



Small Business and the Stimulus Package

Charlie Hall, who holds the Ellison Chair in International Floriculture at Texas A&M University, recently shared his insight into what the economic stimulus means for the green industry.

He lists [seven major provisions](#) of the stimulus package that may be to your benefit including upfront deductions, bonus depreciations, and extended energy credit

Upsell Companion Plants

Ball Horticultural Company and Burpee have partnered to launch Burpee Home Gardens (link to their [website here](#)).

One of their pages lists a number of vegetables and their "companion" plants. Use [this chart](#) to highlight plant companions when you are selling those vegetable plants this spring.



Vegetables in the White House

This should spur additional plant sales. Are you ready?

Increasing Profits through Benchmark Analysis

How do you, as a producer, make money with shrinking margins, rising costs, and demanding customers? Which crops are making money, and which ones are losing money? Which crops do you make the most money on?

Those are the questions that Dr. Robin Brumfield of Rutgers University will help you address through her cost accounting program. In addition to analyzing your actual costs, the program can be used as a planning tool to analyze the impact of increased energy costs and prices as well as changes in marketing mixes, or other changes you are considering in your business.

How to use the program is detailed in an article from the most recent issue of the OFA Bulletin that can be found [here](#).

A link to the downloadable program can be found [here](#).

Appeal to your Eco-conscious Customers

Fiskars has introduced a Rainwater Harvesting System that could prove very appealing to customers. [Link here](#) for more information.

Independent Garden Center Show

August 18-20, 2009
Navy Pier, Chicago
www.igcshow.com to register



Source: [Ellis Hollow Blog](#)

Signs of Spring

Introducing Students to the Green Industry

Here are two steps the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) are taking to introduce students to green industry careers.

The MNLA Foundation is funding two projects that will provide innovative opportunities for youth to learn about the outdoor living environment including related careers in plant production, garden centers, landscapes, water management, arboriculture and hardscapes.

Project 1: Introducing Third and Fourth Graders to the Green Industry.

This is a new curriculum being developed by Dr. Terry Ferriss at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. It will meet the academic standards in science, math, and art through lessons using landscape pavers, sprinklers, plants, ponds, and retaining walls.

Project 2: Junior Master Gardener Program

Up to 7 new Junior Master Gardener groups will be started in 2009, introducing elementary and junior high youth to gardening, plants and the outdoors at an early age.

Getting Your Message Out

Do you ever say, if only I could get people into the store, I know I could inspire them enough to buy? What if you didn't rely on them coming into the store for their inspiration?

The folks at Herby Wonderful, a garden center in Batavia, N.Y., realized how busy people are, and decided to take their message (and plants) to them at the place they spend most of their time: work. They have a few companies within 30 minutes that have very large work forces - a couple of hundred up to a thousand employees - who work long hours. The companies allow the retailer to come in as a morale booster for employees. Garden center representatives come in during lunch or near a shift change and bring some of its best-selling product for employees to buy.

Some companies have the garden center out once a year, while others have them once a month.

"It gets the word out about us to people who normally wouldn't even know where our town is, let alone drive out there," says owner Tracy Gaus. "Once they do know of us, they do take the drive or they order plants and more so they can pick it up on our next visit."

They do the same to a smaller extent with some garden clubs to generate interest in new plants. "These are our biggest sales boosters by far," she adds.

Eileen Nelson
eonelson@wisc.edu
608-265-5283

