



CNLA Update - March 3, 2014

CNLA LATEST NEWS

[Outstanding Flower and Garden Show!](#)

[Landscape Contractor License Bill Receives a Public Hearing](#)

[President Obama will visit Connecticut this Wednesday to promote increasing the minimum wage](#)

[Legislators Announce Retirements](#)

[Great Job by Holly Johnson, Summer Hill Nursery, Testifying on Running Bamboo and Other Legislative Updates](#)

[CNLA fights Unionization of Agriculture Employees](#)

[UConn Sponsors Perennial Plant Conference on March 20](#)

[Job Fair at Naugatuck Valley Community College, Waterbury](#)

Outstanding Flower and Garden Show!

We hope many of you were able to attend the Connecticut Flower & Garden Show at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The event was held Thursday, February 20 through Sunday, February 23. CNLA exhibited a number of services at our booth/display and appreciates everyone who stopped by. We want to give a shout-out to Bob St. Jacques for all of his hard work on behalf of CNLA on this event. As many know, we held a Garden Trail Drawing with a "\$10,000 Dream Landscape" grand prize. The lucky winner was **Donna Kulas** of Kensington, Conn. Congratulations, Donna!

The *New Haven Register* published a great article by Joe Amarante in the Entertainment Section of the February 20th edition, promoting the beautiful gardens and displays. [Click here to read more.](#)

Landscape Contractor License Bill Receives a Public Hearing

CNLA is once again proposing legislation that would create a Landscaper Contractor License. The proposal differs in some respects from last year's bill in that it places the new license within the Department of Energy and the Environment, rather than the Department of Consumer Protection. Regardless, we believe the time has come for the state to recognize the landscape profession as a stand alone industry with its own license. Landscapers currently register under the Home Improvement Contractor statute-something

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that does not recognize the high standards and unique qualifications of our profession. We were pleased with the case made for this new license at a public hearing before the legislature's Environment Committee on Friday, February 28. CNLA president Kevin Sullivan, immediate past president Dave Taddei and Bob St. Jacques all spent hours at the State Capitol that day and evening to discuss the proposal with legislators and other interested groups. Many thanks to them all!

[Click here to read CNLA's statement.](#)

The next step of the process is to work with a number of parties to bring a consensus to the proposal and have it reported out of the Environment Committee. The legislation is *Senate Bill 238, An Act Establishing a Landscape Contractor License*. [Click here to read SB 238.](#)

President Obama will visit Connecticut this Wednesday to promote increasing the minimum wage

President Obama will visit Connecticut on **Wednesday, March 5**, to participate in a "raise the wage" event. He will be joined by several New England Governors, including Deval Patrick (Massachusetts), Lincoln Chafee (Rhode Island), Peter Shumlin (Vermont) and Connecticut's Governor Dannel P. Malloy. The event will take place at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. As you may know, the President has proposed raising the minimum wage nationally while legislation to do the same here in Connecticut is pending in the Legislature. The Connecticut bill (Senate Bill 32) would phase-in several increases to take the minimum wage to above \$10/hour. [Click here to read SB 32.](#)

CNLA attended the public hearing on this bill.

Legislators Announce Retirements

Senate President Don Williams announced he will



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retire from the Senate at the end of his current term. CNLA wishes him well. Watch for an interesting race in the Northeast Connecticut district. Meanwhile, the Senate has a new



member: Gary Holder-Winfield was elected to the New Haven-dominated 10th district in a Special Election. Gary previously served as a State Representative from New Haven. Several veteran legislators have announced they will retire. These include Rep. DebraLee Hovey, Rep. Marilyn Giuliano, Rep. Livvy Floren and Rep. Geoff Luxenberg. We expect more announcements in the near future.

Great Job by Holly Johnson, Summer Hill Nursery, Testifying on Running Bamboo and Other Legislative Updates

We want to thank Holly Johnson of Summer Hill Nursery in Madison for offering the Environment Committee valuable information on best practices for ensuring that running bamboo does not encroach on a neighbor's property. The bamboo legislation is contained in Senate Bill 72 which increases the liability of individuals who plant it. [Click here to read HB SB 72.](#)



Meanwhile, CNLA testified against House Bill 5139 that would limit state aid to agricultural operations who wish to use solar panels on-site. [Click here to read HB 5139.](#)



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CNLA has also expressed concerns about a state bill that would increase the minimum wage to over \$10/hr as it would make our in-state farms less competitive with companies in lower cost states.

CNLA fights Unionization of Agriculture Employees

House Bill 5066 has been introduced and would eliminate the current exemption for agriculture employees from being unionized. CNLA had a very good meeting with Sen. Cathy Osten, Senate co-chair of the Labor Committee, on the issue and expressed our concerns about it. Many thanks to Mark and Lisa Sellew of Pride's Corner and Kevin Sullivan for attending the meeting. Although discussions are still in a preliminary stage, there is a possibility Senator Osten would change the legislation to create a task force to look at the economic conditions of agricultural workers. CNLA also testified on the bill at the Labor Committee's public hearing. The Connecticut Greenhouse Growers' Association is also active in opposing the proposal along with the Farm Bureau Federation. [Click here to read HB 5066.](#)

[Click here to read CNLA's statement/testimony.](#)

UConn Sponsors Perennial Plant Conference on March 20



March 20 Perennial Plant
2014 Conference

UConn is sponsoring the **Perennial Plant Conference - A Conference for the Landscape and Horticultural Professional**. The conference will be held at the Lewis B. Rome Commons on the University of Connecticut Storrs campus on **Thursday, March 20, 2014**.

This all-day educational conference will address a wide range of topics focusing on herbaceous perennial production, sustainable landscape design, and retail marketing. Topics were selected to appeal to

professional landscapers and designers, nursery and greenhouse producers, and retail garden centers. Two concurrent educational sessions will feature nationally recognized speakers from both industry and academia.

Program and registration information is available online. A pre-registration fee of \$100 per person is due by **March 13th**. The fee is \$110 per person if postmarked after March 13th or for walk-ins.

For more information contact Donna Ellis (donna.ellis@uconn.edu or 860-486-6448) or visit their web site at www.2014perennial.uconn.edu.

Job Fair at Naugatuck Valley Community College, Waterbury

Naugatuck Valley Community College will be holding a Job and Career Fair on **Tuesday, March 25th**, from 9:00 A.M. to noon in Café West. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to connect with employers who are hiring and to learn about career opportunities.

Employers can [register online here](#) or contact NVCC directly (jpc@nv.edu or 203-575-8158).

If you have items of interest to CNLA members, please email them to us at LKowalski@thekowalskigroup.com or to the CNLA office at ConnNrsry@aol.com).



CONNECTICUT NURSERY & LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 414 · Botsford CT 06404
800-562-0610 · Fax 203-261-5429