



PERRY LABORATORY

HORTICULTURAL ADVISING AND TESTING

Fall 2008

With the warm day temperatures and cool (and sometimes cold) nighttime temperatures, Fall is surely in the air. After a fairly mild summer, we welcome our “Indian Summer” weather on the California central coast. As with everyone else in the country, we are anxious about the worsening financial climate and its possible effects on the market place for horticultural products. Although there are some companies reporting very good sales for this year, the majority are still having a difficult time and winter is just around the corner with the resulting high energy costs associated with it.

The cut flower industry had a slow summer season and even as the market improves somewhat after the Labor Day holiday, there is still some concern as to where the economy and flower market will go. The good news is that overall the quality of product has been very good this summer. The growers can attribute this to the mild weather conditions and good management of the plants. We are just beginning to have a bit of the standard disease issues that come with warm days and cool nights. There is botrytis mold showing up and a small amount of downy mildew also. Good air movement in the greenhouses is especially important at this time of year.

The container nursery industry is happy that summer is finally coming to an end, as it has been a slow one. Many plants have not made it to market due to slow sales and this makes it especially hard in these times. Many nurseries have had to forego hiring experienced and educated managers due to cost savings, compounding this situation. We are seeing many more plant problems that would be avoided if there were a more educated eye watching the crops and reacting faster to the problems.

The potted plant industry is busy with poinsettia crops at this time of year. Overall the plant quality seems to be fairly good and everyone is either on schedule or slightly ahead. As we have finally had our “Indian Summer,” the few weeks of warm weather have helped push the growth on some of these plants. The other holiday crops, hydrangeas, roses, bulb crops, etc. are also doing fairly well this year. Most nurseries are cautiously optimistic that the holiday season will go well. The bankruptcy filing of Hines Nursery and the closing of Mainland Nursery have resulted in fewer poinsettias on the market and there is actually some talk of a shortage of plants. Only time will tell, as this is often the story, and the reality is not always as it seems.

The landscape industry has been somewhat slow this year, and with the slow down in the construction trades, this could linger for some time. There are many companies that we work with that do seem to be staying busy, although there is not as much future work lined up.

The viticulture industry has completed the harvest and overall there has been a reduction in yield this year. The bloom time frost and mild growing season are prime reasons for this. We have heard reports from various regions of lower yields. However, the quality of the grapes seems to be very good this year and it may be one of those years where the vintage is exceptional. As we are beginning to perform wine testing for our local wineries, we are seeing some of the variability that is out there and most of the samples we have tested so far show good characteristics.

Hope everyone has a good Fall and Holiday Season.
Cliff