

## FEN's Container Operation: Expansion Plans in Motion

For several years, many of our customers, especially those in the garden center market, have been asking us to expand our container plant offerings. The results of our recent customer survey backed up these requests, specifically in regard to our core evergreen varieties. In this article, our propagator and container division manager Tammy Bendure Harrington discusses our plans to meet our customers' needs in this important area.



Tammy stands on the land that will soon become FEN's new container production facility.

It's hard to believe that seven years have passed since we put up the first four of our polyhouses and started experimenting with containerizing plant material here at FEN. Since then we have potted plants, asked lots of questions, and worked hard to increase the quality of our product in an area of nursery operations that the generations of our family before us said we would never enter. Well, twenty houses were added to the original four; then those 24 houses expanded into our winter B&B polyhouse storage area. Before

we knew it, we were filling more than 60 houses in an effort to keep up with our customers' increasing demand for our potted plants.

Thus, the time has come for a new, larger and more efficient area to grow containerized plant material. So this summer we began to design what will become our new container facility in an area several miles west of our current headquarters. This property may eventually become FEN's central operating complex.

Phase one of the project includes preparing the site, including a 3-million gallon irrigation pond, and increasing our polyhouse growing area by 70% with plenty of room for additional expansion. Longer term plans allow for the possibility of moving our entire main complex, including central offices, loading dock, cold storage, vehicle garages, and more, to this new site, which is more centrally positioned among our current field growing operation properties.

We are constantly expanding our line of potted plant

material. This past year we added Azaleas, Buddleia, Rhododendrons, Iteas and hollies (in addition to our lilacs, Hibiscus, Hydrangeas, Spiraea, Arborvitae, Clethra, Weigela, and others). Now, we are experimenting with boxwood and Taxus, with an eye toward producing the same quality in pots that our customers have come to expect from us in our B&B plants. We'll have increasing quantities of container yews and boxwood available during the next few years as we strive to meet our customers' needs. If you have suggestions for other items that you would like to see added to our line of containerized plant material, please give me call; I would love to hear your ideas.

If you haven't tried our containerized material or it's been a few years since you have, please request some samples, we will be more than glad to send you a few free samples of our material. We think you will be impressed with our quality plants and their survivability. Remember, we will ship no plant "before its time", so you are guaranteed the best quality plants available.

Happy Holidays!

—Tammy Bendure Harrington  
Propagator, Container Chief



### Inside this issue:

Container Expansion	1
Spring 2007 Availability Update	2
Web Site Project	2
CEO Corner	3
Poll Question: 2007 Sales Outlook	3
Poll Results: Freight Cost Impact	3
Trade Show Schedule	4



FROM  
FAIRVIEW  
EVERGREEN

## Sales & Marketing Update

# 2006 Rains Bring 2007 Grading Gains



Need a tall, columnar yew for hedging? Try our new *Taxus Cusp. Columnar*, shown here with a 4-foot yardstick.



*Hydrangea Hortense* in summer bloom. We're happy to add free samples of any of our colorful container plants to your order. Just let us know which ones you'd like to try!



Sales rep Tony DiStefano shows off our *Cornus Kousa Chinensis*. We have these beauties available from 5' up to 8'.

Complaining about rain? Is that even legal in our business? If you live within a day's drive of us here in north-western PA, you probably also dealt with more of the wet stuff than you'd ever thought you'd want to see in a year's time. We know many of you lost out on scheduled landscape projects because of all the extra rain, and some of you even endured significant losses on plant material from flooded fields and facilities. It didn't help our sales either. Fortunately, however, it didn't hurt our plants — quite the contrary!

As our customers who ordered throughout fall saw, our yews, boxwood, arborvitae, junipers, and other evergreens and flowering shrubs were BIG and bodacious. The grading on our Hicksi, Densiformis, and other old favorites is as generous as it has been in several years. More than a few of our customers have been known to bump the grade of our plants up to the next size at their point of sale, and this spring's crop may make that prospect all the more tempting.

So which Fairview beauties can you get your hands on in spring and which will be harder to come by? Let's have a look:

**Conifers:** We have some very nice B&B Colorado spruce and Fraser fir available from 3' up to 6', but quantities are limited.

**Taxus:** As mentioned, we've got better-than-ever grades on all our upright, pyramidal, globe, and spreading yews. Sizes over 18" will sell quickly, though.

**Other Evergreens:** Good numbers on Green Velvet, Green Mountain, and Winter Beauty Boxwood. Good numbers on upright arborvitae, even up to 7' grade. Try our new Thuja Green Giant if you

need a deer-resistant variety. Upright Junipers remain very hot, so get your order in ASAP if you need Wichita Blue, Skyrocket, Hetz Columnaris, or Spartan. Supplies are very limited. Same goes for our Rhododendrons, but we now have some great new varieties of container rhodies. Our Blue Prince and Princess hollies are also now available both B&B and in pots, and our B&B Hetz and Northern Beauty hollies are huge at 18" and 2' grades.

**Deciduous Shrubs:** Our best crop of viburnums in years, including the very popular, fragrant Carlesi Compacta. Burning Bush up to 3'. Colorful Spiraea in pots and B&B.

**Shade Trees:** Ginkgo, Lilac, and Locust trees are sold out, as are most Birch. Some maple varieties remain, as do Pin Oak, crabapples, and a killer crop of dogwoods. New for us this year are Kwanzan Cherry and Thundercloud Plum, both of which look great and are available at 2" caliper.

You should be receiving your 2007 catalog from us around the same time this newsletter arrives, but you can get an updated availability and price list from us anytime. Just call, fax, or e-mail us, or better yet, go directly to our web site at [www.fairviewevergreen.com](http://www.fairviewevergreen.com) and click on the current availability link on the home page. You'll be asked to enter a user name and password. Type in 'fairview' (all lower-case letters) in BOTH fields and, presto, the full list will appear.

Finally, if you don't have your order in yet, please get it in as soon as you can. We've already started allocating plant material, and some of the varieties mentioned above will sell out quickly. The sooner your order is in, the better chance we can supply you with most or all of the plants

you need from us!

Here's what else is going on in the world of FEN Sales and Marketing:

### SURVEY SAYS...

Our recent customer survey yielded high praise and some very useful suggestions. Response was phenomenal, with more than 180 customers completing the survey. Over 97% of respondents rated us as either 'Excellent' or 'Good' in both plant quality and grading. More importantly, we received some great ideas from you in areas such as plant selection, branding, production, payment processing, and catalog content — ideas we can put into practice quickly. Special thanks to all of you who completed our survey. The feedback you provided will help us better serve you in the future!

### YOUR PICTURES PLEASE!

One of our winter projects this year is to further develop the content on our Web site. We'd like to help promote our landscape customers by displaying photos of their showcase projects on our site. Please help us out by e-mailing us one or more digital pictures of landscape jobs your firm has completed of which you are particularly proud. We plan to compile them and link them, along with your firm's contact information, to a national map on our site. That way, when commercial or residential prospects around the country are browsing our site, they can find someone close to home - YOU! - who can do the quality job they need done, hopefully with some Fairview plants in the mix! Call me for details anytime.

See you at the trade shows!

— Hagan Hetz, FEN Sales

# CEO Corner: A Look Back at 2006

Another fast-paced, challenging year at Fairview Evergreen is almost over. What started out as a year of high hopes – great spring sales, plenty of rain (best growing season in years!), enthusiastic co-workers – leveled off in summer and fall as sales slowed while the rains kept coming... and coming.

First let me say that my July was a whirlwind. I flew to Vail, Colorado for the ANLA Annual Convention mid-month, then testified before the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee in Harrisburg, PA on the 2007 Farm Bill on July 19th. From there I drove on to the PANTS summer trade show in Atlantic City to finish a very busy month. After being back home for two weeks and finally settling back into a normal work routine, I soon found out that a new round of 'excitement' was about to begin.

The U.S. Department of Labor knocked on our door one

Tuesday to inform us of a 'full investigation' commencing the following week. One never knows what prompts the government watchdogs to come calling (they certainly won't tell you), but all of us here have the confidence of knowing that Fairview Evergreen has always tried to comply with all the laws, rules and regulations

do you will have to pay them for time worked!) The investigator also required a field tour and needed to speak to three different employees of her choice. She was fluent in Spanish and I gave her the time and distance to be comfortable doing these interviews. The main concern seemed to be the potable water and toilet facilities for our employees. Several years ago we retrofitted our crew vans with 25-gallon water dispensers for washing hands. The vans also each have 10-gallon drinking water containers, and we supply paper cups for drinking and soap for hand washing. When you have 'lunch-in-field' you need to be very aware of the OSHA rules. In the end, the DOL's only adverse finding was that we needed to upgrade the condition of our portable restrooms in the field, and even this citation was classified as 'Non-Willful and Not Serious'. We were charged a minimal fine and when the investigator returned she thought we had done a fabulous reclamation of those port-o-potties!

Two weeks after this the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture stopped by to do a 'Worker Protection Safety' check. This was getting old! After a brief interview with the county inspector I passed him off to our IPM Manager and Field Superintendent. Once again we had no concerns, but it felt a little like getting

those annual physicals – you're always nervous until the doctor comes back and says you're okay. We passed the safety check with flying colors.

In October we were pleased that the Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture, Dennis Wolff, decided to include us in his 'Fall Harvest Tour' of the State (hmm... had that summer inspection been a reconnaissance mission?). So we cleaned up the office and tried to make sure our fields were in tip-top shape for the Secretary and his entourage. Secretary Wolff is an extremely bright man who brings to the position a strong background in science, farming and is also a member of the Agricultural Technical Committee of the World Trade Organization. It was a pleasure to have him tour our nursery, and to be able to exchange ideas and information with him and his staff.

On the operational side of things, a fall season of inclement weather unfortunately resulted in somewhat lackluster sales. Despite the tenuous state of the national economy and housing market, we're all hoping for a great year in 2007. In the meantime, I hope you all enjoy some well-deserved downtime this winter. Happy Holidays!

— Christine Hetz Phillips  
CEO



Fairview Evergreen welcomed Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff (pictured at far right) and his staff as part of his "Fall Harvest Tour" of the state's ag-related businesses in October.

that we are aware of. As you all know, though, these regulations can change overnight and sometimes it is difficult to keep up with them. This investigation required all payroll information from the last year, to determine if we follow all the applicable overtime and time card rules. (Did you know that your employees are not allowed to clock in more than 7 minutes early? If they

### Last Issue's Poll Results:

Have the freight cost increases of the past couple years changed how (and from whom) you purchase your nursery stock?

- YES  78%
- NO  22%



### This Issue's Poll Question:

What is your outlook for your business in 2007?

- We expect our sales to increase over 2006.
- We expect sales to be about equal to 2006.
- We expect sales to decrease from 2006.

To submit your response, log onto our Web site and click on the Poll Question tab; call us; or e-mail us at [feninc@velocity.net](mailto:feninc@velocity.net).

**A Publication of  
Fairview Evergreen Nurseries, Inc.**

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The Western Show, Kansas City  
January 7-9  
Booth #1019C  
Exhibitors: Hans and Hagan



Great Lakes Trade Exposition, Lansing, MI  
January 5-7  
Booth #705  
Exhibitors: Fred and Chris



MANTS, Baltimore  
January 10-12  
Booth #37 (A.J. Horticulture)  
Exhibitors: Christine, Amy, and  
Tony D.



Mid-Am, Chicago  
January 17-19  
Booth #1942  
Exhibitors: Christine, Hagan, Chris

**FEN Hits the Show Circuit Again  
Road Trip!!**



CENTS, Columbus, OH  
January 22-24  
Booth #1012  
Exhibitors: Fred, Tom, Mike, Kurt



New England Grows, Boston  
February 6-8  
Booth #1223-5  
Exhibitor: Tony DiStefano (A.J. Hort)