



*Tennessee*  
**GREENTIMES**

VOL. 16/NO. 1  
SPRING 2015

The Official Publication of The Tennessee Nursery and Landscape Association

*UT Gardens*  
**2014 BEST &  
BEAUTIFUL**  
*Annuals and  
Perennials*

**Nursery Irrigation:  
The Importance of  
Water Availability and  
Irrigation Efficiency**

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**Crapemyrtle Bark Scale  
Expands Its Range in the South**

# DBB015

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# Tennessee GREENTIMES

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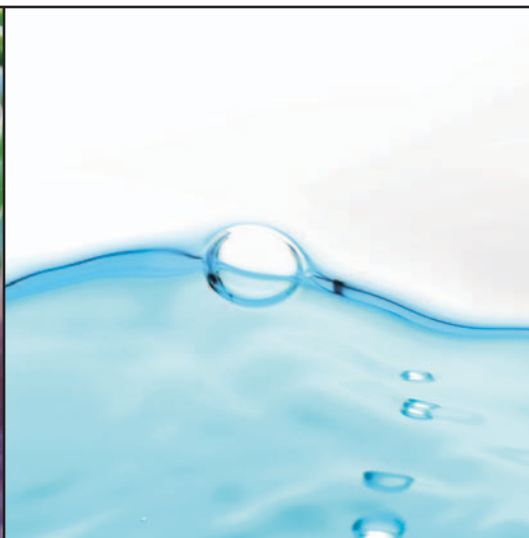
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# A GREAT *Year Ahead!*

**My** name is Jeff Harrell, and I am your 2015 TNLA president. The torch from former president Matt Dawson was officially passed to me in January. It is an exciting challenge to be able to serve as your new president.

When first asked to join the board in 2013, I was reluctant, but it has been a very positive experience. Being part of the board has given me the opportunity to meet and work with new people in our industry. I look forward to continuing to build a network throughout the year as president.

I feel that 2015 will be a good year for TNLA. Once again, we have merged with MTNA for the Tennessee Green Industry Expo, to be held in Nashville on September 17–18, 2015. With plants in high demand and short supply, an early fall show could be enticing to buyers looking to place orders before the January tradeshow rush.

I would like to thank all who have participated in our past shows. I would also like to encourage those of you who have not participated in the past to give it consideration this year. We are working hard to make this a successful and productive show.

The ultimate goal of TNLA is to increase the production and marketing of Tennessee-grown nursery stock. Our board is dedicated to making our goal a reality, and I will work diligently as president to make this happen. My motto is start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can. I look forward to serving you and this organization in 2015.

***Jeff Harrell***

2015 TNLA President

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# Meet Your New TNLA Leaders!

At TNLA's Business Meeting held on October 3 during the Fall 2014 Tennessee Green Industry Expo in Nashville, Tennessee, the following new TNLA officers and director for 2015 were elected and installed.

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Photo by Caroline Allison.

JDR257

## NEW TNLA MEMBERS

## Welcome, TNLA NEW MEMBERS!

**ACTIVE MEMBER****Panter Nursery**

Terry Panter  
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McMinnville, TN 37110

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS****Cowart Mulch Products, Inc.**

My linda Merck  
185 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.  
Sugar Hill, GA 30518

**Husqvarna Professional Products**

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Jefferson City, TN 37760

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***The Event for all Your Horticulture Needs***

# UT Gardens' 2014 Best & Beautiful *Annuals and Perennials*

*By Susan Hamilton, Ed.D., Director of the UT Gardens; Beth Willis, Trials Coordinator; James Newburn, Assistant Director; Holly Jones, Kitchen Garden Manager; Jason Reeves, Curator of the Jackson UT Gardens; Carol Reese, Ornamental Horticulture Specialist; and Andy Pulte, Plant Sciences Faculty Instructor, The University of Tennessee*

## TOP ANNUALS of 2014



### Best in Show — **Canna Cannova® Series**

A seed-grown canna that was most impressive, it was early to bloom and had vigorous growth and uniform height. Unlike some other seed-grown cultivars, it developed multiple shoots early, which allowed for an abundance of blooms. The vibrant flower colors were outstanding, and with a long blooming season (until frost), this series created quite the flower power display. Topping out at 4' tall, it's ideal for the landscape or as a large container plant. This canna had it all. We trialed three colors: 'Cannova Yellow', 'Cannova Rose' and 'Cannova Red Shades' — all were outstanding. (Ball Ingenuity)



### Best New Variety — **Cuphea Vermillionaire™**

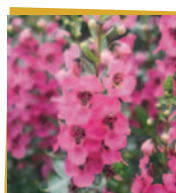
Tiny, red-orange, cigar-like flowers set against dark-green foliage covered this vase-shaped plant to form a mass of color. Matured to 18" to 24" tall. A very heat- and drought-tolerant plant that attracts bees and hummingbirds. (Proven Winners)



### Best Repeat Variety **Celosia 'Arrabona'**

A plume-type celosia with neon red-orange flowers and great branching on a sturdy plant that provided non-stop color throughout the season. (PanAmerican Seed)

## Top Twenty Annuals (alphabetical)



### **Angelonia Archangel™ Dark Rose**

Perfect for the South, Archangel loved the heat and tolerated humidity and drought. This multi-branching plant had strong, erect stems that provided sturdy support for the flower spikes. The beautiful, rich, deep color was still bright enough to stand out in the landscape. (Ball Floraplant)



### **Begonia Pegasus™**

This vigorous foliage plant added unique color and texture to shade containers and landscapes. The large, glossy palmate leaves had a dark, blue-green background with contrasting silver between the leaf veins. Reaching 14" to 18" tall, this plant gave our shady spots a lush, tropical feel. (Proven Winners)



### **Calibrachoa Superbells® Cherry Red Improved**

Talk about a color that popped! The bright, hot, neon blooms covered the plant all season long, adding pizzazz to mixed containers, and the plant was a showstopper when used alone. (Proven Winners)



### **Capsicum 'NuMex Easter'**

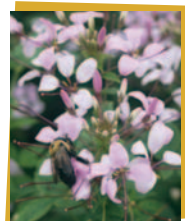
The small, pointed fruits of cream, orange and purple grew well above the foliage and covered this medium-sized, 8" to 10" mounding plant. (Johnny's Selected Seeds)



### ***Catharanthus (Vinca)***

All of our vincas performed well in each trialing location. The focus this year was on selections with a white center. 'Titan Lavender Blue Halo' and 'Titan Rose Halo' from PanAmerican Seed and 'Vitesse Lavender Morn' and 'Vitesse

Rose Morn' from Floranova were our top choices.



### ***Cleome Pequeña Rosalita™***

A more compact version of the top-performing Senorita Rosalita®, Pequeña Rosalita had excellent branching, wonderful flower power and was more long lasting than cleomes of the past. The sturdy stems and shorter form decreased the tendency of lodging or splitting apart. (Proven Winners)



### ***Coreopsis 'Sunshine Suzy'***

Non-stop, bright-yellow blooms that didn't fade or wash out as they aged made this compact (12" to 16"), low-maintenance plant exceptional. (Proven Winners)



### ***Fragaria 'Toscana'***

This ornamental strawberry had showy pink blooms set against large, dark-green foliage. Its cascading habit made it well suited for containers. (Fleuroselect)





***Lobularia* Dark Knight™**

Delicate, deep-purple blooms on feathery foliage made this alyssum perfect for the front of the border. It kept blooming well into the heat of summer before flowering slowed down. (Proven Winners)



***Impatiens* Big Bounce™ and Bounce™**

This new series of interspecific impatiens hybrids performed fantastically in morning sun and afternoon shade. Covered in blooms all season, both series came in a great palette of colors, with no evidence of disease problems. Big Bounce™ was more vigorous, reaching 18" to 24" in height, while Bounce™ was about half that. Both had a mounding habit that was well suited for landscape, container or hanging-basket use. (Selecta)



***Passiflora* Aphrodites Purple Nightie™**

This very vigorous vine needed room to grow. A prolific bloomer, it was filled with flowers at varying stages of growth throughout the season, which made for a constant succession of open flower blooms. (Proven Winners)



***Pelargonium* (Geranium) 'Pinto Premium White to Rose'**

This 2013 AAS bedding-plant winner was a beautiful geranium from seed. Florets that darkened from white to pink to rose as they aged resulted in one flower head with multiple complementary colors. Large blooms were long lasting on strong stems above dark-green foliage. (Goldsmith)



***Pennisetum* Graceful Grasses® 'Sky Rocket'**

Thin, variegated green-and-white blades and show-stopping seedheads made this indeed a "graceful grass." Plumes began to appear in July, making this annual fountain grass an ideal specimen plant in large containers or in mass plantings in the landscape. Vigorous but not too tall, topping out at 3' to 4'. (Proven Winners)



***Petunia* Supertunia® Indigo Charm and Morning Glory Charm**

Indigo Charm (shown) displayed uniform flower mounds and a profusion of small, rich, purple blooms that seemed to be made of velvet. Morning Glory Charm had a white throat and the same small blooms that stood up well to wind and rain, making it ideal for containers and landscapes and as a substitute for calibrachoa. (Proven Winners)



***Petunia* Tidal Wave™ Cherry**

This vigorous, seed-grown selection has been around for several years, but its eye-catching, bright neon color and mounding habit (up to 24") made it perfect for the landscape. (PanAmerican Seed)



***Portulaca* RioGrande™ Series**

Large flowers in clear, bold, vibrant colors formed a dense mat that tolerated heat and drought. We evaluated Magenta, Yellow, Orange and White, and all were exceptional. Although they're marketed for hanging baskets, we planted ours in the ground, and they were an eye-catching groundcover for the front of the bed. (Ball Floraplant)



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### **Salvia Ablazin™ Series**

With flower spikes held upright on strong sturdy stems, these 18" to 24" plants were prolific bloomers all summer, whether dead-headed or allowed to self-clean. Evaluated in two colors: Tabasco, a fire-engine red, and Purple, a rich, velvety eggplant purple.

Both were great bee and butterfly attractants. Mystic Spires Blue (shown), a cross species, was a bit more vigorous, with deep blue spikes, and received the highest possible scores in both gardens. Very heat and drought tolerant and was the most visited plant by bees and butterflies in the garden all summer. (Proven Winners)



### **Scaevola Pink Wonder™**

Great groundcover for the front of the bed. Continuously blooming plants were heat and drought tolerant. A bit more compact than we've seen in the past. The great pink color was rich enough to not wash out in the sunlight. (Proven Winners)



### **Solenostemon (Coleus)**

#### **Kong™ Lime Sprite (shown)**

This large-leaved, seed-grown coleus had lime-green, wide margins and burgundy-red centers. We were successful with this very striking plant both when grown in the shade as in Knoxville or in almost full sun as in Jackson. (Ball Premier)

### **Color Blaze® Lime Time™**

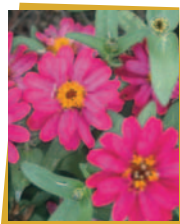
Vigorous sun-loving coleus in a bright chartreuse color that didn't scorch in the sun. Great foliage plant for pairing with any number of other foliage or bloom colors to form striking combinations. (Proven Winners)



### **Verbena EnduraScape™ Series**

Very heat tolerant. Did not cycle in and out of bloom like many older cultivars but instead flowered continuously. We evaluated Blue, Dark Purple, Hot Pink, Lavender and Red — all with great, rich color retention even as

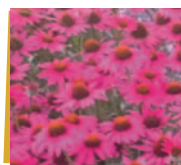
individual flowers passed their prime. (Ball FloraPlant)



### **Zinnia 'Profusion Double Hot Cherry'**

As in past years, Profusion zinnias continued to be one of the top choices in our trials. This year's top pick was a 2013 AAS winner that was bright, deep, hot pink whose vibrant flower faded to a pleasant,

softer tone as it aged. All the Profusion cultivars massed together well, were of uniform height, bloomed prolifically until frost and were disease resistant. (Sakata)



### **Echinacea 'Glowing Dream', Glowing Dream Coneflower**

Terra Nova nurseries said, "This compact, floriferous coneflower hybrid has *E.*

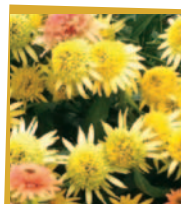
*tennesseensis* parentage, which imparts a great habit and a great crown." We certainly found this to be true. The flowers were a glowing, deep, fuchsia-red and were produced in abundance in May and June, while the compact but not overly short stems were strong enough to hold the blooms upright.



### **Echinacea 'Colorburst Orange', Colorburst Orange Coneflower**

Beautiful, anemone-type double flowers opened with centers that aged from dark green to lime-green and then to orange, remaining attractive with each stage. 28"

tall and 22" wide. Excellent vigor. Flowers are very large on extra-strong stems and well-branched plants.



### **Echinacea 'Secret Glow', Secret Glow Coneflower**

This Terra Nova selection's large number of unique, school-bus-yellow double flowers made it a standout in the garden. The sheer number and weight of the flowers made it somewhat floppy as compared to 'Glowing

Dream', and the stalks can lodge slightly after heavy rains, but compared to older double cultivars, it is a winner.



### **Rudbeckia fulgida var. sullivantii 'Little Goldstar' black-eyed Susan**

This introduction from Jelitto Seeds is thought to be an improvement over 'Goldsturm', an industry favorite for years. It was much more proportional and compact, standing just knee-

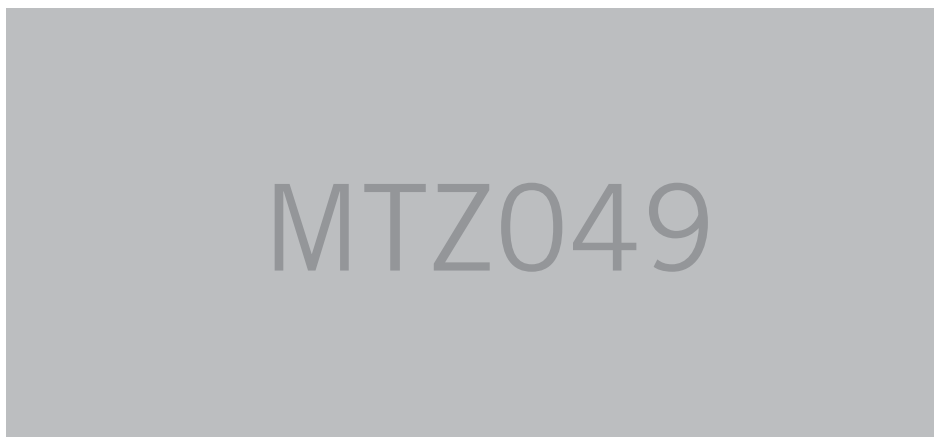
high at 14" to 16" tall and wide, with more blooms on a tighter habit. Loads of yellow, daisy-like flowers surrounded a prominent brown cone that, in winter, provided a healthy snack for birds. Flowers can be used for fresh or dried floral bouquets and were very attractive to butterflies and bees in the summer.



### **Tetrapanax papyrifer 'Steroidal Giant', Rice Paper Plant**

For a truly tropical look, this cultivar of giant rice paper plant couldn't be beat. It was all about big and bold foliage. It can make a dramatic show if planted in combination with hydrangea and most any other plant. In

Tennessee, expect one season's growth to be about 10' to 12' tall and just as wide. The brown, hairy stalks were clothed with giant 3' to 5' wide, fuzzy, castor-bean-shaped leaves. The root suckered underground, although less than the typical form, and fortunately, it was easy to remove. The plant thrived in full-sun to partial-shade and a moist but well-drained soil. 🌿



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## Connecting the Industry Across the Southeast

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# Nursery Irrigation:

## The Importance of Water Availability and Irrigation Efficiency

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*By Halee Jones, Undergraduate Student, Department of Plant Sciences, and Amy Fulcher, Ph.D., Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor for Sustainable Ornamental Plant Production and Landscape Management, The University of Tennessee*

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**W**ater is a vital, driving force behind life and, as such, is essential to plant life. In plants, water serves many important functions. It hydrates, drives photosynthesis, transports nutrients, promotes growth, maintains turgor pressure for physical structure and removes waste. As the human population increases worldwide, the demand for water will increase. In fact, the world's population is growing by roughly 80 million people a year, which is estimated to increase freshwater demand by 16,907,011,200,000 gallons a year!

Yet, we don't have to travel across the globe to encounter issues related to water supply. Increasing demand for water affects agriculture, including the U.S. nursery industry. Agricultural water use competes with municipal, industrial and recreational uses for a finite water supply. Currently, one of the largest draws on water supplies in the U.S. is agriculture, with irrigation application being responsible for 37% of all freshwater withdrawals.

At the time of writing, California, the nation's #1 seller of nursery crops, was three years into one of the worst droughts in history. In fact, 2013 was California's driest year since the state started keeping records more than 100 years ago. In some areas, allowable water consumption has been reduced by 95%. While surface water has been regulated in California for a long time, ground water was not regulated until January 2015; property owners were allowed to pump as much water as desired. As you can imagine, many nurseries relied on well water, especially during drought. For decades, groundwater was withdrawn faster than it was replaced in the Coachella Valley, decreasing groundwater by 55 feet over the last 43 years. To strike water, wells must now be dug twice as deep as they were just 12 months ago. The depletion of ground water reserves has led to subsidence that is collapsing the Central Valley floor, roads and structures!

### The situation in Tennessee

Tennessee's 2007 drought has become a distant memory for many people. In 2007, 66 wells were dug in Warren County. In 2008, when the drought eased (and the economy softened), just 36 wells were dug. We are counting on essentially unlimited access to well water and basically a "drill at will" policy, very similar to the system utilized until recently in California and currently Georgia. As irrigation increases, especially in the

western part of Tennessee, careful use of water can allow all sectors of Tennessee agriculture to have an enduring, sustainable edge over more-water-scarce regions.

California's lack of water could ultimately benefit businesses located elsewhere in the U.S., but we can also keep a watchful eye and learn from what California is experiencing. This knowledge may help us address related water issues in the future. Tennessee has enjoyed an abundance of water historically, but many climatologists predict droughts and other extreme weather in the future. Also, border and water-access disputes with neighboring states add to the possibility that Tennessee's water status could change. Additionally, there are now 146,442 acres of irrigated land in Tennessee. Irrigated acreage (all crops) in Tennessee increased 80% since 2007 surveys. In spite of these potential challenges and the changing demands on agricultural water use, the green industry will continue to need water to fuel production and maintenance of plants.

Members of the green industry can make sure that elected officials and the public understand how critically important water is to their livelihood and the importance of the green industry to Tennessee's economy. The sales of nursery products are among the top sectors of agriculture in Tennessee. Nursery crop sales are estimated at more than \$133 million dollars, and more than 363,000 people are employed by agriculture and forestry in Tennessee. In 2012, the market value of Tennessee agriculture was valued at \$3,611,037,000, a 38% increase from 2007. With agriculture growing, and irrigated cropland increasing, using water resources carefully will be a vital part of sustaining Tennessee's agriculture economy and heritage.

At the September 25, 2014, Sustainable Nursery Irrigation: Controlling Growth and Reducing Risk from Changing Irrigation Water Resources and Regulations Workshop sponsored by the Southern Risk Management Education Center and

organized by The University of Tennessee with partners at TSU, MTNA and Berry Family of Nurseries, the reliance and the risk related to water was discussed. One speaker, Stefan Maupin, Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, shared wise advice and encouraged growers to establish their water needs. I have come to think of this as, "You can't defend what you can't define." Being able to demonstrate the water requirements of your nursery can help mitigate disputes with neighbors and prevent litigation and other issues that challenge access to water, should water use policies change.

### Working toward solutions

At The University of Tennessee, we would like to help nursery growers understand their nursery's water requirements and how they can refine water use so that as production rebounds and demand grows, water consumption doesn't have to. This will be an emphasis in programming over the next few years. In other states, research by universities in partnership with nurseries found that precise irrigation practices dramatically decreased plant death, fungicide use and production time, which further reduced water use and other inputs. In a different irrigation project, a nursery reported cutting water use by 50%, decreasing fertilizer use by 30% and lengthening the amount of time between preemergence herbicide applications as a result of refining irrigation scheduling. In doing so, these products stayed in the container, where they can benefit the plant, rather than being leached out. With advantages like these, Tennessee growers have a lot to gain by exploring irrigation scheduling!

In future articles in *Tennessee GreenTimes*, we will explore common inefficiencies in irrigation and present various ways that growers can use water effectively. We will cover both low-tech options, such as grouping plants with similar water requirements in irrigation zones and irrigating based on leaching

fractions, as well as options that use technology like a rain delay sensor and substrate/soil moisture sensors. We will also cover simple tests that you can conduct at your nursery to improve the uniformity of delivery and other efficiencies. In future months, look for a manual on nursery irrigation and efficient water use that can help guide your efforts to protect your water resource.

For more information on how you can refine your nursery's water use, please contact your county Extension Agent, Area Extension Specialist or Dr. Amy Fulcher at The University of Tennessee, [afulcher@utk.edu](mailto:afulcher@utk.edu) or 865-974-7152. 🌿

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*This article was sponsored by the Southern Risk Management Education Center, USDA NIFA and The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture.*

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# PESTS

*In The Spotlight*

## Crapemyrtle Bark Scale

### EXPANDS ITS RANGE IN THE SOUTH

*By Frank A. Hale, Ph.D., The University of Tennessee*

Presenting many colors of showy flowers in mid-summer, crapemyrtle cultivars offer a wide range of plant sizes, provide attractive bark as a winter accent and, so, are widely planted throughout southern U.S. landscapes. Crape-myrtles are also easy to grow, as well as easy to prune and shape, and they are well adapted to sunny landscapes. Unfortunately, a new pest of crapemyrtle is starting to make crapemyrtle less appealing as a staple plant for landscapes.

First discovered in a north Dallas (Texas) suburb in 2004, this relatively new exotic pest has been tentatively identified as crapemyrtle bark scale (CMBS, *Eriococcus lagerstroemia*) (see Photo 1, and close-up Photo 2). CMBS is known to occur on crapemyrtles and pomegranates in China, Japan and Korea. From its original detection site, CMBS spread to nearby McKinney, Texas, which has been self-promoted as America's Crape-myrtle City since 2005 (McKinney had invested in major plantings of crapemyrtles since September 2000). By 2010, CMBS had spread across the Dallas–Fort Worth area and since has continued to spread rapidly. In 2012, it was found in Ardmore, Oklahoma, and Shreveport, Louisiana. Then, in 2013, it was discovered in Tyler, Texas; Houma, Louisiana; Newnan, Georgia; and Germantown, Tennessee (greater Memphis area). In 2014, CMBS was also detected in Mobile, Alabama; Little Rock, Arkansas; Fayette County, Tennessee; and Bernalillo County, New Mexico. In March 2015, CMBS was found in south Mississippi.

**Photo 1. Crape-myrtle bark scale appears as white patches on bark.**

**Photo 2. A close-up of crapemyrtle bark scale.**

**Photo 3. The top of a CMBS ovisac.**

**Photo 4. The underside of a CMBS ovisac.**

Fortunately, because CMBS is most commonly observed on the bark, infestations are relatively easy to identify on crapemyrtles. Each adult female and her eggs (Photo 3) are covered by cottony, white, waxy filaments that form a 2 mm long, oval ovisac (Photo 4). Thus, CMBS is considered a felt scale, which is different from the more common armored and soft scale. The female (Photo 5), as well as her eggs (Photo 6) and the immature stages, are red-colored and will bleed a pink fluid when crushed.

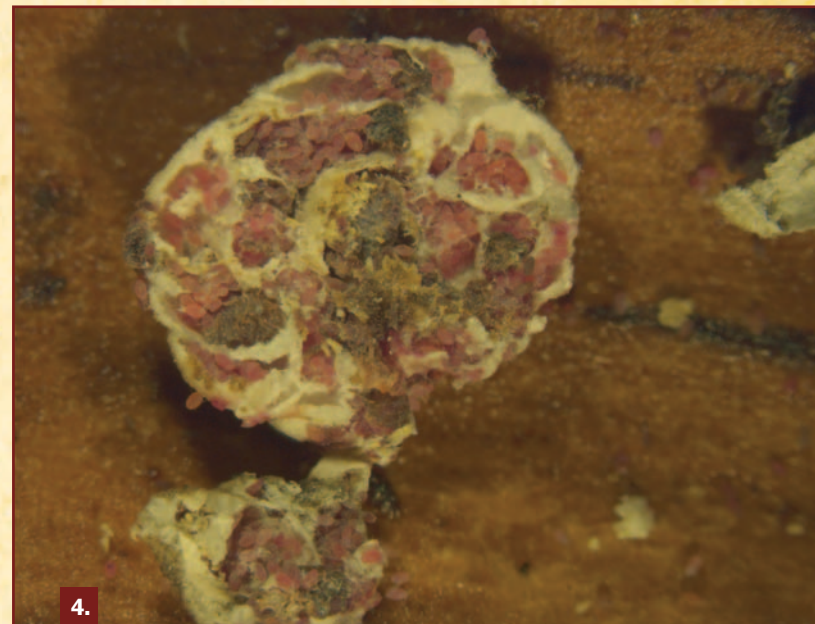
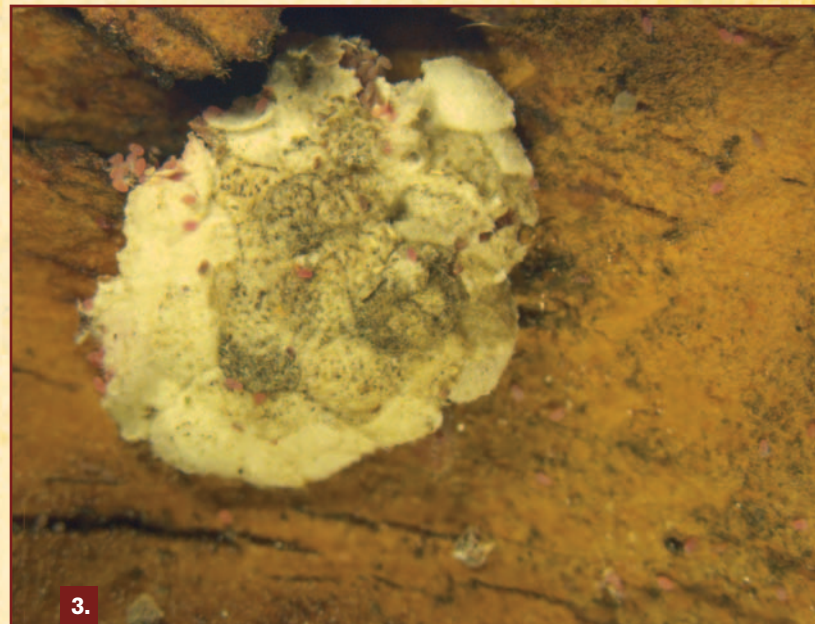
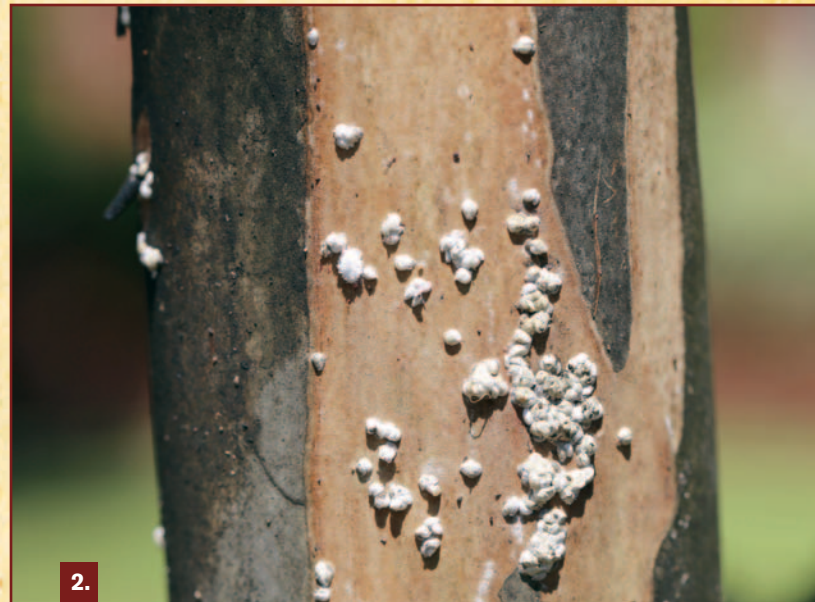
CMBS produces copious amounts of honeydew on which black sooty mold grows. While the crapemyrtle aphid also produces honeydew with the resulting sooty mold, crapemyrtle aphids are found feeding on the underside of leaves, while CMBS are encountered on the bark and small branches (Photo 7). The white CMBS ovisacs also sharply contrast against the black sooty mold on the bark of the trunk and especially on the branches. CMBS tend to aggregate more on the underside of horizontal branches, so they stand out when viewed from below.

The first instar nymphs that hatch from the eggs beneath the ovisacs start to emerge in about mid-May through early June in Tennessee. The crawlers move to an area of the bark and quickly settle down to feed. They will soon molt to second instar nymphs, which lose their legs and antennae, becoming sessile. In USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 8, two to three generations of CMBS may occur, while three or four generations may occur in Zones 9 and 10. Note that while the Memphis area is in Zone 8, my personal observations of eggs in Germantown, Tennessee (Memphis area), on July 30, 2014, correspond with the two generations per year life cycle from observations made in China. It is suspected that at least two generations may occur in Arkansas, while the potential number of generations in the majority of Tennessee (Zone 7) and other plant hardiness zones is unknown.

CMBS produces many eggs (Photo 8), and the resulting crawlers can possibly hitchhike on birds and other animals as vectors for new infestations to crapemyrtles. Thus, this pest will be able to spread locally through these natural pathways. The rapid, long-distance movement of this pest in the last 10 years is also suspected to have been aided by movement of infested plants.

### **Control options**

From all indications, this difficult-to-control pest will require an integrated pest management (IPM) approach, utilizing a combination of control options. Educational efforts should be made to teach the general public and growers to recognize this pest so that it is not moved to other locations. Inspect plants closely, and don't buy a plant that you suspect may have this pest. Alert anyone selling crapemyrtles that CMBS-infested plants should not be sold.



In the landscape, the bark of infested plants should be washed with a soft brush and a mild dishwashing-soap solution to physically remove and destroy all life stages. Commercial applicators can use a dishwashing-soap solution and a handgun sprayer with enough pressure to wash the CMBS and any loose, peeling bark from the trunk and branches without damaging the plant. Horticultural oil can be applied to the bark at the higher dormant rates during the winter.

Before applying pesticides, scout for twice-stabbed lady beetles, which are small, black lady beetles with two red spots on the wing covers. These beetles are effective predators of CMBS and should be conserved. Avoid spraying the bark with pyrethroid insecticides, carbaryl (Sevin) and other broad-

spectrum insecticides from spring through fall where lady beetles are active.

Limited insecticide tests have shown that systemic insecticides applied as a soil drench or soil injection offer the greatest potential for CMBS control. For best results, these types of applications should be made between May and July, using clothianidin (Arena 50 WDG), dinotefuran (Greenlight Tree and Shrub Insect Control, Safari), thiomethoxam (Meridian, Flagship) or imidacloprid (Merit, Bayer Advanced Garden Tree and Shrub Insect Control, and other brand names). Finally, neighborhood-wide efforts to manage this pest, similar to area-wide management of imported fire ants, will increase likelihood of successful CMBS control. 🌿

**Photo 5. A female crapemyrtle bark scale.**

**Photo 6. The pinkish-red eggs are covered by cottony, white, waxy filaments.**

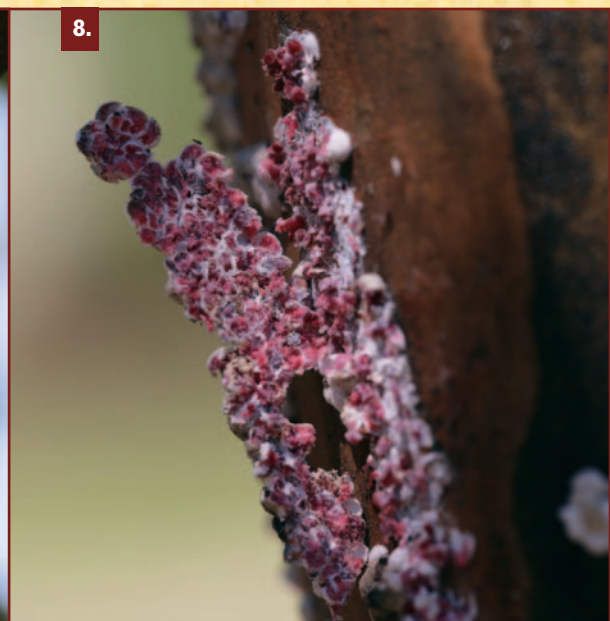
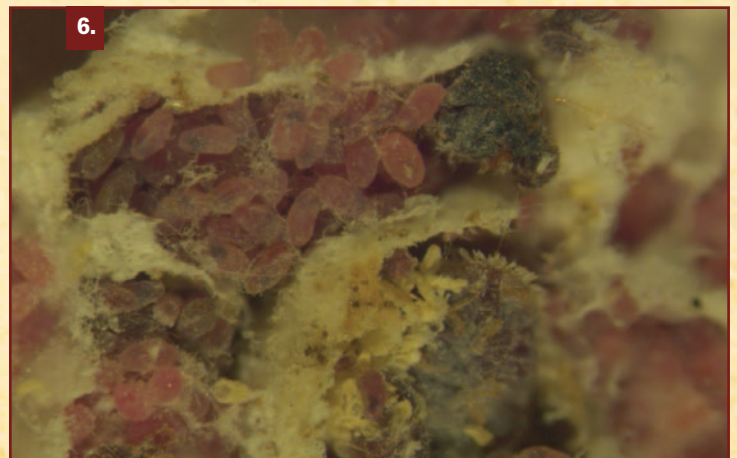
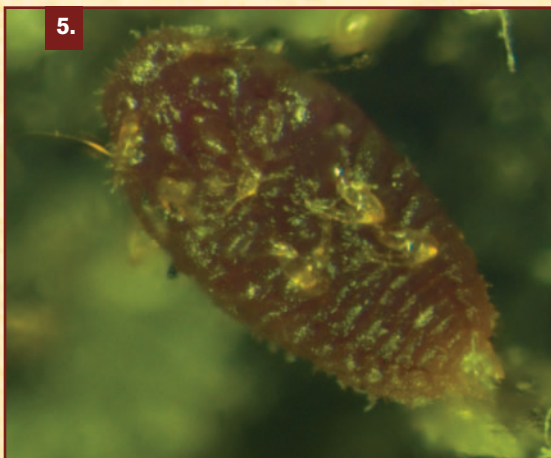
**Photo 7. CMBS are encountered on the bark and small branches (as shown), while crapemyrtle aphids feed on the underside of leaves.**

**Photo 8. CMBS produces many eggs.**

### Additional Resources

Robbins, J., J. Hopkins, M. Merchant, and M. Gu. 2014. Crape Myrtle Bark Scale: A new insect pest. Univ. Arkansas Div. Agric. Coop. Ext. Fact Sheet. FSA7086.

Gu, M., M. Merchant, Robbins, J., and J. Hopkins. 2014. Crape Myrtle Bark Scale: A new exotic pest. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Fact Sheet. EHT-049.



EWI121





# SEVEN FACTS TO BREATHE LIFE INTO YOUR BUSINESS

*By Bill McBean, Author and General Manager, McBean Partners*

**Just** *as there are facts of life that affect us personally, there are facts of business life that affect us as entrepreneurs. Bill McBean shares what he has learned over the course of a successful career to help you avoid common mistakes and steer your company in the direction you want it to go.*

*Doomed from the start.* If you're an entrepreneur or an entrepreneur-hopeful, it's probably difficult to keep those four words from causing you to second-guess your every move as you plan and run your business. They become especially hard to ignore when you consider the fact that less than 30% of businesses last more than 10 years, and most failures happen within the first few years of operation. The truth is, many things could go wrong: an ill-conceived business idea, poor planning, lack of capital, ineffective leadership and more. In the high-stakes world of running a business, those are the facts.

But there are other important facts about business ownership — facts that could help you avoid the mistakes and pitfalls that trip up so many others, and help you to go on to achieve the success you've dreamed of. I call them the Facts of Business Life. After many decades of running my own successful businesses, and learning how other successful owners have created success, I have come to the conclusion that these facts are the seven essential concepts needed to create a successful business life.

Now, don't get me wrong. There are no guarantees for entrepreneurs. Adding

to the challenge, each business is one of a kind in terms of its constraints and how it competes and operates. What you can do, though, is tilt the odds in your favor. If you're ready to build a strong, lasting foundation for your business, here's an overview of my tried-and-true seven Facts of Business Life.

## *Fact 1:*

**If you don't lead,  
no one will follow.**

At first, this statement seems mind-numbingly obvious. But often, "leadership" is one of those words that are thrown around by people who haven't given much thought to what it looks like in action. Good business leadership begins with defining the destination and direction of your company and deciding how the business should look and operate when it arrives. But it doesn't stop there. It also involves developing and continuously improving on a set of skills in order to move your business from where it is today to where you want it to be tomorrow.

What's important to understand is without effective leadership, your managers or employees have no idea what is important to the owner, what to manage or what success and failure look like. In other words, in order to have effective employees, your business first must have effective leadership, which includes defining success and failure based on the eventual destination.

Another important aspect of being a good leader is developing a company

culture that is expectations-based and that rewards those who meet and exceed those expectations. The good news about leadership is that the most important aspects can be learned, and it's essential that owners do so.

## *Fact 2:*

### **If you don't control it, you don't own it.**

Control is the owner's management reality. If you don't control your company by defining key tasks and dictating how they must be handled, and "inspect what you expect," then you don't truly "own" the business because all you are is a spectator watching others play with your money.

There are two overriding or macro concepts that successful owners understand over their unsuccessful competitors. First, great procedures and processes need controls, and these in turn create great employees. This happens because procedures and processes operate the business, and employees operate the processes. This is one of those business basics that owners must understand to be successful.

Secondly, don't stop at pointing out what should be done and how. Clearly state and emphasize that there will be consequences when standard operating procedures and processes aren't followed. If you don't do this, you'll be "leading" a group of individuals who follow their own rules and judgment, rather than a cohesive company working toward a common goal. Once again, this is one of those business basics that owners can't ignore.

## *Fact 3:*

### **Protecting your company's assets should be your first priority.**

Were you surprised because this fact didn't instruct you to first protect your company's sales, profits and growth? If so, you're not alone. But the truth is, assets — which include both tangible and intangible assets — are what power sales, profits and growth.

Usually, owners and soon-to-be owners

understand the need for insurance on assets like their buildings and equipment. In fact, bankers insist on insuring specific assets for which they lend money (like facilities and equipment) and sometimes even insuring an owner's life. However, successful owners don't stop at protecting obvious assets. They understand the importance of every asset because assets represent invested cash, which should be managed to produce exceptional and maximized profits.

Ignore this business fact, and your company will underperform, if it can even survive the continual asset write-offs and write-downs, customer abandonment and employee indifference. I believe that protecting both tangible and intangible assets is one of the most underrated and underappreciated ownership issues today and, if mismanaged, can be one of the most damaging. The key is to understand what all of your company's assets are, and then guard them closely and work to maximize the profits they represent. If you don't, they will haunt your business and cause financial pain when you least expect it or want it.

## *Fact 4:*

### **Planning is about preparing for the future, not predicting it.**

Nobody knows what tomorrow, next week or next year will bring for your business. But you can make educated guesses based on the most current, accurate information available as well as your own past experiences, and this should be an ongoing process. Effective planning is a mix of science (gathering pertinent information) and art (taking that information and turning it into a plan that will move your business from "here" to "there" over a specific time period).

Being able to plan better than your competitors can give you a significant competitive edge in the market. Ford Motor Company is a great example. In 2008 and 2009, its competitors, GM and Chrysler, ran out of cash and needed taxpayer bailouts to avoid bankruptcy. But not Ford. Years prior to the credit

crunch, Ford began to restructure its debt and raised billions as it continually added to cash reserves. Was this luck or good planning? Industry insiders will say good planning. The point is Ford knew, as you should, that planning is important because it focuses you on what's important and it prepares you for what lies ahead.

## *Fact 5:*

### **If you don't market your business, you won't have one.**

Maybe working to market and advertise your services or products isn't your cup of tea. Or maybe you believe your offerings are so great that they should speak for themselves. If so, too bad — you're going to have to do it anyway. The bottom line is that if people don't know about your services, you won't be successful.

Granted, new business owners especially are nervous about marketing because money is already so tight at this stage. Again, though, very little good will happen if marketing isn't done. You must make the necessary effort to connect consumers to your company. When you do, you'll begin to see marketing as the investment it actually is, rather than the expense that less-successful competitors think it is.

## *Fact 6:*

### **The marketplace is a war zone.**

Every company has competitors, and if it doesn't and it's successful, it soon will. Successful owners know they must fight not only to win market share but also to retain it. You must develop a warrior mentality and maintain it for as long as you're at the head of your business.

That's because selling and sales in any industry is serious business. It's take or be taken from. If that isn't a business war zone, then I don't know what is. In other words, to be successful and remain that way, you must continually focus on the market, react to it and fight

for what you believe should be yours. If you don't, your competition will win the war. Great marketing must be followed up by having your company "on its game" in order to capture every customer your marketing attracts.

## Fact 7:

### **You don't just have to know the business you're in; you have to know business.**

Yes, of course you need to know the inner workings and nuances of your particular industry if you want to be successful. But you also need to understand the various aspects of business as it is more broadly defined — such as accounting, finance, business law, personnel issues and more — and how all of these impact each other and the decisions you make.

Having tunnel or limited vision as far as business knowledge is concerned is

akin to dropping out of high school. It limits your possibilities for success and how great your success could be. At the end of the day, what is most important is not how much you know, but what you know and what you do with that knowledge. For example, it's important to know what's going on in your market, but it is just as important to know what to do with that information and how you can translate it into more sales and gross and net profits, which is something that can't be done with limited business knowledge. And remember, it's your responsibility to make sure what you're learning is correct and relevant.

### **Final thoughts**

Ultimately, I don't believe that any entrepreneur can succeed — or at least reach his or her full potential — without knowing, understanding and applying these seven Facts of Business Life. It's equally important to understand how these facts are interrelated. For instance, being able

to develop strategic plans or market your product will mean little if you don't have a good grasp of business in general. I promise, though, if you commit yourself to understanding these facts while being prepared for their implementation to change as your business goes through its inevitable life cycle, you'll create a best-odds scenario for success.

About the author: Bill McBean is the author of *The Facts of Business Life: What Every Successful Business Owner Knows That You Don't*. He is currently general partner of McBean Partners, a family-owned investment company. A successful business owner many times over and a trusted mentor to entrepreneurs, he is the first author to define the five levels through which every successful business evolves — Ownership and Opportunity, Creating Your Company's DNA, From Survival to Success, Maintaining Success and Moving On When It's Time to Go. 🍀

SUN051



# Congratulations to the Inaugural Online Class of the **TENNESSEE MASTER NURSERY PRODUCER PROGRAM**

*By Amy Fulcher, Ph.D., Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor for Sustainable Ornamental Plant Production and Landscape Management, The University of Tennessee*

**The Tennessee Master Nursery Producer Program (TMNP)** is a professional development program for nursery crops producers and is led by The University of Tennessee with support from Tennessee State University and the USDA. The first program of its kind in the nation, it was designed to provide Tennessee nursery producers with the best information possible in order to enhance their profitability and environmental, economic and community sustainability. During 2013–14, growers

from Jackson through various parts of Middle TN logged in from their homes or offices to access the latest information on container and field production, irrigation, fertilization, substrates, pruning, propagation, integrated pest management, economics and marketing. The inaugural online class had 10 graduates!

Growers who successfully complete the TMNP program are rewarded! Graduates have been eligible for 50% cost share on Tennessee Ag Enhancement Grants, rather than the standard 35%. In addition, the inaugural online class reported **an estimated**

**value of \$15,533** per graduate from applying practices learned in the program that, in turn, can reduce costs and increase crop quality. The TMNP program is possible due to financial support from a TDA Specialty Crop Block grant.

If you have questions about the Tennessee Master Nursery Producer Program, please contact Dr. Amy Fulcher at [afulcher@utk.edu](mailto:afulcher@utk.edu) or 865-974-7152. Please check our website — <http://www.tnmasternursery.com> — for updates and detailed information about the online program topics, cost, etc. For questions about applying for or becoming eligible for TAEP or other TAEP questions, please contact Mark Powell at [mark.powell@tn.gov](mailto:mark.powell@tn.gov) or 615-837-5323.

Congratulations to the 2013–14 class of the Tennessee Master Nursery Producer program! 🌱

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## 2013–14 Tennessee Master Nursery Producer Program Graduates

- John Adkins (Adkins Farms)
- Dale Bennett (Swan Mill Nursery)
- Frank Collier (Pleasant Cove Nursery)
- Justin Diel  
(Sumner County Nursery & Flowers)
- Ray Guidi (Melodia Hill)
- David Hitchcock  
(Bradford Farms Nursery)
- Bonnie Jacobs-Logsdon  
(Beautiview Gardens)
- Willie Newby (Newby Tree Farm)
- Joe Pennycuff  
(Sycamore Springs Farm)
- Pat Wilcher (Wilcher's Nursery)

## JUNE 23

**Tennessee Green Industry  
Field Day**  
University of TN Gardens  
Knoxville, TN  
Contact: 931-473-3951  
Fax: 931-473-5833  
Email: mail@tnla.com  
www.tnla.com

## JULY 19-21

**PLANET Legislative Day  
on the Hill**  
Washington, D.C.  
Contact: 800-395-2522  
www.landcarenetwork.org

## JULY 21-23

**SNA 2015: Research  
Conference, Perennial Plant  
Conference & Tradeshow**  
(Southern Nursery Assn.)  
Georgia International  
Convention Center  
Atlanta, GA  
Contact: 678-809-9992  
mail@sna.org  
www.sna.org

## JULY 27– AUGUST 1

**Perennial Plant Symposium**  
Hilton Baltimore  
Baltimore, MD  
Contact: 614-771-8431  
Email: ppa@perennialplant.org  
www.perennialplant.org

## JULY 29-30

**Penn-Atlantic Nursery  
Trade Show (PANTS)**  
Pennsylvania Convention Center  
Philadelphia, PA  
Contact: 723-449-4004  
www.pantshow.com

## AUGUST 12-14

**Summer Green Road Show**  
(NC Nursery & Landscape Assn.)  
Hickory Metro Convention Center  
Hickory, NC  
Contact: 919-816-9121  
https://ncnla.memberclicks.net

## SEPTEMBER 17-18

**Tennessee Green Industry Expo**  
To be held in conjunction with  
The Middle Tennessee Nursery  
Association (MTNA)  
Music City Center  
Nashville, TN  
Contact: 931-473-3951  
Fax: 931-473-5833  
Email: mail@tnla.com  
www.tngie.com

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