



# PERRY LABORATORY

HORTICULTURAL ADVISING AND TESTING

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As we finish out the recent growing season, it seems that there are small improvements in the nursery economy, at least in some areas. The cut flower industry had a fairly good summer, with the market staying steady and most everything selling well. There have been many growers reporting surprising sales through the normally slow summer months. There is also a positive note in that there have not been any additional nursery closures in northern California in any case. Maybe our politicians are right about the economy improving!

The container stock industry is going good as well, or at least for the ones who had gone to more color items and moved away from the foundation plant material. Since many of these businesses are connected with the housing industry, it will still be some time before there will be a complete recovery.

The potted plant nurseries have also recently completed the poinsettia season and by all accounts, it was a very successful year.

The landscape industry is still somewhat slow, although there does seem to be some new construction happening and hopefully it is a sign that things will improve this coming year.

The viticulture group has just completed a great year, as there were many reports of record harvests this year. This was maybe making up for the very poor harvest of 2011. The only issue was that many of the grape varieties matured close to the same time, making it especially trying for the wineries as they had to crush and process more fruit in a shorter time period. There were many stories of a lack of equipment, containers and space to process all of the fruit available, however everyone managed in the end. It would seem that in a couple of years, there will be an abundance of wine available.

The berry industry continues to grow and there seems to be quite a bit of interest in growing all of the various berries in substrates. This seems to be the wave of the future and we will continue to help these farmers learn the intricacies of horticultural growing and production. There is great room for improvement and it is very exciting to see how this industry will react to these changes. With the recent elimination of methyl iodide from the fumigation arena, there is even more interest in the ability to grow these berry crops in a system that does not require fumigating the growing medium and this is where the use of organic substrates will be most helpful.

Another new item is that the California Central Coast Water Board recently passed the Agricultural Order in March 2012, and this is currently on many farmers' minds. This Order requires monitoring of groundwater and drain water from their properties. The intent of this Order is to monitor and regulate water quality in this region as most of the water pollution is reported from farms and this is an effort to mitigate these effects. Obviously this has met with confusion and frustration as this is another layer of regulation that all growers must now contend with. The substrate growing systems will also open the possibility of recirculating water and nutrients to further accommodate the overall goal of the Agricultural Order.

May everyone have a great 2013!

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