



PERRY LABORATORY

HORTICULTURAL ADVISING AND TESTING

Spring 2008

Spring seems to be just around the corner. Although we have not had the hard freeze experienced last year, this has been an overall cold winter season with extended periods of rain and low temperatures. This has led to many holiday crops being a bit late and also to somewhat higher heating costs for greenhouse nurseries. Although it has been cold, the rain is very welcome as we were nearing another drought with the very small amount of rainfall we had last year. So far, this has been a “normal” year, which may not be quite enough to make up for last year, but will still help. The snow pack in the Sierra is reportedly fairly good and should help fill the reservoirs.

The cut flower industry seems to have had decent Christmas and more recently Valentine’s Day holidays. The low temperatures did result in a few rose nurseries missing the holiday period, but overall there seemed to be decent demand for flowers and there are still many South American products going to Europe due to the weak dollar. Of major note is the selling and closing of Pajaro Valley Greenhouses in Watsonville. Growers Transplants from Salinas, CA purchased the nursery with the intention of growing orchids in some of the greenhouses. They did keep some of the roses and gerberas growing for Valentine’s Day, although there are many changes in store for this location. We wish the Thirup family and all of the staff from Pajaro Valley Greenhouses good luck in their future endeavors. A few of the staff were kept, however most have moved on or are still moving on.

The potted plant nurseries had a good holiday season as well, although poinsettia sales were slower this year, particularly the larger pot sizes. Everyone is now gearing up for the spring holidays, with Easter and Mother’s Day being big ones.

The landscape nurseries are also getting ready for the spring season and are cautiously optimistic that the slowing economy will not affect sales too much. In other slow economies, there have been decent sales with people staying home and gardening more, rather than going on trips. The cold and wet weather is also leading up to possibly good plant sales. The few good weekends recently have brought people out to the retail nurseries, so this is a good sign.

The landscaping industry is still fairly slow, due to the rain and cold temperatures. Some contractors are reportedly getting some work in on hardscape projects in between the storms.

The turf industry also still seems to be in its slow season, although the golf courses have the die-hard golfers hitting the links whenever the weather permits.

The viticulture industry is in its pruning season and most vineyards seem to be able to get this work done in spite of the rain. The wine from last year’s crop is in barrels and there is also cautious optimism for this wine. The grapes were of good quality and hopefully this will result in very good wines as well.

With spring just around the corner, there should be more smiles out there for everyone involved with the horticultural industry.

Cliff Low