

The Contingency Plan and the Exit Strategy

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During the past few months, we have discussed various aspects of your business planning. We have looked at different sections of the planning document. In summary, what we have outlined includes the following:

- The Executive Summary
- The Concept Description
- The Management Team
- The Product or Service
- The Marketing Plan
- The Operations Plan
- The Financial Plan

Today, we will close this series on business planning by looking at the final two items you should incorporate into your plan.

All well-prepared plans allow for contingencies. These "what if" scenarios deal with the issue of "what happens when things go wrong?" And things will not turn out as you anticipate, no matter how good your crystal ball. It is for this reason

your plan should include contingencies for any problem you can anticipate—from slow consumer acceptance, to drastic competition backlash, to unexpectedly high demand. The content of this section will be highly variable, and will depend greatly on your business type, your competitive environment, and your ability to recognize and analyze trends.

At the outset of this series, I referred to, "Beginning with the end in mind." I repeat that phrase here, for it deserves your consideration once more.

How are you going to "get out?" Are you going to sell to someone else? Are you planning on being bought out by a larger firm? Are you going to take your firm public and sell stock?

The last thing you want is a business that is working well, but you can't do anything with it. Why is this so important?

Because if you use your business

plan to secure financing from investors or venture capitalists, they may want to invest their funds for only a few years. Then they will want to sell their stake and invest elsewhere. You need to be prepared to deal with this possibility.

Designing a good business plan is an art. As I said at the beginning, what I have presented in this series is one approach to that art. As I also mentioned at the beginning, if you are having trouble putting your plan together, chances are you will have difficulty with that section of your business as well. Spend the time to write your plan, from beginning to end. You will discover there are pitfalls and potholes along the road to a successful business. Good planning will help you avoid them.

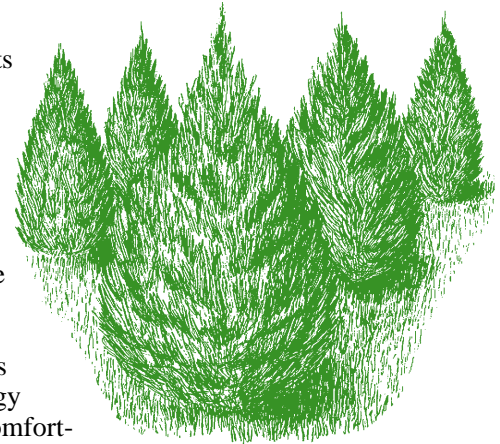
Travel well. (DJ)

Acreage Insights



Benefits of Acreage Windbreaks

Well-designed windbreaks can cut energy costs as much as 20 to 40 percent. Individual savings depend on local site and climatic conditions, the construction quality of your home, your living habits, and the design and condition of your windbreak.



Local wind conditions affect the amount of energy needed to keep a home comfortable during cold winter months. Unprotected buildings, buildings with poorly fitted doors and windows or frequently opened doors, and buildings in areas with high average wind speeds, coupled with low average temperatures, are left vulnerable to winter's extremes. Windbreaks reduce the force of the wind on the exterior surfaces of buildings and thus the amount of cold air that enters the home.

In the summer, the inside and outside temperatures of a home may be very similar. Usually, this means the reduction of hot air entering the home

provides only minimal savings in home cooling costs. However, in areas where hot winds are common and most homes are air-conditioned, a reduction of hot air infiltration into the home can reduce air conditioning demands and, likewise, energy consumption. Additionally, trees provide significant evaporative cooling and may lower the local air temperature several degrees. Well-placed landscape plants, such as shade trees or foundation plantings, can provide summer

See WINDBREAKS on page 11

African Violet Growing Tips

African violets are popular houseplants because they're relatively easy to grow for most people, but they still require maintenance.

Before purchasing new plants, inspect them closely for pests, particularly thrips and mealy bugs. Thrips are tiny insects that live on flowers. They often feed on the pollen sacks and damage the petals. Because they hide deep in the flower structure, they are difficult to control with insecticides.

Mealy bugs look like specks of cotton and tend to cling near the plant's stem and crevices, sucking juices out of the plant and weakening it. They are difficult to control because of the cottony covering over the insect's body. Mealy bugs can be controlled by dabbing individual

cottony masses with a cotton swab dipped in alcohol, but this is very tedious. It's easier to buy plants that are not infested.

A common misconception about African violets is water shouldn't touch the leaves or they'll get water spots. Cold water causes leaves to develop brown spots, but tepid or lukewarm water can be used without causing damage. For extra insurance, dab off the excess water drops. Periodic rinsing of the foliage removes dust and soil so the plants will thrive. Try to avoid letting water sit in the crown of the plant, as rot may develop.

An easy way to water African violets is to put them on a wick watering system.

Many of the other hardwood trees have seeds that mature in autumn. Walnut, green ash, osage orange, boxelder, red oak, and bur oak seeds mature in late September and early October. Bur oak seed is ready to germinate when it matures, therefore, it cannot be stored for more than just a few days.

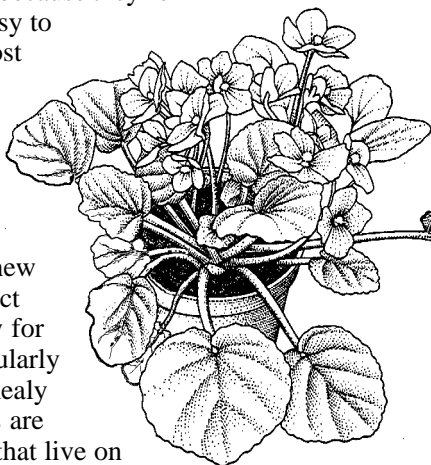
1. Run a piece of wet yarn through a flower pot and let several inches of yarn dangle out one of the drainage holes. Acrylic yarn works best because it won't rot or fall apart in water.

2. Fill a small margarine tub or deli container with water or one-quarter strength fertilizer solution. Make a hole in the lid of the container and snap it on the bowl.

3. Set the potted violet plant on top of the water container and direct the yarn through the hole and into the water. The yarn will wick water into the pot and the plant will absorb as much water as it needs.

4. Check the water level in the container periodically and add more as needed. Rate of use by the plant will depend on the plant size, growing temperature, and soil type.

5. Every few months, place the violets in a sink and leach them with tepid water to reduce the buildup of soluble salts. Place them back on their water reservoirs and watch them grow! (DJ)



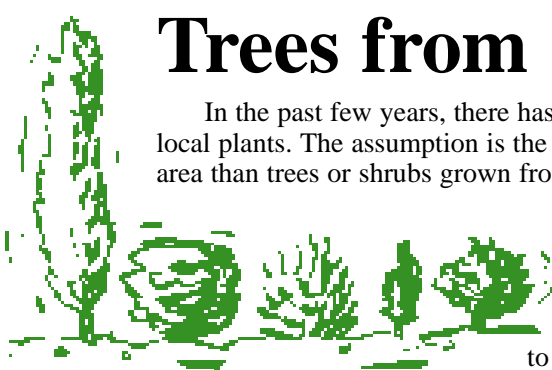
Trees from Seeds

In the past few years, there has been a growing interest in collecting seed from local plants. The assumption is the plants growing locally are better adapted to the area than trees or shrubs grown from seed not in the local area.

Cottonwood and silver maple seeds mature in June. Because the seed is difficult to store for more than a few months, seldom is the seed available from commercial sources. For these two species, it is easier to plant seedlings than to try and locate seed and plant it.

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Several excellent sources of information about collecting and storing trees and shrub seeds are available. NebGuides "Growing Conifers From Seed"—G380 and "Growing Shrubs from Seed"—G873 are available from the Lancaster County extension office. (DJ)



Quickies

If you think decorating your yard with driftwood and rock will help save energy costs, think again. A yard landscaped with a lot of rock will result in a lower water bill, but the heat reflected from the rock probably will raise summertime cooling by at least 20 percent.

Well-applied mulches conserve moisture. Too much is too much, however. More than four inches of mulch around a tree, for example, can be harmful because tree roots can't exchange gases with the atmosphere. Mulch also attracts slugs and ants, so be wary about applying it next to a house foundation.

To care for your dieffenbachia, use a non-flowering houseplant fertilizer such as 10-10-10 once a month. Turn the plant once a week to keep it from growing crooked. Water a couple of times per week with tepid tap water. (DJ)

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