UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

PennState Extension

Greenhouse TPM/IPM Report

Central Maryland Research and Education Center
Ellicott City, Maryland

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September 29, 2026 Cut Flower Program Summary

By: Suzanne Klick

We conducted the 2026 cut flower program on September 29th in our conference room the Central Maryland Research Center in Ellicott City, MD. In the morning, we heard talks from Andrew Ristvey (nutrient management), Dave Clement (plant diseases), Xuan Wei (potential Chinese and Japanese mums for tea and edible flowers), Laura Nixon (insects), and Jill Coutts, Tanglewood Flower Farm, and Lisa Derx, Apricity Flowers (how they set up the Chesapeake Flower Exchange co-op).



Jill Coutts and Lisa Derx present on how they set up a co-op and how it works.
Photo: Suzanne Klick, UME

Jill Coutts, and Lisa Derx first met at our cut flower tour on September 14, 2021. They started talking to each other while eating lunch at Castlebridge Flower Farm and came up with the idea for a co-op to pool together resources and products from multiple cut flower growers. With help from the Rural Maryland Council and the Keystone Development Center, they opened the co-op in April 2023 with 10 members. Initially, they used Jill's farm, cooler, and van (she did the pick-ups). In 2024, they moved into Historic Savage Mill in a spot that had been used by a furniture restorer for 40 years. They had a lot of work to do to set the space up for flowers. In

2025, they hired a part-time market manager to assist with the work of the co-op.

Each grower lists what they have available for sale on a website (Rooted Farmers platform) used by the co-op. All agree to the prices. The individual farms are identified on the Exchange and buyers order what they need. Farmers bring their flowers to Savage Mill on Tuesdays; Wednesdays are for pick-up and deliveries. Each member also sells to other markets separate from the co-op.

The co-op provides florists with consistent product year-round and farmers with steady customers. Jill noted that it is not competitive like you might think. She said, "Together is better".

For more information, contact Chesapeake Flower Exchange at chesapeakeflowerexchange@gmail.com or check out their website at chesapeakeflowerexchange.com. The co-op reviews new applicants in January.



Caryopteris is one of the late-season blooms sold by Jill Coutts at Tanglewood Flower Farm.
Photo: Suzanne Klick. UME



Jill Coutts, Tanglewood Flower Farm planted some of the rooted mum cuttings in her high tunnel. We will be evaluating these plants for tea and edible flower production.
Photo: Suzanne Klick, UME

Disease Prevention When Preparing Container Plants for Winter

David L. Clement

Poorly overwintered container plants can lead to disease outbreaks in the spring and poor-quality plant material. Some growers in our region routinely cover their plants or put them in high tunnels. A few growers recently because of our mild winters have been gambling with the hardier species and leaving them uncovered. Snow can act as an insulator; however dry cold will create greater chances for winter injury. The key to overwintering container grown plants is keeping the plants cold and alive but not actively growing.

If not covering, group plants closely and surround them with bags of mulch, bales of straw, or wood chips. If available, unheated high tunnels also work to insulate plants from cold. Place cold sensitive species in the center of the house and more cold tolerant species around the edge. Waiting as long as possible to cover or store plants in tunnels will allow plants to harden off gradually which minimizes the risk of winter injury. Poorly established and pot-bound plants tend to overwinter poorly. Also don't forget to provide rodent protection. The primary concern for container grown plants under winter dormancy is damage to the crown or stems and growers must be concerned about root viability. The crown is a unique part of the plant, being the juncture between the stem and the root system. It is physiologically active earlier than the stem, thus making it more susceptible to cold damage. This is also the part of the plant that if damaged will be the most likely attacked by fungal and bacterial pathogens.

To prevent disease during dormancy thoroughly prune back old foliage and remove weeds from the pots. Water everything well to prevent desiccation, allowing the foliage to dry thoroughly. Moist media freezes slower and releases heat compared to dry media, offering protection to the roots. Check the moisture level of the media during the winter and irrigate if necessary. Avoid over-watering plants which will promote root and crown diseases. Some growers treat plants with a broad-spectrum fungicide and allow them to dry prior to covering, especially if there has been a history of disease. If using enclosed frames, polyhouses, or heavy wraps, vent them on sunny or mild days to prevent overheating and fungal growth. Remove covers gradually in spring.

End of the Field-grown Dahlia Season

By: Suzanne Klick

While working on a dahlia project at Clear Ridge Nursery this summer, we were able to enjoy the beautiful blooms each week when we collected data. Over the weekend of October 17 and 18, temperatures went below freezing and the cold temperatures blackened the field-grown dahlia foliage and killed many flowers. If you are growing dahlias in high tunnels, the harvest period lasts a few extra weeks since the warm soil within the tunnel keeps the temperatures a few degrees higher than outside overnight. Be prepared to lift the tubers from the soil and store them in a dry, cool place for the winter.



Note the blackened foliage of these heavily damaged dahlias after the first freeze in central Maryland
Photo: Suzanne Klick, UME

Flower of the Month

By: Krystal Snyder

Celosia New Look® from Benary delivers bold late summer and fall color with vibrant scarlet-red plumes contrasting beautifully against rich bronze foliage. Its compact and bushy habit make it a great choice for landscapes and containers.



Celosia New Look® from Benary
Photo: Krystal Snyder

What Are Insect Pests Doing in the Winter?

By Laura Nixon

Fall is here, and so we have to start thinking about our winter preparations; what does that look like for pest management?

For many of our outdoor crops, including cut flower fields, most pest insects will go dormant for the winter. Most insect species which survive in regions with cold winters go into diapause; diapause is a time of inactivity, similar to vertebrates going into hibernation, when development and feeding stops. Most of our pest caterpillars, such as cabbageworms, loopers, and armyworms will seek out safe spots in the soil or plant debris to pupate for the winter. True bugs, such as stink bugs, harlequin bug, and tar-



Harlequin bug adults overwinter in nooks and crannies on trees and in plant debris
Photo: Suzanne Klick

nished plant bug overwinter in the adult stage; these adult bugs will seek out safe spots in nooks and crannies of trees as well as ground level debris. Many beetle species will survive in the soil as grubs, think of Japanese beetle grubs feeding on roots; however, some species, such as cucumber beetles, will actually overwinter in protected areas as adults. Best practices for many of these outdoor pests is to clean up your crops debris! If you remove debris and standing dead plants from your flower field, this will minimize the pest populations emerging in your field next spring.



If you are growing poinsettias, check the underside of plant foliage to avoid late season problems with whiteflies
Photo: Suzanne Klick

Greenhouses are, of course, slightly different. These controlled environments provide warmer habitats for pests to continue activity. Although thrips and whitefly activity will slow down a little in the winter, these species can continue to feed and reproduce in warm greenhouses. If you are still producing in your greenhouse over the winter, be mindful to continue monitoring for these pests and treating early to decrease populations before the spring boom. At this time of year, poinsettia production will start to see a rise in whitefly pressure and fungus gnat larvae damaging the roots. A soil drench of a systemic, such as cyantraniliprole (ex. Mainspring), will effectively knock these problems down before major damage occurs. Whether your greenhouse spaces are active or inactive in the coming months, sanitation is key to preventing next year's pests. Cleaning floors and drains will minimize areas for fungus gnat and shore fly reproduction and removing stray weeds or unwanted plants will minimize winter feeding of active pests.



Weeds growing under greenhouse benches can be sources of pests such as aphids
Photo: Suzanne Klick

If you have any pest problems over the winter, or need advice on winter maintenance, feel free to get in touch at any time! Lnixon1@umd.edu or sklick@umd.edu

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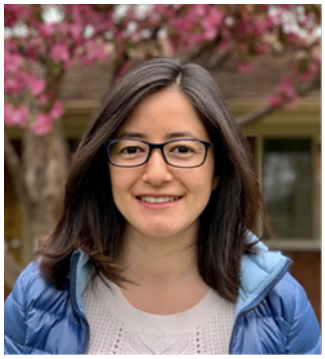
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