



Introductory Comments

On April 1, we (Pat and I) returned to College Station following a most productive and enjoyable 2 ½ months at our TAMU-Dallas Research and Extension Center. This was followed by six weeks in the Horticultural Sciences Department at TAMU in College Station. On May 15, we departed for our next two-month port-of-call at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. We'll return to College Station on July 15 and be there for a month prior to departing for a two-month international stay in Ireland, The Netherlands, and Denmark. This newsletter will focus on activities since returning to College Station on April 1 and provide highlights on two additional floriculture faculty, Terri Starman and Yin-Tung Wang.

Chair Activities and Progress

Shortly after returning to College Station, we departed for the California Pack Trials. Other TAMU participants included Tim Davis, Wayne Mackay, Cynthia McKenney, Brent Pemberton, and Don Wilkerson. Several good contacts were made at this spectacular floriculture showcase. Other activities while in College Station included visiting three more greenhouse and nursery operations in Blanco, Schertz, and Brenham, and participating in a TNLA Partnership meeting in Austin. Progress was made on developing a strategic model for the Chair and identifying additional sources of financial support for TAMU floriculture programs.

We arrived in Columbus, Ohio in mid-May and I am officed in the Department of Food,

Agricultural, and Biological Engineering and linked closely with the nearby Department of Horticulture and Field Crops. I am also working closely with faculty at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Extension Center at Wooster. While here, I have visited faculty, growers, retailers, and other industry leaders, with more to come, gaining a broadened perspective for the Chair.

On May 24-25, I returned to College Station for our Chair Advisory Committee meeting. This was a most productive and exciting meeting. The Advisory Committee is fully engaged and their enthusiastic support and commitment is most important to the success of the Chair. Mike Williams of Ball Horticultural was elected as Vice-Chair, serving with Ellen Ellison, Chair. During the meeting, I reviewed my role as Inaugural Chairholder and the importance of developing a strategic model for the Chair, providing Observations to date and Preliminary Conclusions. The Preliminary Conclusions follow: *

- The Chairholder should be a person with sufficient breadth to fully appreciate the great strengths we have and the leadership ability to facilitate elevating all program areas of strength by linking them together to create a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts.

* *Reader input regarding these Preliminary Conclusions is solicited.*

- Actions should be taken that will establish
 - (a) clearly identified benefits to our industry (Texas, U.S., worldwide) and
 - (b) clearly identified leadership among academic programs nationally and internationally. Some of these actions include:
 - facilitating development of greenhouse worker training programs;
 - leading regional and national needs assessments and forums;
 - establishing an International Floriculture Lecture Series;
 - developing a document to address Best Practices by Zip Code; and
 - stimulating student recruiting, internships, and placement.
- A major priority for the Chairholder should be synergizing efforts to be successful in getting new sources of fiscal support to meet industry needs, e.g. check-off program, Center of Excellence, grants and contracts from state and federal agencies, private gifts, grants from industry, . . .

This was followed by lively dialogue with committee members (regarding these Observations and Preliminary Conclusions) obtaining their thoughts and ideas for enhancement.

The need for delineation of **Project Goals**, as well as **Process Goals**, was discussed and emphasized. The principal Project Goal for the Chair was identified as PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT, including three subgoals as follows: entry-level worker training; university student recruiting, internships with industry, and placement; and continuing education. A secondary Project Goal in which the Chair will have only a support role is Best Practices by Zip Code. Process Goals for the Chair include (a) bringing academics/industry together toward common goals; (b) establishing an International Floriculture Distinguished Lecture Series, (c) supporting a Center of Excellence for increased program funding and visibility, (d) developing a strategic model for the Chair, and (e) leading regional and national needs assessments and forums.

— Short, medium, and long-term objectives will be developed for achieving the People Development goal. A subcommittee of Jack Weatherford, Stan Pohmer, Dave Fujino, Tony Griffin, and Ellen Ellison agreed to work with Ed Hiler on this goal.

Dave Fujino led a discussion related to a possible Texas Certified Gold Medal Recognition Program related to diseases, pests, and invasive species. Such a program would be valuable in addressing regulatory issues. Dave asked Ed Hiler to investigate this topic further. It could be very important to the Texas growers.

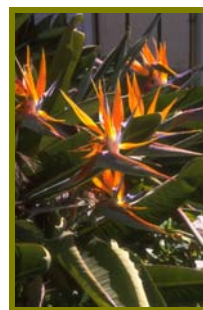
Successful Projects validate the effectiveness of the Processes and are important in demonstrating Results to supporters and prospective supporters.

A special called meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held on June 23 during the Super Floral Show in Houston. Ernesto Velez, our new Advisory Committee member from Columbia, will participate in this meeting. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on October 14 in College Station.

While here in Ohio, I will participate in the OFA Short Course in early July and several floriculture meetings occurring during the Short Course that will focus on strengthening partnerships.

Floriculture Faculty Highlights

In this issue, we are highlighting Drs. Terri Starman, College Station, and Yin-Tung Wang of our Weslaco Research and Extension Center.



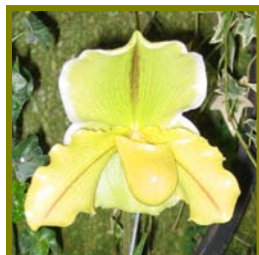


Terri Starman

Terri Starman is Associate Professor of Floriculture, Department of Horticultural Sciences, Texas A&M University. She teaches Commercial Greenhouse Management, Fall Greenhouse Crops, and Floriculture Crop Production.

Dr. Starman's recent research projects include shipping and nitrogen toning effects on postharvest shelf life of vegetative annuals. This research has characterized the postharvest decline symptoms of 21 cultivars of vegetative annuals. It has determined the effect of reducing nitrogen fertilization during the last two weeks of greenhouse production on postharvest longevity. It has determined the effect of shipping plants in boxes in the dark at warm temperatures on shelf life. It also looked at the effect of Ethyl-Bloc on flower drop during shipping of diascia and the effect of thidiazuron on lower leaf chlorosis of bracteantha when spaced economically on the greenhouse bench.

She is collaborating with Dr. Leonardo Lombardini on growth, gas exchange, and chlorophyll fluorescence of four ornamental species during water deficit conditions to provide a physiological basis for declaring when a species is drought tolerant. Additionally, Dr. Starman and Dr. Yin-Tung Wang have teamed up to determine the nutrient and thermal requirements for optimum growth and flowering of hybrid *Dendrobium nobile* as a potted orchid.



Yin-Tung Wang

The wholesale value of potted blooming orchids in the United States jumped to \$127 million in 2004, with 17.2 million pots sold. Yin-Tung was the first university faculty member in modern-day floriculture to develop and lead a dedicated research program on potted orchids. His work on *Phalaenopsis* orchids started in 1990, well before this industry took off in the United States. He initiated the use of more water-absorbent media to improve growth and found that *Phalaenopsis* requires heavy feeding for optimum growth. Yin-Tung discovered that while *Phalaenopsis* are exposed to cool air to induce the emergence of the flowering stem, the presence of light exceeding a certain level is absolutely required. He used this break-through discovery to develop a technique for controlling and deferring flowering. Combined with using air-conditioning or growing them in cool regions, *Phalaenopsis* can be brought to flower year-round. He frequently travels to orchid nurseries in the U.S. and has helped growers in Canada, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, The Netherlands, India, Japan, Mexico, Panama, Spain, and Taiwan. His current work includes studies on how alternating temperature and photoperiod promote or inhibit flowering behaviors. He is also studying how mineral nutrients affect growth of *Phalaenopsis* and *Dendrobium* orchids. He has a joint research project on *Phalaenopsis* with his colleagues at the Floriculture Research Center in Taiwan. He is also developing collaborative orchid research with scientists at Michigan State University and Laval University in Quebec, Canada. In addition to his orchid research, Yin-Tung is in the initial stage of studying the feasibility of producing bird-of-paradise as a cut flower crop in South Texas.

Upcoming Events

Called Chair Advisory Committee Meeting – Houston, Texas - June 23
Super Floral Show – Houston, Texas – June 22-25
Seeley Conference - Ithaca, New York – June 26-29
OFA Short Course – Columbus, Ohio – July 9-13
Southwest Greenhouse Growers Conference – Jacksonville, Texas – August 3-4
TNLA Expo – Dallas, Texas – August 19-21



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