



PERRY LABORATORY

HORTICULTURAL ADVISING AND TESTING

Fall 2009

The days are getting shorter, but with the warm temperatures this year, fall seems to be delayed somewhat. We on the coast have enjoyed a summer with less fog and warmer temperatures overall. Our normal “fog months”, July and August seemed to be confined to August this year. This is great, however with the second year of low rainfall, there is concern about the availability of water. With our economy still in “recovery” mode, the markets have been soft throughout the summer and there has been a reduction in staffing in most of the horticultural industries we are involved with. It’s interesting that there have not been any additional nurseries closing, which was commonplace a few years ago. Maybe people can’t afford to close their businesses.

The cut flower industry had their typical slow summer season and as in most years, hope for an improvement in the market after the Labor Day holiday. As with most phases of the economy, this industry is also simply “holding on” until the markets improve. There is a bit more diversification of crops occurring, although there have not been any nursery closures, which is a good thing.

The container plant industry has also been slow this summer, as the slump in the housing market has resulted in minimal demand for plant materials. The better quality nurseries we deal with seem to sell out of most of their products, showing that quality matters.

The pot plant industry is also feeling the sluggish economy with slower demand for flowering potted plants through the summer months. Many nurseries have laid-off staff and are cautiously planting for the upcoming holiday season. There seems to be less speculative poinsettia crops being grown this year, understandably so given the poor season last year.

The landscape industry seems to be variable with some clients reporting “lots” of work and others saying it has been slow and bidding on jobs has been tough. Since the housing industry is also still very slow, there seems to be more work for contractors working on established gardens and landscapes rather than new landscape installations. We have had many arborists reporting good demand so far, but they were slow last January and are taking as much work as they can handle at this time.

We have not heard too much from the turf industry and with the slow economy, the amount of play on the golf courses has also been reduced.

As with last year, we are all holding on and hoping for the down turn to be heading towards an up turn. At least our government officials keep telling us the recession is over and we are in “recovery” mode. I am not sure if the West Coast will be seeing this as soon as other parts of the country, but if history is our guide, we should be able to recover faster. Lets all hope so!!!!!!

Hope everyone has a good fall and Holiday Season,
Cliff