
TECHNICAL SESSIONS

MONDAY MORNING, 6 OCTOBER, 2003

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the International Plant Propagators' Society Southern Region of North America convened at 7:45 AM at the Menger Hotel, San Antonio, Texas with President Randy Jacobs presiding.

PRESIDENT RANDY JACOBS

President Jacobs welcomed everyone to San Antonio, Texas for the Twenty-Eighth Annual I.P.P.S. Southern Region of North America meeting. Jacobs complemented Program Chairman Diane Dunn for the outstanding program and speakers she assembled for the meeting. He also praised Local Site Chairman James Harden, Jr. and his committee for all of their long hours in arranging the tours, hotel, and other planning activities.

He challenged the membership to seek and share. Kay Walden-Phelps was then introduced to moderate the first morning session.

Up With Pots — Solutions for Heat, Cold, and Blow-over Problems®

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INTRODUCTION

Containers confine plant root systems to a specific volume of growth medium. Containers provide a neat and practical system for production, shipping, and handling. Plants in containers are the overwhelming preference by the gardening public. Nevertheless, growing plants in containers also provides an assortment of unique challenges, particularly, heat, cold, and blow-over. Roots of terrestrial plants evolved in soil and were often insulated by leaf litter and other debris over the surface. As a result, roots are far more sensitive to both heat and cold compared to plant tops (Barney, 1947; Havis, 1976; Nightingale, 1935; Shirley, 1936; Studer et al., 1978; Tinga, 1977). Plants that blow over do not get watered, topdressed fertilizer is spilled, roots on the exposed side of the container can be killed by heat; in some cases foliage and stem damage can occur, and if plants are actively growing and not returned to the upright position promptly distorted growth may result. An assortment of techniques have been tried to insulate roots of plants in containers from heat and cold and stop the blow-over problem (Whitcomb, 1980, 1983, 2003; Whitcomb and Mahoney 1984; Whitcomb and Euchner, 1979; Williams and Whitcomb, 1985). All have had some degree of success, but all add additional complications.

Several years ago, Bushman's Plant Farm, Cleveland, Texas, came up with the idea of using sections of 1.3-cm (0.5-inch) rebar inserted through drain holes of support containers. When four or more base containers were interconnected, production containers inserted inside the base containers would not blow over. The technique worked and the cost and assembly time reasonable. However, root zone heat reduction was slight, rebar were large enough in diameter to cause tripping of