

# LETTERS

## 21st Century Challenge Redux

I am in full support of the letter of Dr. David Hershey ["21st Century Challenge Report Badly Flawed," *HortScience* 26(5):464], and congratulate him for having the courage to publicly present a viewpoint other than the rather narrow interpretation of the Ad-Hoc Committee. The real challenge of the 21st Century will be to use the tools that we have to solve the problems of tomorrow without creating artificial barriers to success.

It is unfortunate that the Chairman of the Ad-Hoc committee chose not to publicly address the concerns outlined by Dr. Hershey, since *HortScience* would provide an excellent forum for determining the extent of the problem and identifying potential solutions. The failure of the Chairman to respond simply reinforces Dr. Hershey's contention that the 21st Century Challenge Report was used as a self-serving vehicle to support the preconceived ideas of the committee.

GARY W. STUTTE  
Univ. of Maryland  
College Park

ture from pictures made from glass negatives.

We welcome all visitors to come feel the aura that surrounds this lovely old home.

MARIE DOSSETTE  
Liberty Hyde Bailey Birthsite Museum  
South Haven, Mich.

Dr. Seeley's article on Liberty Hyde Bailey was a real inspiration and help to me, as I have often wondered about this fine pioneer in our field.

When I embarked upon a graduate degree in horticulture, my father sent me a copy of the *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture* for a desk reference. After looking through this text I was amazed at how much information had been apparently lost in today's courses at botanical gardens and universities. Bailey's work showed more than the usual depth, and a great liberal tendency to include such observations and thoughts that many of today's horticulturists neglect. Such are the seeds from which "new" applications evolve. The text has been a most useful one for me, and I still find the reference

invaluable. I have often wanted to look further into his writings, and having all too little time for library research these days, I am most grateful for such a fine literature review as was in the article.

SINCLAIR A. ADAM, JR.  
West Chester, Pa.

I certainly appreciated Dr. Seeley's biography of the late Liberty Hyde Bailey. I used to see Bailey at science meetings, but never did meet him personally. He was an excellent speaker.

It would be a great help if someone were to write a book of short biographies of eminent horticulturists.

VERNON STOUTEMEYER  
Univ. of California  
Los Angeles

## Data Query

I find it difficult to accept the data presented in a recent research report in *HortScience* ["Influence of Paclobutrazol on Growth and Flowering of *Rhododendron* 'Sir Robert Peel,'" R.I. Wilkinson and D. Richards,

## Liberty Hyde Bailey

I was delighted to read the article on Liberty Hyde Bailey [*HortScience* 25(10):1204-1210] and am most grateful for all the time Dr. Seeley devoted to work on it. To see Bailey as one of only two recipients of the Horticulture Hall of Fame Award, the other being Gregor Mendel, is honor indeed. Dr. Seeley's wonderful account of Bailey's life will be of abiding usefulness.

FRANK H.T. RHODES  
Cornell Univ.  
Ithaca, N.Y.

It is always a great thrill for the board members of the Liberty Hyde Bailey Birthsite Museum that the memory and accomplishments of Dr. Bailey continue on and on. We also appreciate ASHS's placing Dr. Bailey in the Horticulture Hall of Fame. Who has contributed more in this field?

Dr. Bailey's home is a beautifully restored and tended museum with an accessioned collection. We have a wonderful library of his works, his letters, his Bible, and articles of clothing, among other items. Thanks to a devoted board member, we added a large lovely room this past year (handicapped accessible). We were able to duplicate the previous struc-

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The application rates of paclobutrazol seem unreasonably high. Application of 0.4 g active ingredient per pot as a soil drench is equivalent to application of 100 ml of Bonzi concentrate per pot in the 0.4% formulation as sold by Sandoz. All except the lowest rate for whole-plant sprays are higher than anything recommended by this distributor. Perhaps the authors meant grams of formulation rather than grams of active ingredient.

The height and number of flowers are presented in a  $\log_{10}$  transformation in Figs. 1 and 2. Converting to centimeters, the height of the control plants is a remarkable 3 m after 58 weeks of growth. Transforming the data in Fig. 2 suggests the greatest number of flower buds was  $\approx 60$  per plant. Both of the values seem unreasonably large to me.

Have I misinterpreted the data as presented in this paper?

MARTIN GENT  
Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station  
New Haven

In reply to the above inquiry, I stress three points:

1) Figure 1, the influence of paclobutrazol on Rhododendron stem extension, represents the total stem growth of the whole plant, not to be confused with plant height. Final height for control plants was 90 cm, and for the 0.4 g/pot drench 51 cm. These data were not presented in the paper.

2) The 'Cultar' formulation that contains 240 g paclobutrazol active ingredient/liter was used in our experiment. Bonzi had not been

released at the time this work was completed.

3) The drench rates are not unreasonably high in hindsight, given their influence on flower bud number and development. Figure 2 reports  $\approx 60$  flower buds in the return flush at the highest drench rates. Vegetative growth was suppressed by the paclobutrazol drench. The high number of floral buds represents a conversion of an abnormal number of lateral meristems to floral buds. This abnormal effect on flowering was certainly worth reporting.

IAN WILKINSON  
Institute of Plant Sciences Knoxfield  
Australia

[Martin Gent replies: Dr. Wilkinson's reply answers my questions. However, I still feel the chemical application rates are extremely high.]

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