

GROWING MATTERS

Sun Devil Gaillardia

March 2016

Volume 19: Issue 1



*Proudly serving northern gardeners
since 1982*

**P. O. Box 402
Portage la Prairie, MB.
R1N 3B7**

**Toll Free: 1-888-857-5288
Fax: (204) 857-2877
e-mail: jeffnurs@mts.net
www.jeffriesnurseries.com**

Office Contacts

President

wilbert.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

Sales Manager

michel.touchette@jeffriesnurseries.com

MB west / Saskatchewan / Alberta Sales Rep

pete@jeffriesnurseries.com

Accounts / Inside Sales

shawna.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

Field Manager

andrew.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

Research / Marketing

philip.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

News Briefs

Remember that Friday, April 1st is the last day to make changes to spring orders.

Preliminary results from the WNGG tree cultivar trial and Jeffries shrub cultivar trial were presented at Grow 16 in Winnipeg on February 25th. You can view the presentation at: www.jeffriesnurseries.com/CV_trials.pdf

Jeffries' 2016 Reference Guide, Price List and Order Form are all available online. Use the password: xxxxxxxx to access protected files.

From the President

As I write near the middle of March, we are enjoying warming weather, disappearing snow and indications of an early spring start to the season. It has been a mild winter with good snow cover giving us confidence in the overwintering of our shrubs and container trees.

Our spring bookings have been strong and some shortages are evident in liner stock. Hopefully the strong bookings will be reflected in strong retail sales. Remember, now is the time to make any changes and order additions. With the strong U.S. dollar, any state-side purchases of liners and supplies are costing about 20% more than last year. The dollar rises and falls and we have to work with the margins priced into the expectations last summer.

We recently completed some new improvements in equipment to enable us to be more efficient. A new Felcomatic pruning shear and battery pack has already been put to use and hopefully will be a great help in cutback of rootstock and field pruning. A new high speed, 32" Lemar spade and accompanying Skid steer loader will also come into service this spring. We will be adding a significant quantity of fiberglass stakes to support the tree liner production in our fields. We have built a new root pruning blade for our high-clearance, tracked digging machine to enable more root pruning of liners. One major change in our insect control strategy has been to implement a bio-control program throughout the greenhouse in this growing season.

This past January, Philip Ronald completed an update of our popular prairie tree poster and we have sought to place it in the hands of as many customers and landscape architects as possible. If you have missed getting a copy please let us know and we will gladly mail one to you. This promotional poster will complement the widely used Northern Garden reference guide and our outstanding Point of Purchase materials.

Remember in the stress of spring rush and shipping to take time to smell the flowers and keep a balanced healthy approach to your work and workplace.

Wilbert G. Ronald



Felcomatic Pruning Shears

By Michel Touchette

Last fall, while attending the Green Industry Show in Calgary, Andrew Ronald purchased a new Felco 801 electric pruner. The user carries a rechargeable battery in easy-to-wear back pack.

This month, we have finally had a chance to use this new tool to prune our dormant roses as they move from cold storage into the greenhouse. I was very impressed at the Felco 801's ease of use and portability.

We intend to use this tool in the field for spring cutbacks and maintenance pruning.

As a safety prevention we are looking at purchasing a chainmail mesh glove to prevent any possible injury to the free hand.



What Lies Ahead in 2016

By Pete Van Vliet

Spring is upon us! What a fantastic time of year!

Old man winter was very gentle this past season in the Regina area. We had only a few days of -20 C temperatures, and low snow accumulations. That is great for the day-to-day people, but how about our plants? For those of us who have mulched beds, the perennials and shrubs should have fared ok. Time will tell as to how much winter damage there is. For snow removal companies, it has been a hard season.

I was at the LANTA workshop in Edmonton in March, where the main topic was the economy. John Rose, the chief economist for the city, had a positive outlook overall. He mentioned that Edmonton doesn't rely wholly on the energy sector, so that the city should be able to hold its own. The new housing market has declined, but not collapsed. In fact, according to Mr. Rose, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge and Edmonton have seen employment growth. His reasoning is that many workers that had come from out-of-province to work in the energy sector have now moved on to other employment opportunities. Thus, the local employment market is needing people.

I also talked with other nursery people about their outlook on the upcoming season. The same message came resonating back: construction projects that were started in 2015 still need the landscapes done this year. They do not expect a slow down until possibly this fall, or perhaps not even until 2017. The prevailing feeling is that many people will be more inclined to beautify their own backyard oasis, and forego their typical tropical vacations.

The joy of working in the world of plants, is the everlasting optimism we all have!



Aphidius colemani



Growing Good Bugs

By Shawna Bell

There's something new happening at the nursery this spring. We are growing aphids in our greenhouse.... on purpose!

Why, you may ask?

We are working towards eliminating the use of insecticides in our greenhouses. In order to facilitate this change we are implementing an aphid banker plant system. This system introduces cereal aphids which serve as a food source for the parasitic wasp, *Aphidius colemani*. This specific wasp is most beneficial in its control of green peach aphid and black melon aphid. The aphidius wasp impregnates an aphid with its egg, killing the aphid and creating more beneficial insects to control any new aphid hot spots.

So if in the spring time you see mummified aphids on your plants, don't worry!

We are sending you good bugs that will continue to work for you in your greenhouse!