



# The Invasive Plant Issue: St. Louis, Chicago, and the Voluntary Codes of Conduct

By Robert E. Schutzki, Department of Horticulture,  
Michigan State University

In this article we will continue to lay the ground work on the invasive plant issue and build upon the foundation set by the Executive Order. Two landmark workshops were conducted to bring the natural resource and horticulture communities together to discuss the issue and generate a plan for workable solutions. We will highlight the outcomes from these workshops and provide some additional commentary for consideration. Much of the information presented in this article is reprinted from the Proceedings of the Workshop at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Missouri, 1–4 December 2001 and the Proceedings of the Meeting at the Chicago Botanic Garden, Chicago, Illinois, 31 October 2002. Our intent is to increase your awareness of these workshops and encourage you to review the entire proceedings for more detail. For a complete set of the proceedings from both workshops visit <<<http://www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives/home.html>>>.

In 2001, the Missouri Botanical Garden and Royal Botanical Garden, Kew co-sponsored a workshop entitled, “Linking Ecology and Horticulture to Prevent Plant Invasions”. The objective was to assemble experts from around the world to explore approaches for reducing the introduction and spread of non-native invasive plants. The workshop featured several key presentations directed towards landscape architects, botanical gardens and arboreta professionals, the nursery

industry, and the gardening public. Workshop efforts resulted in the St. Louis Declaration that included Findings, Principles, and the draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct for several key parties. A second workshop was held in Chicago the following year (2002) to: build upon the groundwork established in St. Louis; assess the achievements made in voluntary adoption and implementation of the codes; and further explore key components of the issue.

## **From the Proceedings of Linking Ecology and Horticulture to Prevent Plant Invasions — Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Missouri 2001**

### ***St. Louis Declaration***

Among the most important and challenging components of the first workshop was the development of the St. Louis Declaration. The St. Louis Declaration consists of two major components:

1. Findings and Principles that frame the invasive plant species problem and present the underlying basis for successfully addressing it.
2. Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct that help govern decisions made by commercial, professional, and government groups whose actions affect the spread of invasive plant species including government agencies, nursery professionals, the

gardening public, landscape architects, and botanic gardens and arboreta. These codes were drafted by representatives of each respective group and were designed to minimize the spread of invasive plants by these groups and their activities.

The St. Louis Declaration was an important first step in responding to the global invasive plant species problem. The Findings and Principles were developed by the entire group to provide a consensus statement on the severity of the problem and outline a general approach to address it. The Findings include: 1) recognition of key sources of the problem; 2) its regional nature; 3) consensus that invasive plants are a real threat to natural systems and biological diversity; and, 4) that the problem’s magnitude is large. The Principles were established to guide future responses by key stakeholders, including landscape architects, botanic gardens and arboreta, garden clubs, garden writers, regional planning groups and trade groups. Specifically, the Principles: 1) address how future plant introductions should be pursued; 2) emphasize the importance of a national problem response framework that leaves room for regional solutions; 3) encourage the use of available assessment tools, resources and voluntary codes of conduct; 4) establish the importance of public education and professional training; 5) stress the fundamental value of broad-based collaboration.

## **Findings**

People are major dispersers of plants. The magnitude of this dispersal is unprecedented and has allowed dispersal of species that manifest aggressive traits in new areas.

Plant introduction and improvement are the foundation of modern agriculture and horticulture, yielding diversity to our supply of plants used for food, forestry, landscapes and gardens, medicinal and other purposes.

A small proportion of introduced plant species becomes invasive and causes unwanted impacts to natural systems and biological diversity as well as economies, recreation, and health.

Plant species can be invasive in some regions, but not in others. The impacts of invasive plant species can occur at times and places far removed from the site of introduction.

## **Principles a.k.a. The St. Louis Six**

1. Plant introduction should be pursued in a manner that both acknowledges and minimizes unintended harm.
2. Efforts to address invasive plant species prevention and management should be implemented consistent with national goals or standards, while considering regional differences to the fullest extent possible.
3. Prevention and early detection are the most cost effective techniques that can be used against invasive plants.
4. Research, public education and professional training are essential to more fully understand the invasive plant issue and positively affect consumer demand, proper plant use, development of non-invasive alternatives, and other solutions.
5. Individuals from many fields must come together to undertake a broad-based and collaborative effort to address the challenge, including leaders in horticulture, retail and wholesale nurseries, weed science, ecology, conservation groups,

botanical gardens, garden clubs, garden writers, educational institutions, landscape architects, foundations and government.

6. A successful invasive plant species strategy will make use of all available tools including voluntary codes of conduct, best management practices, and appropriate regulation. Codes of conduct for specific communities of interest are an essential first step in that they encourage voluntary initiative, foster information exchange, and minimize the expense of regulation.

## **Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct**

A second component of the St. Louis Declaration is Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct. Representatives of each group at the St. Louis meeting created voluntary professional Codes of Conduct designed to curb the use and distribution of invasive plant species through self-governance and self-regulation. This approach has already been used successfully to ameliorate other problems but its application to invasive plant threats is novel and innovative. Importantly, the workshop participants and others who helped draft the Voluntary Codes of Conduct are acutely aware that education must accompany all efforts to address the problem and that some future government regulation may perhaps also be needed if such efforts prove insufficient. Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct were developed for nursery professionals, government agencies, the gardening public (specifically Garden Clubs), landscape architects, and botanic gardens and arboreta. These Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct are now being considered for endorsement, and in some cases refinement, by the major professional societies and organizations representing each of the groups covered. If endorsed, they will be 'tested' and revised as necessary to improve their utility and effectiveness.

Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct

for government, nursery professionals, and landscape architects are presented below. Voluntary codes for the gardening public and botanic gardens and arboreta can be found on the website cited at the beginning of this article.

## **Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Government**

1. Require risk assessment for government-led or financed plant introductions to ensure that no new harmful plant species are introduced, intentionally or unintentionally.
2. Do not distribute existing holdings of invasive plant species to areas where they can potentially do harm; eliminate these holdings or maintain new or existing holdings using appropriate safeguards.
3. Coordinate and facilitate collaboration in databases, early warning systems, monitoring, and other means of preventing invasive plant species problems.
4. Lead and fund (subject to budgetary considerations) the development of environmentally sound methods to control harmful invasive plant species, seek control of such species on public lands and promote their control on adjacent private lands.
5. Develop and promote the use of non-invasive plant species within all government units and to the public.
6. Facilitate, lead, coordinate and evaluate public outreach and education on harmful invasive plant species.
7. Encourage Federal employees and management to participate in ongoing training programs on invasive plant species.
8. Foster international cooperation to minimize the risk of the import and export of potentially invasive plant species.
9. Develop partnerships and incentive programs to lessen the impact of invasive plant species and provide non-invasive restoration materials.

10. Provide a forum for regular evaluation of the effectiveness of these voluntary codes of conduct towards preventing the invasive plant species problem.
11. Enforce invasive plant species legislation at all levels.

### ***Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Nursery Professionals***

1. Ensure that invasive potential is assessed prior to introducing and marketing plant species new to North America. Invasive potential should be assessed by the introducer or qualified experts using emerging risk assessment methods that consider plant characteristics and prior observations or experience with the plant elsewhere in the world. Additional insights may be gained through extensive monitoring on the nursery site prior to further distribution.
2. Work with regional experts and stakeholders to determine which species in your region are either currently invasive or will become invasive. Identify plants that could be suitable alternatives in your region.
3. Develop and promote alternative plant material through plant selection and breeding.
4. Where agreement has been reached among nursery associations, government, academia, and ecology and conservation organizations, phase-out existing stocks of those specific invasive species in regions where they are considered to be a threat.
5. Follow all laws on importation and quarantine of plant materials across political boundaries.
6. Encourage customers to use, and garden writers to promote, non-invasive plants.

### ***Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct For Landscape Architects***

1. Seek out education and information on invasive species issues:

- a) Work with local plant ecologists, horticulturists, nurseries, botanic gardens, conservation organizations and others to determine what species in your region either are currently highly invasive or show aggressive potential. Investigate species under consideration that may present a threat.
  - b) Increase interaction with other professionals and non-professionals to identify alternative plant material and other solutions to problems caused by harmful invasive plants.
  - c) Take advantage of continuing education opportunities to learn more about invasive species issues.
2. Identify and specify non-invasive species that are aesthetically and horticulturally suitable alternatives to invasive species in your region.
  3. Eliminate specification of species that are invasive in your region.
  4. Be aware of potential environmental impacts beyond the designed and managed area of the landscape plan (e.g. plants may spread to adjacent natural area or cropland).
  5. Encourage nurseries and other suppliers to provide landscape contractors and the public with non-invasive plants.
  6. Collaborate with other local experts and agencies in the development and revision of local landscape ordinances. Promote inclusion of invasive species issues in these ordinances.

### ***From the Proceedings of Linking Ecology and Horticulture to Prevent Plant Invasions — Chicago Botanic Garden, Chicago, Illinois 2002***

A meeting was held in Chicago on October 31, 2002 to follow-up on the first Linking Ecology and Horticulture to Prevent Plant Invasions meeting. The purpose of the Chicago Meeting was to build upon the success of St. Louis. In particular, participants at this meeting:

- 1) Reviewed the status of endorsements

of the Codes of Conduct by institutions and other organizations; 2) Discussed experiences implementing the Codes of Conduct; 3) Explored the role “regionality” plays in addressing the invasive plant species problem; and, 4) Developed rough guidelines for selecting alternative plant species that could be used in place of horticultural species recognized as invasive. The key Findings and Recommendations evolving from the Chicago Meeting are:

1. The initiative taken by The Missouri Botanical Garden, The Chicago Botanic Garden and all of the participants of the two meetings entitled, “Linking Ecology and Horticulture to Prevent Plant Invasions” is making a difference. The major national societies and professional associations for botanic gardens and arboreta, the nursery industry, garden clubs and landscape architecture have endorsed the appropriate “Codes of Conduct” and are now taking steps to encourage their members to adopt and implement them. Three prominent botanical gardens (North Carolina, Chicago, Missouri) have already implemented protocols based on the codes and are specifically designed to minimize the spread of invasive plants through their own activities. Other institutions, organizations and businesses will be encouraged to implement the codes.
2. Education is among the most important factors in motivating people, businesses and institutions to address the invasive species problem. High quality materials targeted to different audiences by appropriate leaders are necessary. The media needs be encouraged to play a more active role.
3. Alternative and invasive plant species lists are useful and worth developing provided that: 1) all stakeholders participate in their development; 2) there are clear and accepted criteria for listing invasive plants and alternatives for them; 3) the specific horticultural needs of different audiences are considered and addressed; and, 4)

regional considerations are given a priority. There are already some good examples to build from.

4. Scientific research and risk assessment (economic and environmental) models need to be further developed to provide a stronger foundation for identifying (and listing) plant species as invasive or as non-invasive alternatives. Less anecdotal information should be used in making these determinations.
5. Lists of invasive species and of alternatives should be developed for states or regions (e.g. based on The Nature Conservancy's "ecoregions" or the USDA's hardiness zones). Some very useful examples of collaborative efforts to develop such lists are underway in Florida and Massachusetts and these may serve as models for similar efforts elsewhere.
6. It may be appropriate to formalize the existence of this group and acknowledge the need for continued communications and efforts among the groups represented. Steps to formalize the group could include giving it a name, defining a mandate and plan of action for the next 1–5 years, and evaluating funding opportunities to support future meetings.

### ***Using the Codes of Conduct: Status of Endorsements, Code Development Education, and Outreach***

Although developing the Findings and Principles and Codes of Conduct are certainly major steps toward addressing the threats posed by invasive plant species, endorsing, communicating and applying them is just as important. A principal reason for holding the meeting in Chicago was to discuss experiences of those who have initiated efforts to adopt, explain and use the Codes of Conduct. The following groups were represented at the Chicago Meeting and offered summaries of their recent experiences:

- The Nursery Industry
- The Gardening Public

- Landscape Architects
- Botanical Gardens/Arboreta

These groups face varying challenges and opportunities as they explore how best to build awareness and acceptance of the Codes of Conduct. In all cases, they have made a commitment to explore how best to advance the Codes of Conduct equitably and effectively. This takes time and patience. Following are summaries of what these groups have experienced to date.

### ***The Nursery Industry***

The Nursery Industry has been educating its constituency on the Codes of Conduct so that endorsements and subsequent implementation can occur. There is little opposition within this industry to endorsing and using the Codes of Conduct, as long as three key considerations are fully explored: 1) Regional groups must be allowed to develop their own responses to regional invasive plant problems, including guidance on or lists of invasive plant species, since plants may exhibit invasive characteristics in one region and not in another; 2) Efforts to place invasive plant species on official lists must include research, where needed, to ensure that "listed" plants do, in fact, have invasive characteristics. Lists that use anecdotal information to determine the "invasive" potential of a species are not preferred by the nursery industry, since this highly important approach could cause some plants to be deemed "invasive" without sufficient basis; and, 3) Well understood criteria for listing a plant as "invasive" must be developed prior to completing invasive plant species lists. Industry representatives emphasized the distinction between processes for identifying and ranking invasive plants, and processes for selecting and applying non-regulatory or regulatory management measures.

### ***The Gardening Public***

The Garden Club of America (GCA) established its leadership position in the fight against invasive plants when it became one of the first national organizations to

endorse the Codes of Conduct. Since endorsing them, the GCA has been communicating with their 197 member clubs located across the country, including Hawaii. Each club is being strongly encouraged to endorse the Codes of Conduct for the Gardening Public and then to implement them with positive actions in the form of education and community outreach. The Findings and Principles and Codes of Conduct have been carefully explained along with other pertinent information in order to communicate a strong message regarding the nature and severity of the invasive plant problem.

### ***Landscape Architects***

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) was also among the first national organizations to endorse the Codes of Conduct. It has placed a high priority on communicating efforts that are underway to address the invasive plant species problem. The ASLA determined that more education on the topic was needed since many landscape architects lacked an in-depth awareness of the nature of and solutions to the invasive plant species problem. The ASLA has increased efforts to bring about awareness by publishing a series of articles in Landscape Architecture magazine, advocating for federal legislation proposed to help curb the threats, and hosting a successful education session at the ASLA annual meeting held last fall in San Jose, CA. In summary, landscape architects and their regional and national representatives are committed to advancing thoughtful and effective measures to better understand and curb the threat of harmful invasive plant species.

### ***Botanical Gardens and Arboreta***

The American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA) endorsed the Codes of Conduct in early 2002 and several botanic gardens have already taken steps to implement them. The North Carolina Botanic Garden had anticipated development of codes, and

for several years has been implementing protocols designed to minimize the institution's use and distribution of invasive species. Following the 2001 meeting, two other prominent botanic gardens, The Chicago Botanic Garden and The Missouri Botanical Garden followed suit, developing and implementing protocols based on the Codes of Conduct. Summaries of what The Chicago Botanic and Missouri Botanical Gardens have accomplished to date and what they have learned so far from their accomplishments can be found in the entire proceedings document.

### ***Using Codes of Conduct: Further Considerations & Challenges***

The Chicago Meeting included two concurrent, facilitated break-out group sessions on topics that had been identified as key to promoting implementation of the Codes of Conduct and effectively addressing the invasive plant species problem. They are:

1. "Non-Invasive Alternative Plants"
2. "Regionality Considerations"

### ***Non-Invasive Alternative Plants:***

When horticultural plants are recognized as invasive, one positive way to address the situation is to offer producers and users alternative (or "replacement") plants that meet their requirements but are not invasive. One breakout group discussed how lists of and information about non-invasive alternatives could most profitably be constructed and distributed to appropriate audiences. "Alternatives lists" are most effective when they are tailored to individual audiences. Specifically, home gardeners will benefit most from a list that meets their particular interests and needs. This will also be the case for a variety of other audiences, including landscape installation firms, municipalities, nurseries and business park owners.

This breakout group concluded its discussion by identifying several guiding principles for the further development of ways to use alternative plant species

in place of harmful invasive plant species. Among the foremost principle is that a general set of criteria for developing such lists should be created — this is of great importance for ensuring the equitability and reliability of alternatives lists. On the other hand, the lists themselves should be for single states, groups of small states or regions. These lists must reflect behavior of the plants in that region. ALL stakeholders should be involved from the outset in their creation and should first agree upon criteria for listing plants (both alternative and invasive species). Furthermore, the listing criteria should identify which plant a particular alternative species is replacing. If there are several alternative species available to replace an invasive plant, then they should all be identified. This entire effort should be aimed at an audience that includes consumers, growers, landscape contractors, researchers (to help them find "better behaved" cultivars), and government agencies.

### ***Regionality Considerations***

It is commonly agreed that the potential for a particular plant to behave "invasively" depends on the region in which it exists. This situation occurs with many plant species and means that any effort to address the invasive species problem must include consideration of what is called "regionality". This breakout group deliberated about several key areas that drive the "regionality" factor and suggested possible ways to address each area.

#### **1. How best to define a "Region".**

Use pre-existing approaches for defining a region, such as The Nature Conservancy's "eco-regions" or USDA's hardiness zones; consider soil and temperature when defining the eco-regions; evaluate and possibly modify (as needed) the goals of previous definitions of regions, as they may diverge too much from those adopted for developing invasive species lists; in some cases it may be appropriate to use distance from a central point — such as a 100-mile radius around a botanical garden or nursery when defining a region.

2. **A process and appropriate participants for developing invasive plant species lists that reflect regional considerations.** Process for developing invasive plant species lists should: establish a clear purpose and scope for the list; identify and convene all key stakeholders in the region and consider what their motivation and desired outcome/ use for the list will likely be. Key stakeholders should include all those who could be affected by the list; create an on-going review process for the list to add or drop species; develop clear and objective criteria for listing a species; provide for public review and comment on the list before it becomes final.
3. **Criteria for creating regional invasive species lists.** Suggested listing criteria should consider: historical documentation such as herbarium specimens, field note documentation; whether the species is actually reproducing out of cultivation, or is just persistent; the suspected impact of the species and basis for this reasoning (acknowledging that detailed studies may not be feasible if there is reason to suspect it does have a strong negative effect); how many individual plants and plant populations are in the region; availability and consideration of peer-reviewed papers or other public data; plant dispersal ability; affected habitats of a particular invasive plant and their value; general knowledge about our ability to control the plant; economic burdens are a separate issue — this is just concerning possible ecological harm that would land a species on a list of invasive species. Economic impact may be considered in the selection of response measures.
4. **Other influencing factors.** Other influencing factors (i.e. economic or political) include: the cost and viability of control/quarantine; the cost of not controlling/quarantining; the ramifications of crossing political boundaries, assuming regional

boundaries are drawn using political ones; who the stakeholders are and other relevant issues associated with a particular region.

5. **Next steps for addressing “regionality” considerations.** Next steps for regional considerations need to: determine how to perform and conduct simple economic risk/benefits analyses for a few representative species; establish what research has been conducted to support whether a plant should be listed as invasive; create and adapt a uniform criteria model adaptable to multiple regions; actively encourage and facilitate communication among all stakeholders; and continue to facilitate communication about the Codes of Conduct, particularly to garden writers and other media by releasing timely press releases. Also, they should strategically consider who should endorse the codes and make such endorsement requests be adapted to regions; these ideas and suggestions regarding “regionality” should be considered by anyone responding to the invasive plant species problem, including those implementing the Codes of Conduct.

### ***Future Directions recommended at the Chicago meeting***

A number of ideas have emerged to ensure that the initiative taken by The Missouri Botanical Garden, The Chicago Botanic Garden, and all of the participants of the two workshops entitled, “Linking Ecology and Horticulture to Prevent Plant Invasions” remains influential. These ideas reflect the general consensus that this effort is making a difference.

A first step involved is to continue encouraging major national societies and professional associations for botanic gardens and arboreta, the nursery industry, garden clubs and landscape architecture, as well as government agencies, to endorse and implement the “Codes of Conduct”. They should also take steps to encourage their members to adopt and implement them. This can be

accomplished by following, evaluating, and then communicating the progress by leading institutions and businesses. As part of this, high quality materials targeted to different audiences by appropriate leaders are necessary. Also, the media needs be encouraged to play a more active role.

A second necessary step is to convene a group of leaders representing all stakeholder groups to develop alternative and invasive plant species lists, building from current good examples of collaborative efforts. These lists need to reflect clear and accepted criteria for listing invasive plants and alternatives for them, the specific horticultural needs of different audiences, and appropriate regional approaches. Lists need to be developed for states or regions.

A third step is to enhance the tools required for accomplishing the second step. Scientific research and risk assessment (economic and environmental) models need to be further developed (also by a group of qualified representatives of all stakeholder groups) to provide a stronger foundation for identifying (and listing) plant species as invasive or as non-invasive alternatives.

### ***Where do we go from here?***

These two workshops were instrumental in bringing the natural resource and horticulture communities together to discuss the issue and agree upon ways in which we can contribute to workable solutions. The information presented, discussed, and generated provides useful insight into identifying: how we as an industry can have a positive impact on minimizing the impact of harmful invasive plants; how we as an industry can address the issue both within and outside of our boundaries; and equally important, what we as an industry should expect as a set of standards in dealing with the issue from broad-based collaboration with those outside of our industry.

As we move forward, here are a few summary points to consider when contemplating the invasive plant issue and formulating a position as an

individual, business, or an association.

People are the major users of plants. Our use is intentional and targeted. We use plants in a given location for a given purpose. The magnitude of this use has allowed unintentional dispersal of some plants through natural (wind, water, and wildlife) and unnatural (human activity) mechanisms. A small proportion of introduced plant species becomes invasive and causes economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health.

Plant introduction and improvement are long existing foundations of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, resource development, and conservation yielding diversity to our supply of plants used for food, medicinal, landscapes and gardens, natural resource management, soil and water conservation, wildlife habitat, and other purposes.

Plant species can be invasive in some regions, but not in others. It is commonly agreed that the potential for a particular plant to behave “invasively” depends on the region in which it exists. This situation occurs with many plant species and means that any effort to address the invasive species problem must include consideration of what is called “regionality”. Regional groups including all stakeholders must be allowed to develop their own responses to regional invasive plant problems, including guidance on or lists of invasive plant species.

When horticultural plants are recognized as invasive, one positive way to address the situation is to offer producers and users non-invasive alternative plants that meet their requirements. The nursery industry through the Codes of Conduct is encouraged to develop and promote alternative plant material through plant selection and breeding or as stated above “find better behaved cultivars”. Acceptable cultivars of several reported invasive species are already available. Variety, Subspecies, Cultivars, Forma, Intergeneric Hybrids, Interspecific Hybrids, Line, Strain, Race, and genetic variants are terms which identify genetic variations from the parent species. The genetic differences between the above mentioned and the original species may result in traits deemed

acceptable for use. Invasive plant assessment that does not consider the above listed subclasses as individuals when evaluating for invasiveness is not scientifically complete.

Responsible evaluation and assessment of plant invasiveness is essential to fostering collaboration among the diverse audiences interested and involved in the invasive plant issue. Efforts to place invasive plant species on official lists must include research, where needed, to ensure that “listed” plants do, in fact, have invasive characteristics. Lists that use anecdotal information to determine the “invasive” potential of a species are not acceptable, since this highly important approach could cause some plants to be deemed “invasive” without sufficient basis. Well understood criteria for listing a plant as “invasive” must be developed with input

by all stakeholders prior to completing invasive plant lists.

Individuals from many fields must come together to undertake a broad-based and collaborative effort to address the challenge, including leaders in horticulture, retail and wholesale nurseries, weed science, ecology, conservation groups, botanical gardens, garden clubs, garden writers, educational institutions, landscape architects, foundations and government. A successful invasive plant species strategy will make use of all available tools including scientifically based assessment systems, voluntary codes of conduct, best management practices, and appropriate regulation. Codes of Conduct for all communities (not just the horticultural arena) of interest are an essential first step in that they encourage voluntary initiative, foster

information exchange, and minimize the expense of regulation. The St. Louis and Chicago workshops have set the stage for the natural resource community to develop Voluntary Codes of Conduct. These two workshops coupled with the Management Plan of the National Invasive Species Council identify standards by which we identify invasive species and operate. Codes of Conduct are not only needed to address the use of plants, but are also needed to establish a framework from which all parties operate.

### ***So, what do you think?***

It seems that the first articles on invasive plants have stimulated some interesting comments. Give us your thoughts, they aid in our understanding and formulating a position on the issue. 

---

## **President’s Message 2006 MNLA Summer Field Day... *continued from page 6***

retired in 1963, the name Plymouth Nursery was sold to Wayne Jones who leased and continued to operate the garden center. Plymouth Nursery moved to its present location, the corner of Gotfredson Road and Ann Arbor Road, in 1973. Lee, who had been propagating and growing nursery stock under the name Christensen’s Inc. on the back portion of the property, founded Christensen’s Plant Center at the Garden Center location.

The company’s success was fueled by the rapid growth of Plymouth, Canton, and Northville. Although the garden center was very successful, the needs of landscape contractors directed the company towards wholesale supply. Christensen’s Inc. started and moved to a 200-acre growing facility in South Lyon in the late 1970’s to help fulfill the growing needs of the garden center and area landscape contractors.

In 1985, Christensen’s Plant Center was sold to two key employees, Tim Joy and Frank Huber. In 1988, Tim and Frank moved the company to an 11-acre

parcel at the corner of Gotfredson Road and North Territorial Road in Salem Township. Throughout the years, as Christensen’s Plant Center has experienced continued growth and success, an additional 26 acres has been purchased at this location. Christensen’s Inc., the growing facility in South Lyon, was purchased by Tim and Frank from Lee in 1990 and began to operate under the name of Christensen’s Rushton Farms. Christensen’s Rushton Farms is a short 20-minute drive from the Plant Center and currently has 160 acres of container nursery stock, shade and ornamental trees, evergreen trees and shrubs, and perennials in active production.

Christensen’s Plant Center, wholesale supplier to landscape professionals, has been providing the metropolitan Detroit area with quality plant material and outstanding service for 75 years. Serving over 1,400 customers in five states, Christensen’s Plant Center’s 40-acre facility is located between Plymouth and Ann Arbor. A broad selection of plant material arrives daily from 24 states and

two Canadian provinces. This includes everything from cell flats, plugs, and divisions to 6" caliper trees; native and wetland plants to topiary and specialty plants; and traditional varieties to the newest cultivars. At full capacity, 22,000 shade and ornamental trees, 4,000 evergreen trees, and tens of thousands of deciduous and evergreen shrubs and perennials are available on-site. Daily, during peak season, 14 semi truckloads of material are unloaded and stored at the nursery while the equivalent of 10 semi truckloads are shipped out.

Christensen’s Plant Center and Rushton Farms have been members in good standing of the MNLA for many years. They can be counted on for support of the industry and the efforts of the Association.

We look forward to working with the staff and family at Christensen’s Plant Center and to seeing all of you on August 17 at the 2006 MNLA Summer Field Day! 