The past few months, schedules have been loaded with an association meeting, educational programs, a workshop, and seminars of all kinds. The people in the horticulture industry have been all over the country trying to learn more so that they can increase profits, change old habits, and stay up with the trends around the country.

There is a lot of excitement that evolves every spring, with many new techniques and products to try. K-State Research and Extension’s commercial horticulture team has been traveling, doing research, monitoring and teaching various programs. Many in our “green industry” are eager learners and always on the lookout for new information. Unfortunately, not everyone in the business has the same priorities. Many will do business this year just like they have in the past. They will make the same mistakes, but call themselves experts by virtue of the years they have spent, regardless of being correct in procedure or advice.

For our industry to increase profitability, the business must become more professional in how we conduct business. Our credibility rests on our credibility and professionalism. The confidence that the public has in our horticulture expertise is one of the few niches left for the independent retailer.

Our credibility depends heavily on our ability to provide correct answers to the homeowner. Our examples of techniques to use when we do public landscapes, pruning, spraying, lawn installation, irrigation, plant care, mowing heights etc. is an example to the uninformed public on the correct procedures to use. Many homeowners see samples of horticultural work displayed and assume that it is the acceptable way.

We owe it to the public, and to our fellow horticulturists to continue to learn and demonstrate accepted norms. Often because of time pressures, crews that have been poorly trained, if trained at all, are sent to do jobs. These crews are the ones representing the professionals of the industry. It is their often haphazard workmanship setting the standards for all of us. I want to encourage all businesses in the “green industry” to take the time to learn more about skills used, to train your employees properly, attend the association meetings, classes, workshops, seminars, and share techniques that work for your business.

Participation in the Garden Shows in your area is a tremendous way to connect with the customer and show them what we are all about.

Extension has the theme, “Knowledge for Life,” which is very appropriate. Nobody has all the best ideas. Nothing stays the same, and we can all learn more and better ways of doing things. Learn something every day. Take pride in our growing industry and let us all help each other to create public awareness, increase our credibility and become more proficient and professional in a time of expansion for horticulture.

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