

CATS Membership Meeting via Zoom, September 21, 2022, 9:30-11:00 am
Attendance: 52

Speaker: Stephen Spurlock, Manager, Bremono Trees. Mr. Spurlock spoke on “The Nursery Industry and How it Relates to Planting Efforts Society wide.”

Announcement: JoAnn Dalley, President Elect

Since this is the Cville Day of Caring, JoAnn wanted to make an announcement before leaving to volunteer at the Day of Caring event: She thanked all of the board members and directors for their service during 2022 and made a call for volunteers and/or nominations to fill the open positions of President Elect, Communications Committee chair, and Education Committee chair. If anyone would like descriptions of the duties associated with a position, please contact JoAnn or President Robin Hanes.

An email blast will send shortly, also, characterizing each position’s responsibilities.

Program: Stephen Spurlock

Mr. Spurlock began his talk with a description of Bremono Trees’ operation. It is a small (150 acres), wholesale nursery where they plant approximately 1,200 liners of 100 or so species and cultivars annually. The liners are 1–2-year-old trees produced at various liner operations around the country, predominantly (for Bremono) in Oregon and North Carolina. Bremono sells the trees when they have grown about five years total.

The liner operations dictate what gets grown and which wholesale nurseries receive their stock. Wholesale nurseries such as Bremono attempt to purchase liner trees from five or six different liner companies to make sure they are able to buy adequate numbers of trees.

Bremono submits their orders to the liner companies a year in advance. Since predicting future demand is difficult, Bremono has decided to be as consistent as possible. Still, Bremono does introduce variety in their offerings when feasible.

As a wholesale nursery, Bremono’s customers consist of landscape installation companies, municipalities, retailers and other wholesalers, landscape architecture firms, universities, churches and other nonprofits, and similar buyers. They advertise through hard copy catalogs, MANTS (the nursery trade show), inventory blasts to existing customers, organization memberships, the Virginia Growers Guide, and most importantly through word-of-mouth. Bremono employs two outside salespeople as well.

Given his audience, Mr. Spurlock went into quite a bit of detail regarding the care of Bremono’s trees. Some of his chief points included:

- Bremono is situated on land that is a flood plain with good soil. Therefore, they tend not to use much in the way of cover crops. They fertilize lightly once a year in the spring.
- The trees are planted by a machine with people following along to manually check that the trees were put in at the correct depth.
- Since liner trees are grown very close together, they require staking. Bremono uses 10' fiberglass staking that moves with the wind and accommodates increased tree diameters as they grow. When the liners are planted to grow larger, they are spaced accordingly further apart.
- Naturally, trees that tolerate wet feet are put in the moister areas of soil.
- Irrigation is accomplished both overhead (rain wheel on a timer) and through drip. Overhead irrigation settles the soil, but drip irrigation, while more expensive and harder to set up, is better for the trees.
- Pruning is happening constantly. Each tree is touched a minimum of three times per year. Pruning methods emphasize a strong central leader and strong scaffolding and balance. Bremono prunes not only for tree health but also for appearance – these are landscape trees they are selling for appearance as well as durability.
- Bremono does use herbicide, but attempts to limit its use. The employees also manually remove weeds, and the grass and other plants are kept mowed to keep pests from having places to hide. The entire nursery is ringed with deer fencing.
- The liners Bremono purchases are grown from seed, cuttings, and grafts. All evergreens come from cuttings.
- When the time comes to sell the trees, primarily in the fall, they are mechanically dug and shipped on tractor trailers.

Business Meeting:

Treasurer's Report: Robin Hanes for Michelle Cormier

Michelle was not in attendance, but she had assured Robin that CATS is in good financial shape.

Education: Mary Spear

Next month's membership meeting will be via Zoom on October 19 at 9:30 a.m. Our speaker will be Susan Tyler Hitchcock, National Geographic Photographer and author of *Into the Forest*. Ms. Hitchcock's Talk is entitled, "Hearing the Message of the Forest."

This year's training class is going well.

The latest tree basics presentation on tree selection was attended by about 50 people.

Tree walks have also been well attended. They fill up quickly these days, so go to the website calendar and sign up promptly if you want to go on one. There are several planned for the fall; see TIF for details.

Tree Sale Preparation: Phyllis Johansen

The spring tree sale was unexpectedly mobbed. Phyllis has been planning with a view to making the fall sale operate more smoothly for both volunteers and customers.

We are hoping to have approximately the same number of trees for sale as in the spring.

If anyone has additional trees to donate, please do so very soon.

Projects Committee:

Kathy Nepote is volunteering at the Cville Day of Caring so could not attend this meeting. The Projects Committee meets October 12; more volunteer opportunities will be on TIF following the meeting.

Kathy has been scheduling tabling events. Anne Bentham, who has been helping Kathy, reported:

Volunteers may sign up on TIF. Shifts generally run two hours. Tabling is a great way to advocate for trees and CATS, meet people, plug our classes and projects, and participate in CATS's mission of public education. Resources available to take to tabling events include reference books, brochures, business cards and things for kids.

CATS will have a table at this weekend's Loop d'Ville from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday, at the Crozet Arts and Crafts Festival on October 8 and 9 from 10-5:30, and at the fall tree sale on October 1. See TIF to sign up.

Communications: Robin Hanes for Penny Kaiserlian

Advertising for the fall tree sale and tree walk will be in *Cville* soon. We are also doing a day sponsorship on NPR.

Bumper stickers will be given to the members who come to the fall tree sale.

Tee shirts and hats are back. Penny asked for a volunteer to take on the merch task – Lily Engle stepped up. Thanks, Lily.

Barbara added that she will bring name tags and pins to the fall tree sale to hand out to the members who haven't received theirs yet.

Announcements: Robin Hanes

VDoF is asking for donations of acorns and tree seeds. See the Department of Forestry website for instructions.

Chris Gensic and Steve Gaines will lead a hike at Ragged Mountain to talk about trees and invasive plants. See the Parks and Recreation page on the City's website for details.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Brill