

# RPG Times

Spring 2004

A Publication of the Roots Plus Field-Growers Association of Florida



## The Value of RPG to Distributors

Andy Etters, Skinner Nurseries

As both a producer and distributor of Roots Plus trees, Skinner Nurseries has a unique perspective. The concept of landscape distribution, which is more prevalent in other parts of the country, has gained momentum throughout the Southeast and Distributors realize many of the same benefits as the end user when choosing to carry Roots Plus trees for use by landscape contractors who use their vital service. Trends in landscape distribution centers focus on making the process of sourcing, purchasing and delivering green goods easier for landscape professionals. Therefore, offering any assurance of the quality and overall survivability of the material is crucial to maximizing customer service. Some of the benefits distributors can take advantage of by using RPG trees are higher perceived quality material, superior survivability in the distribution center and reduced returns/replacements due to trees that are not properly hardened-off.

RPG trees carry a higher perceived quality to the landscape contractor than non-RPG trees. As they say, quality is always in the eye of the beholder. RPG trees are produced from reputable growers who stand behind their products enough to self certify that all trees shipped meet the rigorous standards of the other members of the association. These trees can be found in landscapes throughout the Southeast and the familiar tag brands these trees as superior. Now this is not only a perception, RPG trees are handled in a way that maximizes their performance in the landscape and this perception, in the mind of the landscape contractor, elevates these trees to a higher grade. This perceived quality increases the demand for RPG trees over other B&B trees in the marketplace making the use of field grown trees a viable option for contractors who may have cus-

*Value of RPG, continued page 4*

## Great Southern Tree Conference completes the year with growing results!

GAINESVILLE — Industry members from 13 states were drawn to the 2003 Great Southern Tree Conference (GSTC) December 5-6 in Gainesville. A joint effort of the Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association (FNGA) and IFAS at the University of Florida, record number of over 330 attendees from across the Southeast experienced the educational event and plans are already underway for the 2004 conference.

Attendees at the 2003 conference enjoyed topics by Jim Urban on *Urban Design that Realizes the Benefits of Trees* and Jim Paluch who highly motivated the group with topics of *Enjoying the Risks and Rewards of Change* and *Scoring in Sales*. Other spotlight speakers included Nancy Buley with J. Frank Schmidt & Sons, and John Ruter with the University of Georgia.

The 15-acre GSTC demonstration site houses the current and upcoming projects that attendees will see from year to year. These projects will

*Great Southern, continued page 4*



**Mark your  
calendar for  
the next  
RPG Field Day!**

**April 22, 2004**

**co-sponsored by Roots Plus Growers  
the Florida Chapter ISA &  
University of Florida Extension  
for program details see page 5**

## New Trucking Hours-of-Service Rule Begins in 2004

Beginning Jan. 4, 2004 new trucking hours-of-service rules went into effect. These new rules are likely going to effect rates for nursery trucking on long distance loads. The U.S. Department of Transportation used the first 60 days that the rule was in effect as an aggressive education period. The education and enforcement plans have been designed to ensure long-term compliance and understanding of the safety rule. The new hours-of-service rule represents the first major rewrite of the hours-of-service regulations in more than 60 years. It synchronizes the commercial drivers' work and rest schedule better with the body's circadian rhythm to reduce fatigue and save lives.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) will ask states to write warnings instead of citations for all but flagrant violations. State officials are also being encouraged to use every stop in the first 60 days as an opportunity to educate drivers about the new rules. In addition, federal inspectors will coordinate education and enforcement efforts from regional offices across the country. "The new safety rule gives us the means to save hundreds of lives, protect billions in commerce and safeguard our roads and highways for years to come," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta. "We must do whatever we can to make certain everyone is aware and in full compliance as soon as possible."

It is estimated that the new hours-of-service rule will save 75 lives, prevent 1,326 fatigue-related injuries, and prevent 6,900 property damage-only crashes annually, resulting in a cost savings to the American economy of \$628 million a year. "This new rule combines the best scientific research and real-world analysis to prevent driver fatigue," said FMCSA Administrator Annette M. Sandberg. "The measure of a rule is how well it works. That is why we are taking every step to make sure drivers know about the changes and follow them."

The new regulations provide commercial truck drivers a work and rest schedule that is more in line with a person's circadian rhythm and thus is expected to significantly reduce driver fatigue. For

*Trucking hours, continued page 4*

## RPG Notes for Growth

by Jack Siebenthaler



"Roots Plus Growers" is strengthening in the right direction! The efforts of past years is being felt more and more. Increased results can be observed in several directions. Our presence, with displays and personal contacts, can only be seen as RPG coming into its own.

With regular attendance at ASLA's Florida Chapter Conference, SNA's annual meeting in Atlanta, FNATS Orlando gathering, and the Great Southern Tree Conference in Gainesville, RPG is being presented in a complimentary and business building way to thousands of prospective buyers and specifiers.

The RPG Field Day presentation is headed for its 2004 happening at Marshall Tree Farm this April. The success of this information filled event is a fact. Those who may have missed their opportunity to learn "in the field" from experts need to mark their calendars in order to strengthen their expert portfolios.

For those who have been lingering on the edges of membership, now is the time to make the right decision to join one of the most forward looking organizations for tree production and marketing. Memberships are open for supporters as well as growers.

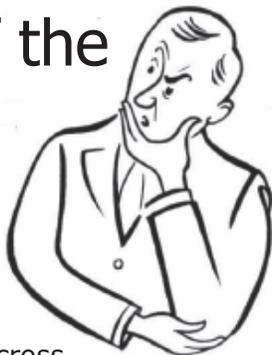
The use of the RPG tags is maintaining a very high level and a replenished supply is available for members and users of RPG trees. This "soft advertising" method has proved to be one of the finest features of salesmanship in the industry.

Now is the time for a rededication to success! For those of us who occasionally tend to look back on the "good old days" of the nursery industry, it's quite revealing when a sincere look at today's growing and marketing methods are recognized.

"Roots Plus Growers" is one of the strongest steps you can take for this rededication to success! 

# Horticultural Marketing Thoughts of the Day ...

By Michael Walsh,  
Walsh Brokerage



Over the period of time being in the business of marketing for the horticultural trade I have come across many exceptional growers, brilliant horticulturalists, cutting edge architects, top of the line landscapers, and many truly colorful characters. I have listened and learned when I could, taken some of the important information passed on by these mentors and over the last 20 years passed on their knowledge, mixed with my own thoughts to both vendors and buyers. Like any other business that has "sayings" I have come across some that truly hit the mark for our industry.

One I would like to share in this article is one I heard many years ago and have passed on to growers I have come in contact with. It is a basic little saying that when thought about sums up why as growers we are in business.

When is the best time to sell a tree?

When some one wants to buy it!

Now this saying is pretty simple and actually needs to be modified to say;

When is the best time to sell a tree?

When it is properly grown, prepared, handled, loaded and then when some one wants to buy it!

With current horticultural practices of proper root control from containers to root pruning, the pruning to establish dominant leaders, the selection of cultivars, and the introduction of Roots Plus Growers we have made the saying above come true!

So when is the best time to sell a tree?

When I have grown the best tree horticulturally and when some one wants to buy it!

So keep striving and producing ... They will come! 



## Roots Plus News

### Sleeve ≠ RPG

Regular buyers of field grown trees are most likely familiar with the black sleeve of weed-cloth like material over the root ball of each tree. This sleeve covers the wire basket after harvest and helps to prevent new roots from taking hold in the ground during the hardening off period. Please note that though many growers ship trees with these sleeves over the root ball, that does not guarantee that the trees have been hardened off. Be sure to look for the RPG tag on the trees you buy as your guarantee of quality hardened off trees. Trees with a black sleeve does not necessarily mean the trees are RPG.

### RPG Welcomes New Members!

The Roots Plus Growers Association is still growing! We welcome two new associate members, General Cordage and Grass Roots Nurseries. RPG is now 16 grower members and 11 associate members strong. If you are interested in membership or in learning more about the Roots Plus Growers Association, please give us a call at 352-528-3880.



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*Value of RPG, continued from page 1*

tomers concerned with the 'quality' of these types of trees.

Superior survivability of RPG trees in the distribution center environment is a key benefit to today's distributors. With a hardened-off root system, RPG trees are less likely to go into shock in the nursery, decreasing the chances of defoliation and overall tree decline. This increases the salability of the trees and reassures the landscape professional that the trees will perform well in the landscape. Increasing the shelf life of the B&B trees also decreases the distributors risk of potential culls due to declining quality of the material after bringing it into the distribution center.

Many landscape architects and designers understand that when a tree is properly hardened-off, the chances of the high quality trees they have selected will end up thriving on the jobsite is greatly increased, rather than going through a costly replacement process. The Roots Plus Growers have taken great efforts to guarantee, that all trees have been hardened-off for a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks and thereby reducing the risks for return and replacement trees. As with all live goods problems can arise; however, making good choices when selecting material always reduces the risk of tree failure. RPG trees serve as an excellent way to hedge against the ever-present risk of problems associated with using B&B trees, or any other live material for that matter.

Distributors as well as contractors share in many of the same issues when dealing with B&B trees. The assurance of a higher perceived quality, a superior survivability in the distribution center (which translates to higher survival rate on the jobsite) and a reduced risk of returns and replacements, all equate to the same thing for distributors and contractors alike - higher levels of customer satisfaction.



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*Trucking hours, continued from page 2*

example, the new rules allow long haul drivers to drive 11 hours after 10 consecutive hours off duty. Similarly, truckers may not drive after being on duty for 60 hours in a seven-consecutive-day period or 70 hours in an eight-consecutive-day period. This on-duty cycle may be restarted only after a driver takes a "weekend" off, that is, at least 34 consecutive hours off duty. The current rules allow 10 hours of driving within a 15-hour, on-duty period and requires only eight hours of off-duty time. Detailed information about the rule is at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov), and FMCSA has staffed a toll-free telephone line around the clock to answer drivers' questions. The phone number is 1-800-598-5664.



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*Great Southern, continued from page 1*

be evaluated by attendees in the coming years to determine how and what would work best for their individual businesses. This provides a training program at the annual conference that helps attendees learn new technologies and practices from applied demonstration projects.

The GSTC is devoted entirely to tree selection, landscape, production, establishment and marketing issues in the Southern United States. There is no other conference in the U.S. designed specifically for hands-on training of growers, landscape contractors, arborists, and other green industry members.

Partners play a key roll in the conference and set up informational displays at the two-day educational program. A special thanks to the 2003 Great Southern Tree Conference Champion Level Partners and the Risk Management Association.

Be-Mac Farms  
Bent Oak Farm, Inc.  
Florida Chapter ISA  
Harrell's Fertilizer, Inc.  
Holloway Tree Farm  
Marshall Tree Farm  
SMR Turf & Trees  
Shadowlawn Nursery  
Skinner Nurseries  
Stewart's Tree Service, Inc.  
THE ACCELERATOR (Hold Em, Inc.)  
Tree Introductions, Inc.

*The Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association represents Florida's environmental horticulture industry, with an estimated \$9.9 billion in industry-wide sales. For more information, visit the FNGA website at [www.fnga.org](http://www.fnga.org), send an email to [info@fnga.org](mailto:info@fnga.org) or call 800.375.FNGA.*

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**Don't miss the 6th Annual RPG Field day! April 22nd, 2004!**

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## **Tree Production, Usage, and Landscape Establishment:** *A hands-on workshop for the green industry*



This focused seminar is designed specifically for those growers, landscape architects, contractors and others in Florida's green industry that would like to increase their efficiency while specifying, growing and planting quality trees.

Do you think it costs too much to grow quality trees? Want to learn more about root systems and irrigation? Want to reduce costs while increasing efficiency? Come learn the easy way from some of the best in the business. New technology and research on irrigation management, pruning, root systems, and harvesting techniques will be demonstrated. You will be able to "get your hands dirty" in this very applied, hands-on program. No theory, just plain old get it done.

Come see new trees being grown by quality nurseries and learn how to use them in landscapes. Learning the most up-to-date planting recommendations will help ensure these quality trees remain a sustainable part of the landscape for a long time.

### **Here's what you will learn:**

- pruning and selecting crape myrtles
- pruning cultivar live oaks
- how to teach pruning to your employees
- pruning large trees in production and in the landscape
- root pruning and hardening off process
- efficient irrigation management in the nursery and landscape
- cultivar and species selection
- marketing trees

### **Program Format**

Attendees will rotate among stations all day. At each station they will receive instruction on a new technique. This hands-on approach to learning has proven to be the best way to learn horticulture techniques.



### **Program Overview**

**8:00-9:00 AM** Registration

**9:00 AM -12:00 PM** Morning Program

- Teaching new pruning techniques to your employees: division of labor, tips on teaching - *Mike Marshall and Priscilla Trace*
- Pruning cultivar live oaks - *Ed Gilman*
- Crape myrtle selection, production and pruning - *Gary Knox*
- Root pruning, harvesting, hardening-off protocol - *Jim Marshall and Jimmy Stewart*

**12:00-12:45 PM** Lunch and open discussion

**12:45-3:45 PM** Afternoon Program

- Pruning large trees during production and in the landscape - *Scott Jones*
- Marketing Trees 101: For Growers and Buyers - *Mike Walsh*
- Irrigation during production and after planting into the landscape - *Ed Gilman*
- Cultivar and species selection - *Scott Shultz*

### **Presenters include:**

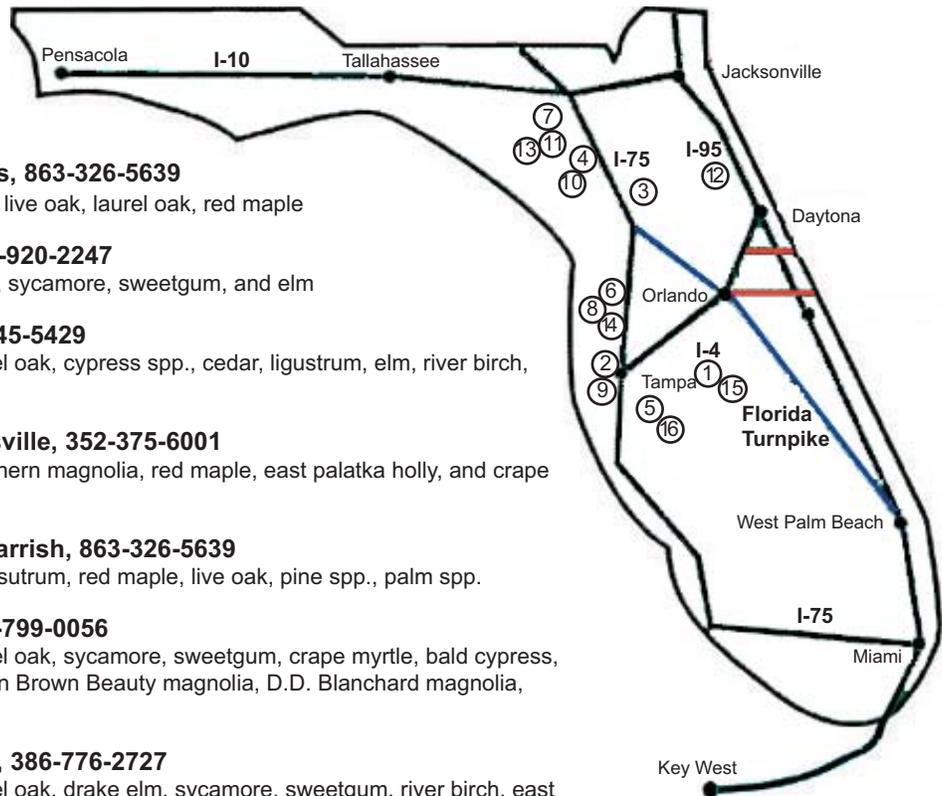
**Dr. Ed Gilman**, Professor, University of Florida  
**Scott Jones**, Graduate Student, University of Florida  
**Dr. Gary Knox**, University of Florida Extension Service  
**Jim Marshall**, Marshall Tree Farm  
**Michael Marshall**, Marshall Tree Farm  
**Scott Schultz**, Walt Disney World  
**Jimmy Stewart**, Stewart's Tree Service  
**Priscilla Trace**, Ellenton Nursery Growers  
**Mike Walsh**, Walsh Brokerage

### **Workshop Location:**

Marshall Tree Farm  
17350 SE 65th Street  
Morrison, Florida 32668

For a complete registration brochure please visit [www.rootsplusgrowers.org](http://www.rootsplusgrowers.org) or call 800-786-1422

# Roots Plus Growers Association Members locator map and available species



- ① **Alturas Native Nursery - Alturas, 863-326-5639**  
RPG Trees Available: bald cypress, live oak, laurel oak, red maple
- ② **BE-MAC Farms - Odessa, 813-920-2247**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, pine, sycamore, sweetgum, and elm
- ③ **Bent Oak Farm - Ocala, 352-245-5429**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, laurel oak, cypress spp., cedar, ligustrum, elm, river birch, crape myrtle, holly, magnolia
- ④ **Champion Tree Farm - Gainesville, 352-375-6001**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, southern magnolia, red maple, east palatka holly, and crape myrtle
- ⑤ **Ellenton Nursery Growers - Parrish, 863-326-5639**  
RPG Trees available: sycamore, ligustrum, red maple, live oak, pine spp., palm spp.
- ⑥ **FMT Farms - Brooksville, 352-799-0056**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, laurel oak, sycamore, sweetgum, crape myrtle, bald cypress, leylandii cypress, ligustrum, Bracken Brown Beauty magnolia, D.D. Blanchard magnolia, maple
- ⑦ **Fort Drum Growers - McAlpin, 386-776-2727**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, laurel oak, drake elm, sycamore, sweetgum, river birch, east palatka holly, bradford pear, slash pine
- ⑧ **J & J Tree Farm - Brooksville, 352-796-3426**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, ligustrum
- ⑨ **Keystone Farms - Odessa, 813-920-0894**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, ligustrum, variegated ligustrum
- ⑩ **Marshall Tree Farm - Morriston, 800-786-1422**  
RPG Trees available: live oak cultivars, southern magnolia cultivars, crape myrtle, slash pine, bald cypress, holly cultivars, winged elm, 'Allee' lacebark elm, sweetgum
- ⑪ **Nature Coast Tree Corp, Bell, 386-935-9349**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, ligustrum, holly, 'Highrise' live oak, 'Cathedral' live oak, 'Alta' and 'D.D. Blanchard' magnolia cultivars
- ⑫ **Skinner Nurseries - Bunnell, 800-741-2020**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, ligustrum, holly, crape myrtle
- ⑬ **Southern Pride Tree Farm - Bell, 386-935-3636**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, ligustrum, holly
- ⑭ **Stewart's Tree Service - Brooksville, 352-796-3426**  
RPG Trees available: red cedar, live oak
- ⑮ **Tiger Lake Nursery - Lake Wales, 863-692-1009**  
RPG Trees available: live oak, laurel oak
- ⑯ **Walsh Brokerage - Parrish, 863-326-5639**  
RPG Trees available: palm spp., live oak, laurel oak, sycamore,

## Associate Members

- Braun Horticulture**
- Caretree Systems**
- Cherokee Manufacturing**
- Crown Community Development**
- General Cordage**
- Graco Fertilizer Company**
- Grass Roots Nurseries**
- Jack Siebenthaler**
- Seaworld**
- Sunrise Landscape**
- Treemart**

# RPG TIMESline

**April 22nd, 2004** - 2004 RPG Field Day, Marshall Tree Farm, Morriston, FL  
Visit [www.rootsplusgrowers.org](http://www.rootsplusgrowers.org) or call 352-528-3880

**May 5 & 7th, 2004** - Florida Law: People and Trees Seminar, Orlando & Miami, FL  
Visit [www.floridaisa.org](http://www.floridaisa.org) or call 941-342-0153 for more information

**June 12-15th, 2004** - Trees Florida 2004, Key West, FL  
Visit [www.treesflorida.com](http://www.treesflorida.com) or call 407-872-1738 for more information

**July 28-31st, 2004** - Florida Chapter ASLA Annual Conference, Daytona Beach, FL  
Visit [www.flasla.org](http://www.flasla.org) for more information

**August 12-14th, 2004** - 2004 SNA Trade Show and Conference, Atlanta, GA  
Visit [www.sna.org](http://www.sna.org) for more information

**August 20-22nd, 2004** - Nursery/Landscape EXPO 2004, Houston, Texas  
Visit [www.txnla.org](http://www.txnla.org) or call 800-880-0343

**September 30th - October 2nd, 2004** - FNATS, Orlando, FL  
Visit [www.fnga.org](http://www.fnga.org) or call 800-375-FNGA

**December 2-3rd, 2004** - 4th Annual Great Southern Tree Conference, Gainesville, FL  
Visit [www.greatsoutherntreeconference.org](http://www.greatsoutherntreeconference.org) or call 800-375-FNGA for more information

## RPG Information

If you would like more information about the Roots Plus Field-Growers Association of Florida please complete the following and return it to:

Roots Plus Growers  
17350 SE 65th Street  
Morriston, FL 32668

Please add me to your mailing list

Please send me information on the following:

RPG Membership

Other \_\_\_\_\_

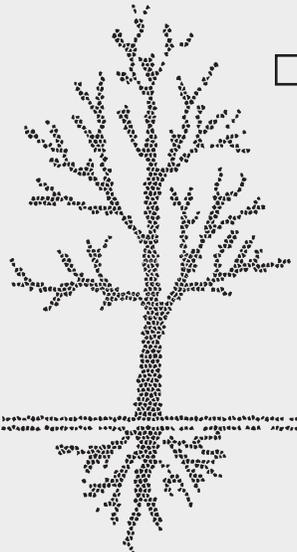
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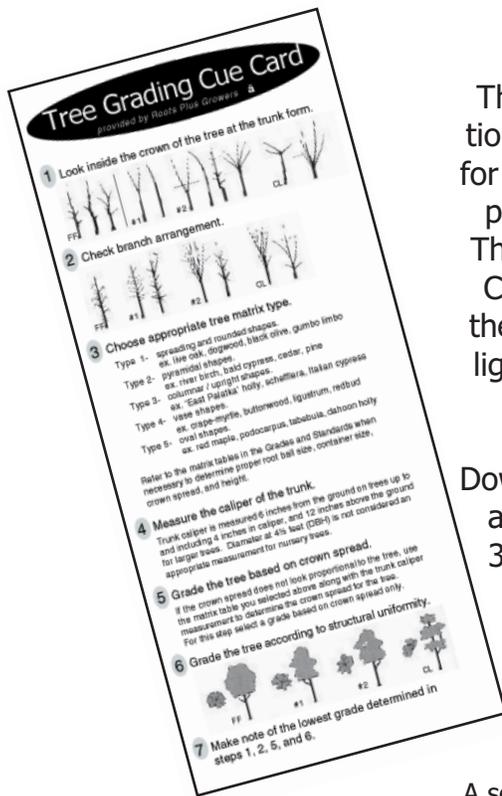
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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

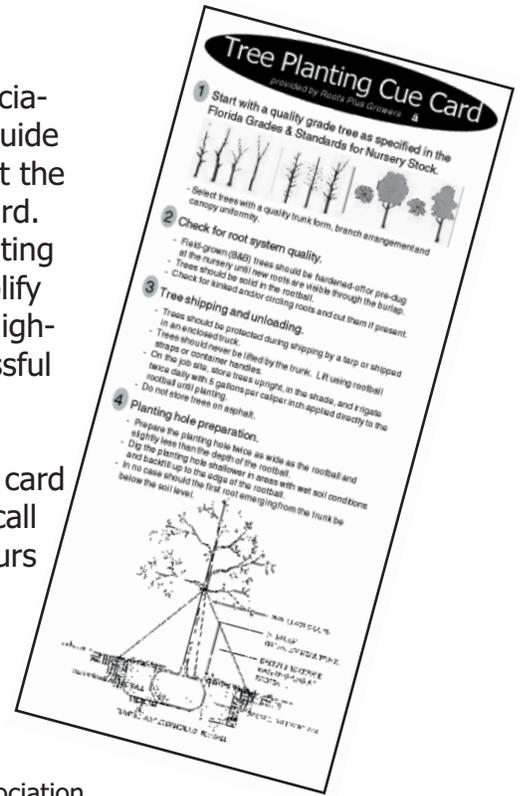
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_





The Roots Plus Growers Association has developed a pocket guide for tree planting to supplement the popular Tree Grading Cue Card. This 3x7" laminated Tree Planting Cue Card is intended to simplify the tree planting process by highlighting eight steps for successful transplanting.

Download a copy of each cue card at [rootsplusgrowers.org](http://rootsplusgrowers.org), or call 352-528-3880 to request yours today!



A service of Roots Plus Growers Association



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Morrison, FL 32668