



Nature Scapes
INC.

Cultivated News

News & Notes From the Ground Up • Volume 2, No. 1 • Spring 1996

Nature Scapes Expands Horizons!

This is an exciting time for Nature Scapes! Rick Upchurch recently announced the inclusion of Greensphere Landscaping, Inc. under the Nature Scapes corporate umbrella. Greensphere is a 12-year-old company specializing in the upscale residential market. "This merger is a great opportunity for both companies," says Rick. "Nature Scapes has not been completely suited to handle the residential market, so now we will be able to expand our scope of services. On the other hand, Greensphere needed an impetus to grow, and now they have it."

Greensphere will move its present operation near Emory University to Nature Scapes' Lilburn facilities. Moving with the operation will be Greensphere's present management and employees. "People are our greatest and most needed resource," says Rick. "Greensphere's clientele demand familiar faces on their property, and the last thing we want is to lose good people." Rick sees better opportunities ahead for the employees of both companies, since they can look among their own ranks for advancement.

The two companies will remain separate in name and operations, at least in the beginning. It is the desire of both



Nature Scapes and Greensphere to make the transition smooth and one that goes almost unnoticed. Both Nature Scapes and Greensphere have excellent management systems in place, so operations will continue as normal. "As we get a full grasp on all of the opportunities presented to us by the merger, we will then be able to expand service accordingly." Rick continues, "We are excited about 1996 and the futures of both Nature Scapes and Greensphere!"

Introducing Mike and Rick

In connection with the news of our corporate merger, we thought our customers and friends would like to know about the two principals of Greensphere.

In 1984, Mike Williams and Rick Barnes formed Greensphere Landscaping, Inc. For the past twelve years, Greensphere has specialized in design, installation and maintenance for the high-end residential market. The company has installed landscapes as far away as Birmingham, Alabama and has won numerous awards for its work from the Georgia Nurseryman's Association, the Georgia Association of Landscape Professionals and the Georgia Green Industry Association.



Mike Williams:

Mike Williams was born in Frederick, Maryland, but was reared in the horse farm country of central Florida. He first became interested in landscaping as a teen, when he worked at a nursery as a summer job. After attending the University of Florida, where he majored in Landscape Architecture, he moved to Atlanta.

Mike began working at Uptown Greenery, a horticultural firm specializing in tropical plants for commercial and residential interiors. It was here that he honed his management and design skills. It was also at this time that he realized a significant potential existed for landscaping in the high-end residential market.

"People would ask if we did outdoor landscaping," Mike says. "After Rick Barnes came to work for us, we told them we knew someone who did. The owner of the company was very gracious and allowed us to pursue landscaping, as he did not want to diversify from his specialty."

Mike left the Uptown Greenery in the fall of 1986 to join Rick, who was already full-time with Greensphere.

In 1990, one of Greensphere's installations appeared in *Southern Living* magazine. "Just getting into the magazine was great, but when we wound up on the cover — we were ecstatic!" Mike also designed the landscape for the *Family Circle* Dream House of the 90s which was built in Rockdale County outside of Atlanta. "Those are the types of projects that really make this business fun."

Mike enjoys gardening in his own yard — another one of Greensphere's award-winning landscapes. He also enjoys

See Intros page 2

restaurants, movies and occasionally relaxing with friends at Lake Chatuge in North Georgia.

Rick Barnes:

Rick Barnes, an Atlanta native, first became interested in plants when he took a Botany course at DeKalb Community College. He was so interested in fact that he worked 2 years for his instructor, combing the mountains, piedmont and coastal plains in search of plant specimens for the college herbarium.

“George Sanko taught plant taxonomy (classification) at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. So we spent 3 weeks there one summer studying everything from the flowers of the dryland mesa to alpine wildflowers,” says Barnes.

Rick continued his education at the University of Georgia, where (in 1980) he received a bachelor’s degree in

horticulture. It was during this time that he went to work for an Atlanta interior plantscaping firm and met Mike Williams. Soon after Rick graduated from college, the two began doing landscape work. “While I was interested in the tropical plants (for offices), all of my education dealt with woody ornamental horticulture, and I did not want to lose that knowledge,” says Barnes.

Rick has served in the Georgia Green Industry Association for several years — in 1994 as President of the Landscape Division and presently as Vice Chairman of the Association.

Rick, his wife Nancy, and 9-year-old son (Eric) live in Tucker. Rick and Eric are in Cub Scouts together, but “it is questionable as to who is the leader and who is the Cub! I have a great time,” says Rick. “It makes me feel like a big kid.” Rick is also active at church and loves photography, videography, hiking, camping, fishing and just being in nature.



Annual Color Selection — David Johnson

Can you believe it’s March already? Over the next few weeks, many of us will busy ourselves planning summer flower gardens: picking out planting beds and dreaming big dreams about how they will look when everything comes into bloom. Here are a few precautions to ensure those dreams come true:

Sunlight and soil

The key to a successful garden is placing the right plant under the right conditions. The proper amount of sunlight, direct or indirect, has the greatest effect on blooming. In this connection, one of the biggest problems I’ve encountered

can be quite easily avoided: shade-loving plants do not belong in full sun and vice versa.

Just as important, planting beds need to be properly prepped. The soil needs to be tilled and loosened to a depth of about 12 inches. Amendments should be added at this time to loosen Georgia’s hard-packed clay, and to help the soil drain properly. Improper drainage will cause a plant’s roots to rot away, and it will never establish itself.

What to buy

When it comes to buying transplants, bigger isn’t always better. Choose the branched plant that is well-proportioned, not the tall one that has become rootbound. The transplant without flowers will perform better, and a young, healthy plant is a better bet than an older, stressed one. Also, watch out for signs of insects or diseases.

Remember: your plants are going to grow! The area you reserve for each plant should be able to accommodate its growth and size at maturity. (Over-pruning to keep a plant within bed-lines can be harmful.)

In choosing the type and color of flower to be used, you should always consider the surrounding plant material. For example, pink begonias placed in a bed with orange day lilies as a backdrop would look very strange.

By far, the most popular summer annuals are marigolds, wax begonias, impatiens, petunias, vinca and verbena. But do not overlook the three colors of salvia: red, white and salmon as possible backdrops for other plants. All of these plants will continue to flower throughout the summer months.

When all else fails...

As a final precaution, the best way to guarantee a successful garden is to follow the steps provided on the plastic name tags that come with your plants. These tags outline steps for fertilizing and watering and also the proper depth to plant and sunlight requirements.



Getting Rid of Fire Ants

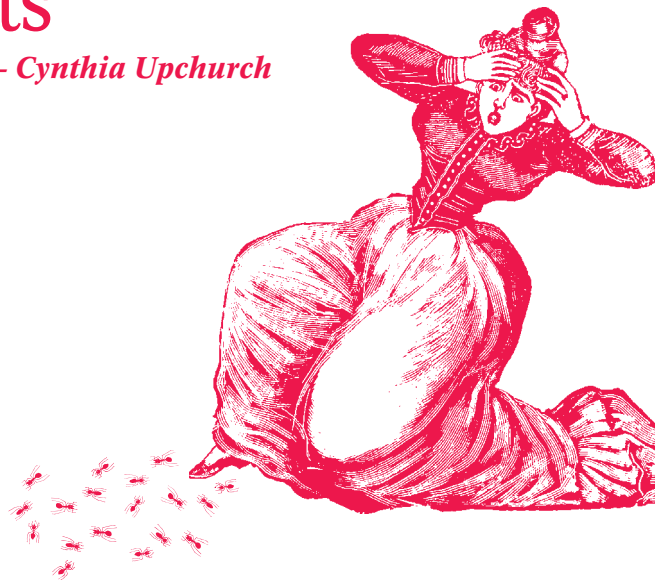
Tis the season most popular for fire ants: spring and summer. Like many other ants, fire ants live in mounds and underground tunnels. Two or three tunnels go down to the water table, but most radiate laterally within the top 18 inches of soil. When the weather is too hot, too dry or too cold the ants move into the deeper tunnels where it's more comfortable. When the weather is mild, they move near the surface.

Fire ants don't like to be bothered. As we know, the slightest disturbance sends them swarming and stinging. If a mound is upset by a lawnmower, a forceful sprinkler, or even an incorrectly applied pesticide, the ants will move beside a walk, under a covered outdoor light, or to any other protected spot.

Baits sprinkled around the mounds make the best fire ant killer. Foraging worker ants carry the bait into the nest to feed to the young and the queen. Although slower-acting than pesticides poured on the mound, baits are more effective because they usually reach the queen. One bait, Amdro, contains a poison which the ants feed to each other and the queen. It works in one to four weeks, depending on the time of year. If it's too hot or too cold, the ants will be slow to gather the bait.

If there's a mound by your back steps and you are looking for immediate control, fire ant killers containing Orthene, Dursban, or Diazinon kill the ants in a nest on contact. However, those out foraging won't re-enter. Instead, elsewhere in the yard they'll build satellite mounds that survive for several weeks, even without a queen. To increase your chances of killing most of the ants — and doing it quickly — apply a bait and allow two to three days for the ants to distribute it through the mound. Then treat with a fast-acting contact insecticide to eliminate the stinging

— Cynthia Upchurch



workers quickly. Contact killers in dust form bear a slight edge over a drench for two reasons: They don't disturb the mound, and they're carried to the depths of the colony on the body of the ant.

Summary tips for control:

- The ideal time to treat a mound is on a sunny day when the temperature is between 60 and 80 degrees and the ground is moist. That is when the ants are near the surface.
- Do not stir up a mound before sprinkling baits or dusts, or pouring a drench.
- Buy bait in small packages, and use within three months after opening. Ants reject stale or rancid bait.

The information in this article comes from *Southern Living's 1995 Garden Annual*.

Spring's Spectacular Show — Pam Lasota

At long last, spring is here! As we watch the amazing show unfold, here are just a few (there are too many beauties to include them all) "honorable mentions."

Yoshino Cherry (*Prunus yedoensis*)

You can't discuss spring foliage without mentioning the Yoshino Cherry. Famous for its mass appeal in Washington, D.C., its beauty enhances our landscapes as well. This plant has a low, spreading growth habit with an almost umbrella-like appearance. Its lacy blooms first appear as pink and then fade to white. These make excellent specimen trees in formal gardens. In bloom, the Yoshino Cherry is simply spectacular.

Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

This indigenous, small tree is seen scattered around woodland areas throughout the south. Redbuds bloom at the same time as Dogwoods, and the two together create a display unmatched in any woodland setting. In spring, magenta blooms grow along the tree's branches giving it a delicate appearance. It is however a very hardy tree, tolerating even

extreme drought conditions. Though the Eastern Redbud grows rapidly to its full height of 25 feet, the plant has a relatively short life span (20 to 25 years).

Rhododendron (*Rhododendron x. sp.*)

The blooms of the Rhododendron grow in clusters, some as large as 1 to 2 feet in diameter, giving the appearance of a bouquet sitting on a branch. This lush foliage gives the plant a natural, yet refined look. Sizes range from 4 to 18 feet depending on the variety, and its diverse colors include lavender, pink, white, red, even yellow and deep purple.

These shrubs are site-particular, preferring an "understory" location. Planting underneath taller trees gives them filtered sun and keeps them cooler. This is important for their survival.

As rhododendrons are not drought tolerant, they must be watered during dry periods. For additional protection, heavy mulching is recommended. Though these shrubs are a

See *Show* page 4

Show from page 3

little fussy in our region, they are worth the trouble of caring for them. Some varieties which tend to be more tolerant to our region's weather conditions include: Chinoides (white), Vulcan (red), English Roseum (pink/purple) and Roseum elegans (lavender).

Native Azaleas (*Rhododendron sp.*)

Native plants should be treasured and these azaleas are a gem. They can be seen growing on the edge of woodland areas, especially in Georgia's northern mountains. They are deciduous, and their growth habit is much different from evergreen azaleas. Even their flowers are dramatically different. People sometimes call them wild honeysuckle, because the blooms resemble those of the honeysuckle vine.

They grow upright and have a very airy appearance. Colors range from white and pink to yellow-orange. They are an excellent choice for naturalistic borders. They also need some shade and do well in an understory planting. Some common varieties are: Flame (orange-yellow), Alabama



Rhododendron
— Removing dead flower clusters to prevent seed formation. (The theory is that it prevents the plant from wasting nutrients in seed production.)

(white with yellow throat) and Piedmont (white to light pink).

Forsythia (Forsythia x. intermedia)

We know spring is here when the cheerful yellow blooms of Forsythia appear. Give them room to grow (forget trying to shear them into a hedge) and you'll have a lovely mound of spring color as well as a durable, relatively low-maintenance plant. Forsythia are nice when used as an informal hedge. Their mature height is around 12 feet, and their width ranges from 6 to 12 feet. So give them room and let them bloom!

Who We Are

Cultivated News is published four times a year by Nature Scapes, Inc., for over ten years a provider of landscaping, maintenance, irrigation and floriculture services to the metropolitan Atlanta area.

Nature Scapes, Inc. is a charter member of GGIA – Georgia Green Industry Association, MALTA – Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association and GTAI – Georgia Turfgrass Association, Inc. We also belong to the Southern Nurseryman's Association.

Natures Scapes, Inc. operates a drug-free workplace, as certified by the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

If you have any topics or questions you would like to see discussed or elaborated on in a future issue of this newsletter, please call and let us know.

Nature Scapes, Inc.

**1307 Turner Road • Lilburn, GA 30247
(770) 923-7023 • Fax (770) 923-3874**



Nature Scapes, Inc.
1307 Turner Road
Lilburn, Georgia 30247

