

## Horticultural News and Research Important to American Gardeners

### 100 YEARS OF HORTICULTURE

Two giants in the horticulture industry celebrated a century in business this year. Ball Horticultural Company and Bailey Nurseries, Inc., both started in 1905, found fitting ways to observe the milestone.

Headquartered in West Chicago, Illinois, Ball is a family-owned business that develops ornamental plants such as the well-known Wave™ petunias and their Simply Beautiful™ line. In honor of the company's centennial, Ball redesigned its seven-acre trial and display gardens at their headquarters.



“better show our visitors the innovation, excellence, and creativity we value at Ball,” says Jim Nau, Ball’s trials manager. As they begin their second century, Ball will continue to develop innovative new plant varieties, with a focus on sustainable horticulture through the use of biodegradable containers, organic practices, and programs to increase customer and public awareness. For more information about Ball, visit [www.ballhort.com](http://www.ballhort.com).

Bailey Nurseries is also family-owned, now run by fourth generation Baileys. Based in Newport, Minnesota, it has grown into one of the largest wholesale nurseries in the United States. Since the State Capitol Building in St. Paul turned 100 this year as well, Bailey designed and installed a new rose gar-



LEFT: Part of the redesigned gardens at Ball Horticultural Company's headquarters in Chicago. Above: Minnesota-based Bailey Nurseries planted a new rose garden at the State Capitol in St. Paul to celebrate the building's 100th anniversary.

den in front of it this past June. The nursery donated all the plants to create the garden, which features 11 varieties of Easy Elegance® roses—including *Rosa* ‘Centennial’ named in honor of the celebration. Each of the 87 counties in Minnesota also received five ‘Centennial’ rose plants as part of the festivities.

As for future plans, “We will continue to actively support research, contribute to organizations that enhance the environment, and study ways to reduce usage of chemicals, water, and plastic in our industry,” says Bailey president Terri McEnaney. In addition, the company will “remain dedicated to providing the highest quality products and services.” Visit [www.baileynurseries.com](http://www.baileynurseries.com) to learn more.

### REPLANTING AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

The long-term effects of Hurricane Katrina will take years to be fully understood; however, the landscape—both physical and emotional—within the cities of New Orleans, Biloxi, and other communities throughout the lower Mississippi River Valley has been irrevocably altered. One change has been the loss of the region's most prominent natural features: the trees. Katrina's wind and water dislodged and smothered many roots, sparing neither 1,000-year-old specimens nor saplings.

One sliver of positive news on the tree front is that live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*), perhaps the Gulf Coast's most characteristic trees, have proven fairly resilient. “Of all the trees in Louisiana, the live oaks fared the best during the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita,” says Coleen Perilloux Landry, chairman of the Live Oak Society (LOS). Landry is the only human “member” of the LOS; the other 5,000-plus members are all live oak trees. To become a registered member of the society, a tree must have a trunk with a minimum girth (circumference) of eight feet. According to Landry, the ‘Seven Sisters Oak’ in Lewisburg, the oak with the largest girth, “survived Katrina quite nicely, just two blocks from the shore of Lake Pontchartrain.” To learn more about the LOS, visit [www.los.org](http://www.los.org).



Unlike many Gulf Coast trees, live oaks—like these in New Orleans City Park—proved resilient against Hurricane Katrina.

LEFT: COURTESY OF BALL HORTICULTURAL COMPANY; CENTER: COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES, INC.; RIGHT: COURTESY OF COLEEN P. LANDRY

[louisianagardenclubs.org/pages/oak.htm](http://louisianagardenclubs.org/pages/oak.htm).

American Forests, a national non-profit group dedicated to extending the tree canopy in urban environments and promoting sound forestry practices, has created a Katrina ReLeaf Fund to aid in the replanting of Mississippi Valley trees. "We know from similar experiences after Hurricane Andrew and Hugo that the people of the Gulf Coast soon will miss their trees," says Deborah Gangloff, executive director of American Forests. "Trees are important for their leafy shade, as well as the sense of community they provide. American Forests has pledged to help residents put down new roots in their communities when it's possible to plant again in the Gulf Coast."

Donations made through American Forests' Web site, [www.americanforests.org/planttrees](http://www.americanforests.org/planttrees), are eligible for federal matching funds. The group has teamed up with state and local Forest Service organizations and universities in the three hardest-hit states to implement the "ReLeaf" program in 2006.

Visit the AHS Web site ([www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)) for a link to the "Releaf" programs and



The tiny larva of a winter moth (compare its size to the penny below it) inflicts tremendous damage to trees by attacking the leaf buds and young leaves, which eventually weakens trees.

other efforts to help the Gulf Coast region recover from Hurricane Katrina.

#### NEW MOTH PLAGUES MASSACHUSETTS

A relative newcomer on the pest scene, winter moths (*Operopthera brumata*) have been found in Washington and Oregon as

well as in regions of Canada, but now are becoming a serious problem in eastern Massachusetts and seem to be spreading.

"We know it's in all coastal towns in the state—it's in the north shore, Boston, the south shore, Martha's Vineyard, Cape Cod, really most of the

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## HORTICULTURAL HISTORY: HENRY NEHRLING'S GARDENS

Henry Nehrling, a schoolteacher and naturalist born in 1853, was also an avid gardener. In 1884, he purchased 40 acres of land in Gotha, Florida, where he built a



Henry Nehrling

renowned garden over the next several decades. "As my 'Palm Cottage Gardens' at Gotha grew and developed from year to year, the results far surpassed any expectations or efforts Nehrling wrote in *The Plant World in Florida*, a collection of his notes published in 1933. "Kind folk sent me more and more tropical plant material, and I soon found myself surrounded with many rare and valuable palms, trees, ferns,

shrubs—in fact every type of growing plant."

Working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Nehrling devoted himself to studying and testing these plants in this garden, including many plants, such as caladiums, hybrid amaryllis, and gloriosa lilies, that became the foundation for Florida's then nascent nursery industry. Thousands came to visit his garden, including the likes of Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, and Nehrling's friend and famous horticulturist Liberty Hyde Bailey.

When Nehrling died in 1929, the property was sold to cover his debts. Over the ensuing years, it has changed hands many times and been divided up. Now, efforts are being made to preserve the six acres that remain of Nehrling's original gardens in Gotha. His great grandson Richard Nehrling has founded the non-profit Henry Nehrling Society, for this purpose.



The Henry Nehrling Society hopes to preserve Nehrling's original home, above, along with six acres of surrounding gardens.

After an unsuccessful attempt to purchase the property as parkland in conjunction with Orange County in Orlando, Florida, this past September, the organization is working to find another solution. "Even though this is a local garden, we hope that people will realize that Henry Nehrling's work has influenced plants and trees that we now grow all over the country," says Richard.

For more information about the garden and the efforts to preserve it, contact Angela Withers, president of the Henry Nehrling Society, at (407) 876-9962, or visit [www.nehrlinggardens.org](http://www.nehrlinggardens.org).

—V.N.

capas," says Richard Childs, an entomologist for the University of Massachusetts Extension Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Program. "It's also in five counties in Rhode Island, and I wouldn't be surprised if we found it in southern New Hampshire."

The moths are light brown and their wings appear to have hairy margins. They emerge near the end of November to mate and lay eggs. When the larvae hatch, they eat leaf and flower buds of host trees during March and April—in some cases crippling the trees' ability to leaf out. The voracious caterpillars continue to feed on tender young leaves until May or June. Tree mortality can occur after several years of moth defoliation. Host trees are diverse, including oaks, maples, cherries, ashes, white elms, and crabapples. The moths also target roses, blueberries, and herba-

ceous perennials growing underneath trees.

Applications of dormant oil and products containing the bacterial insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) have proven ef-



'Feuerhexe' Cheddar pink, the Perennial Plant Association's 2006 Plant of the Year

fective at killing the eggs and young larvae, respectively. University of Massachusetts scientists are also experimenting with a parasitic fly called *Cyzenis albicans*, which feeds on winter moth larvae.

### DIANTHUS WITH DISTINCTION

Intense magenta flowers, silvery-blue foliage, and an easy-going nature have earned *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Feuerhexe' (Firewitch) the distinction of 2006 Plant of the Year from the Perennial Plant Association. This plant produces abundant, clove-scented flowers in spring and will re-bloom if dead-headed. Growing up to six inches tall, it makes a good ground cover or rock garden plant. It thrives in full sun and well-drained soil, and will grow in USDA Hardiness Zones 3 to 8 and AHS Heat Zones 10 to 1.

On a nomenclatural note, the common name of this *Dianthus* species is Cheddar pink, which refers to a region of southwest England, Cheddar Gorge, where the plant was once commonly found in the wild. The accepted cultivar name is the original German rendition, but in North America the plant is often sold under the English translation, Firewitch.

## SUGAR NOT-SO-SWEET FOR INSECTS

Researchers have discovered how to harness one of nature's own insect controls—sugar-based compounds found in wild tobacco plants. Known as sugar esters, this family of compounds is showing potential as a safe and effective alternative to conventional chemical insecticides.

Several years ago, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) laboratories in Beltsville, Maryland, observed an interesting phenomenon when insects came in contact with the tobacco plants. The insects rapidly weakened and died from what turned out to be desiccation. Although scientists initially believed

the nicotine in the plants caused the insects to die, they later determined that sugar esters were responsible.

Natural sugar esters proved too costly to manufacture on an industrial scale, so scientists turned to synthetic models. In 2002, Gary J. Puterka, an entomologist at the Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Kearneysville, West Virginia, patented the first synthetic sugar ester—sucrose octanoate—with industry partners. This compound has been registered for use on agricultural and greenhouse crops as well as on indoor and garden plants. Marketed under the name Sucroicide, it is currently being used by the beekeeping industry to control varroa mites on honey bees.

Most recently, Puterka and his team have patented two new synthetic sugar esters, one of which, sorbitol octanoate, can be produced more cheaply than sucrose octanoate. Puterka is awaiting a decision from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on approval of a license for commercial and garden use of the new compound.

## A PRESERVATION PARTNERSHIP

Through a multi-million dollar campaign called "Restore America: A Salute to Preservation," Home and Garden Television (HGTV) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation partnered in 2003 to restore 12 sites per year around the country. Sites are chosen from the National Trust's Save America's Treasures program, which is "dedicated to identifying and rescuing the enduring symbols of American tradition that define us as a nation."

Horticulturally important sites on the list to date include the Conservatory of Flowers in San Francisco, California; Dunn Gardens in Seattle, Washington; and Hakone Gardens in Saratoga, California. HGTV features each preservation project on its program "Restore America" for a month. Please check HGTV's Web site at [www.hgtv.com](http://www.hgtv.com) for program scheduling and more information.

*Written by Assistant Editor Viveka Neveln and Editorial Intern William Clattenburg.*



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