeks earlier and was on his first assignment as Academic Ambassador for the American Floral Endowment.





While at UGA, Paul taught greenhouse management, horticultural business practices and interiorscaping classes. He also served as the State Extension Specialist in floriculture. Wrote Professor Marc van Iersel of UGA in a letter to Paul's friends and colleagues, “Paul was a fierce advocate for his students and placed many of them in greenhouses around the country. He was extremely passionate about working with students and made a tremendous impact on the floriculture industry. We will all miss him, but no one will miss him more than his wife, Toni, and his two sons, the youngest of whom just got married.”

Debi Chedester, executive director of AFE, wrote that Paul had been engaged by them to help out with promoting AFE’s Vic & Margaret Ball Internship program and AFE’s scholarships.

“Paul has been a great supporter of AFE’s programs for many years and has sent dozens of students through AFE’s programs. He helped create the current internship videos we use today that encourage participation by students and the industry.

Paul volunteered to serve as an AFE Ambassador and had a half dozen visits scheduled between now and the end of the year to talk with other faculty members and speak in front of hort clubs on the east coast. He was such a great educator and had a passion for this industry that was infectious. He loved AFE and spent his entire career promoting the floral industry. He was an amazing person and his presence will be missed by so many.”

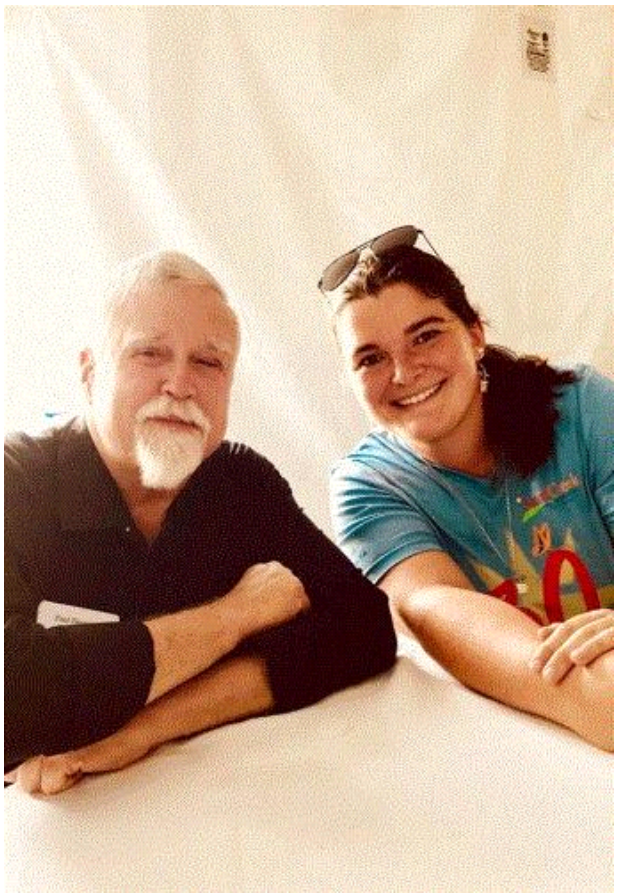
The University of Georgia Horticulture Department has set up a scholarship in Paul's name, with donations going to providing scholarships to students interested in a career in floriculture. Click HERE for more on how to donate to the scholarship.



Going Out On Top

Dr. Paul Thomas was a Facebook fanatic—with a majority of his posts applauding the accomplishments (personal and professional) of his current and former students —“Hort Dawgs,” he called them. Like Matt McCarty, who had been hired on at Green Circle Growers; Emily Currens, the new full-time grower at Brushwood Nursery; and Jeffrey Arner, who landed a job with Copiana, a hydroponic systems company.

Here's his very last post, dated Thursday, September 12. I think Paul would be pleased with us sharing this, as it wasn't about him, it was about supporting and celebrating the next generation:



Dr. Paul Thomas with Miss Sarah Chance, University of Georgia Horticulture student and American Floral Endowment Intern.

"*Today I had the pleasure of visiting my last Vic and Margaret Ball program intern. A sad, but also happy day seeing another successful student doing great things! Sarah Chance is a UGA horticulture major who is interning at North Creek Nursery for six months. North Creek produces quality perennial plugs. The internship is paid and she will receive a $6,000 scholarship when finished. North Creek staff are amazing and they provide an outstanding internship training program. Today was their annual open house. Sarah helped her boss and mentor Gloria with presentations and then gave me a great tour!*

While there, we bumped into Dr. Bob Lyons who served our industry at VT, UDel, Longwood Gardens and more. Many stories were shared today. Sarah has impressed the staff here at North Creek and represents Hort Dawgs perfectly! Many thanks to Steve Castorini (owner) and CEO Tim McGinty for taking such good care of our students! Well done, Sarah! See you back in Georgia in November! And yes … GO HORT DAWGS!"

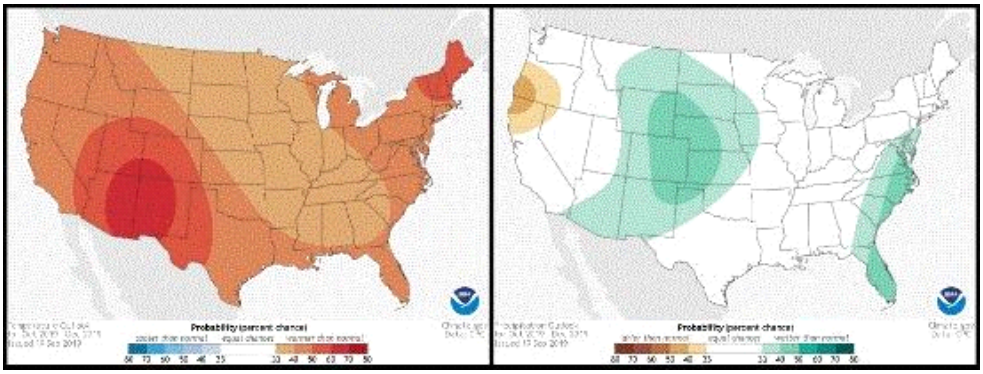
Dr. Thomas' obituary and information on services can be found here.

VIBRANT

PW PROVEN WINNERS

Fall—Just Another 4-Letter Word

If you live east of the Rocky Mountains, then you must be wondering if you're in Bizarro World (old timers will know that Superman reference) these days. Yes, the calendar does indicate today is the first day of fall, but the thermometer seems to have not gotten the memo yet. It seems that memo got lost by USPS too, as temps in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Climate Outlook for October through December are above average for pretty much all of the continental U.S. (as well as Alaska) and Canada. So if you're hoping for a mosquito-killing freeze anytime soon, you may be in for a wait.



Predicted departures from normal for the period October-December, 2019. Temperature is the left figure and precipitation the right figure.

If there's any good news, it's that the majority of the continental U.S. should have near normal to slightly above average rainfall. Personally, I could use some raindrops. We've had a single evening of rain in the last month totaling a whopping 0.6 in. of precipitation at my home in lovely Crawford, Georgia.



Rainbow Circus Mum

How can we not talk about mums on the first day of fall? Scouring my iPhone images way back from the trip to Spring Trials, I found my favorite new mum from the trip. Released by Dümmen Orange, Rainbow Circus is a great example of vivid color contrast and high-impact floral display, with deep orange/red petals with bright yellow margins.



Developed for the fall potted mum market, Rainbow Circus should be widely available in time for the Fall 2020 market.



Wage & Benefit Survey Time

It's that time of year again, when all of your normally sarcastic and sassy Ball Publishing folks turn to begging and groveling for five minutes of your time to help us with a critical industry survey. It's the 24th year for the *GrowerTalks* Wage & Benefit survey and 11th for *Green Profit,* and if you enter your email at the end, you'll be entered into a drawing to win a 128GB iPad.

GROWERTALKS

24th Annual Wage & Benefit Survey

sponsored by FLORASEARCH, INC.

And have no fear, we won't share or keep your email … it's just for the drawing. So head on over to the following links to complete the survey.

Link to *GrowerTalks* survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HZ7GJW9

Link to *Green Profit* survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P9JR8BJ

TreeTown's Landscape Professionals Open House

This sounds like a really cool event for you West Coast gals and guys! On September 27 (that's this Friday), TreeTown will host a landscape professionals gathering where nursery tours and talks on new plants will come together with some good food and company.

To be a little more specific, the event will take place at TreeTown USA Winters Nursery in Winters, California. Enjoy a delicious BBQ lunch, nursery tours, plant displays, raffle prizes and more! Nicholas Staddon, The Plantsman, will present on new plant introductions, followed by a special screening of Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf.

village nurseries
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This event is free for attendees. Space is limited, so reserve your spot today!

Electric Lights Azalea

A couple of weeks ago, I had the chance to tour the Bailey Innovations research and development campus near Athens, Georgia. I'll write more on that adventure in the upcoming newsletter, but the experience made me think of all the Bailey Innovations introductions over the years. While I don't have a single favorite, Azalea Electric Lights is up there. It's a deciduous azalea developed by the ornamental breeding gang at the University of Minnesota and released a few years ago as part of the First Editions brand.



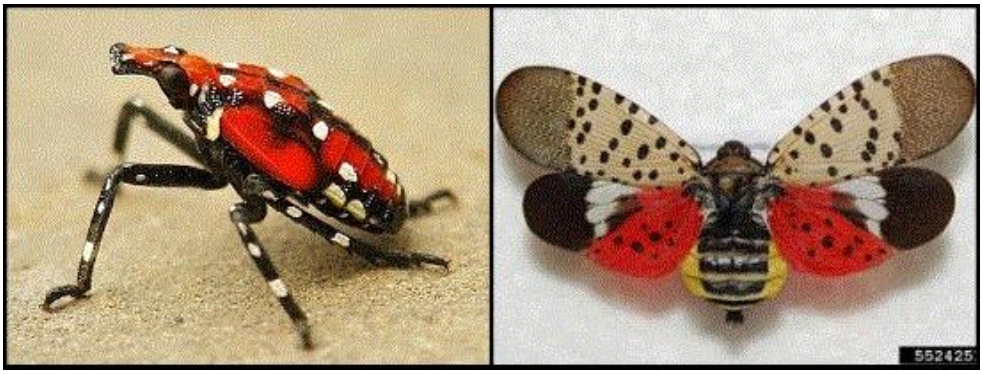
With flower buds hardy to -30F and a tolerance to mildly alkaline (or acidic) soils, it's a great ornamental for Zones 4-5 across the northern tier, even though it'll handle the heat down into Zone 7. Flowers are a double medium pink with a little yellow blotch that seems to give the blooms a little more zing. Plant size is about 5-7 ft. tall, but it can be pruned down to minimize height. Just make sure you do your pruning immediately after bloom ends. Prune too late and you'll be removing next year's flowers.

Our Wild and Wacky World—Notes from the Edge of Sanity

Alternate Title: The Wacky Spotted Lanternfly Update

For those of you living in Pennsylvania, Virginia, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland (where live spotted lanternfly have been observed) or New York and Massachusetts (where dead adults have been spotted)—you have a new form of therapy. That's right folks, you no longer need that pesky psychiatrist to solve your problems … you now have the spotted lanternfly to assist in maintaining your mental health (I'm joking, people).

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, a recognized control method for this insect is, "Kill it! Squash it, smash it ... just get rid of it." That's my kind of therapy—squashing invasive species bugs! Maybe they will have a contest to see who is first to a million squishes—or is it squashes?



It is always good to properly identify insects prior to squishing. Pictured here is spotted lanternfly at two prominent life stages.

So, if you see spotted lanternfly, first let your local Department of Agriculture and/or Cooperative Extension Office know. Second, chase the bug! And if you see hordes of people running and jumping erratically around their yard or in streets, they're probably just chasing the adults (moths). The zombie apocalypse is not underway … yet.

Live authentic,

Matthew Chappell
Editor-at-Large
Nursery & Landscape Insider

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