Perennial Trends

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Issues, “drivers” of trends

degree of influence varies by market
some interrelated

- economy
- demographics
- time (limited)
- “connectedness”

- support for local
- environment
- “cocooning”
- local issues
Economy

- perennials a good deal cf. woodies, annuals
  - cheaper for former, longer lived for latter
  - make sure customers realize differences
- less money fewer larger plants or smaller plants
Demographics

• aging population = easier gardening
  – tools (ergonomic), practices (raised beds), plants (less heavy work)

• new gardeners
  – retired—now time
  – families grown, kids away—now time
  – new “homeowners”
  – kids
  – entering through the “edible” door
New gardeners

• need to be successful
• knowledge is key
  – from your firm or elsewhere (friends, internet)
• Ideas help sell eg. end caps
  – *combinations* 5+ different species, 3+ of each
  – accessories (statues, whimsy)
  – supplies (fertilizer, compost, deer repellent)
Time

or lack of

• instant beds from larger plants
  – opposite to economic need smaller plants
  – maybe smaller space, fewer large plants

• low (not no—explain= success) maintenance
“connectedness”

• internet, social networking
  – **firms: useful** website, basics, information, searchable (can link to other information or incorporate)
  – communication beyond emails, newsletters
  – blogs, facebook, twitter, youtube, other
  – are you there?
Buy Local

• eg. buylocalny.org
• many support, often result of food crops, transfer support to other local industries
• niche cf. box stores, internet suppliers
  – see the goods, feel the goods, answers from real people, support local jobs and economy, less issues with shipping, store as a destination, better for environment…..
Environment

• sustainable practices
  – less carbon footprint (eg less shipping) = global warming issue many embrace
  – better use fertilizers, pesticides = less pollution, watersheds in particular
Environment 2

- sustainable plants
  - right plant, right place = less maintenance (time)
  - groundcovers—growth area = less maintenance and mowing
  - NO to invasives—get to know, sell alternatives
  - YES to “natives”—define broadly
Longwood Gardens

foamflower
(Tiarella)

Longwood Gardens
“cocooning”

- people staying at home more (economy)
- cheaper to invest in property than travel
- property seen more needs to look good
- more time
Other local issues with impact

- watersheds (e.g. Lake Champlain)
- farmers markets
- beautification projects e.g. entry in America in Bloom (Americainbloom.org)
  - incredible, vastly untapped potential for industry
Choices of Perennials

• Issues affect 10 trends in
  – Design (6)
  – Function (4)

• Specific new perennial plant trends
Design trend: **Perennials as Annuals**

- confusing to consumer?
- foliage, flowers
  - e.g. coralbells, lamium, …
Design trend: **Tropicals**

- **tropicals** – still strong
  - **aloctasia, caladium, canna**…
  - performance in North?

- **Caladium ‘Thai Beauty’**
- **Canna ‘Bengal Tiger’**
red-leaf banana, coleus, feathertop grass (Pennisetum villosum)
Design trend: **texture**

- Grasses (annual, perennial)--texture
- Dry climate/succulents
  - xeric, desert, Mediterranean

- **Sedum 'Angelina’**
- **Kalanchoe ‘Flap Jacks’**
- **Fescue ‘Elijah Blue’**
Design trend: **Fashion**

- series, such as…
  - Proven Winners/Selections
  - Hort Couture
    - [www.hortcoutureplants.com](http://www.hortcoutureplants.com)
    - culinary couture

Colocasia ‘Mojito’

Tomato

‘Plum Lemon’
Design trend: Small Spaces

function of design, time, space, economy

“outdoor rooms”
Design trend: containers

- containers—still strong
  - any plant that grows, goes, flowers to exotic
  - think “out of the box” combinations

Begonia
Bromeliad
photos courtesy www.terranovanurseries.com
hanging baskets of succulents
water garden container

annuals, perennials
xeric

herbs, vegetables
Longwood Gardens, Philadelphia vic.
Functional trend: *green roofs and walls*

- more now for public buildings, institutions for wholesalers
  - special construction
  - sedum and similar
  - modular
UVM dorm
Functional trend: rain gardens

• prevents runoff (erosion, pollution) in heavy rains
• special plant considerations
  – adaptable to wet and dry
• good opportunity for suggestive selling, displays
Deep-rooted Plants
Depth
Location
Permeable Soil

photo courtesy www.thecoves.ca
Functional trend: **wildlife gardens**

- pollinators (eg butterflies, bees)
- birds
- plants and hard goods
  - water
  - food
  - shelter
- deer resistant plants, products
schoolyard habitats

By providing wildlife with food, water, cover, and places to raise young, these grounds offer outdoor learning opportunities for students and the entire community.

OFFICIAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION SCHOOLYARD HABITAT

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
www.nwf.org
Functional trend: edible landscaping

- function of recession—more edible gardening
- combination with landscape plants
Edible gardening (veg, fruit)

- 19% more households planned to grow food crops 2009
- 21% of those growing food crops will be doing so for the first time
- 10% of those already growing food crops will spend more time, and expand
- 60% less than 5 years experience

(Gallup survey on gardening, National Gardening Assn. 2009)
New Perennials
“hot” genera/groups

• hundreds each year
  – need to help customers choose
• display—alphabetical or combinations
  – depends in part on customers
• specialty? (hostas, daylilies)
• major lines (eg. Blooms, PlantHaven, Plants Nouveau, White Flower Farm)
• best performers of large genera--societies
Hosta award winners, polls

H. ‘June’
Benedict Garden Performance winner 2009

www.americanhostasociety.org
Daylily award winners, polls

www.daylilies.org

H. ‘Skinwalker’
Stout Silver Medal winner 2009

photo courtesy Amer. Daylily society
Iris award winners, polls

www.irises.org

‘Golden Panther’ 2009 Dykes medal winner

photo courtesy Amer. Iris Society
false indigo

*Baptisia* no longer just purple

Plant Delights Nursery, NC

selection, breeding
Baptisia
‘Twilight Prairie Blues’
‘Purple Smoke’
‘Starlight Prairie Blues’
“purple coneflowers” *(Echinacea)*

Chicago Botanic Gardens trials, breeding
Echinacea ‘Green Envy’

‘Coconut Lime’

‘Tiki Torch’
Coralbells, *Heuchera*

Cinnabar Silver

Obsidian
Coralbells, *Heuchera*

Ginger Ale

Lime Rickey
Coralbells, *Heuchera*

Amber Waves

Caramel
Heuchera
‘Silver Lode’
*x Heucherella (Heuchera x Tiarella cvs)*

‘Sunspot’*

‘Alabama Sunrise’*

‘Stoplight’

*photos courtesy Missouri Botanical Gardens plantfinder*
Foamflowers, *Tiarella*

- dozens
- majority clumpers
- some spreaders
- foliage or flowers, or both

‘Pink Bouquet’
Tiarella River series—spreading
(Dunvegan Nursery)
Diva series—clumpers
Hellebores

*Helleborus x hybridus* ‘Ivory Prince’
Yarrow (*Achillea*)

2 from Tutti Fruitti series

Pomegranate
Wonderful Wampee
late summer
Garden phlox
*Phlox paniculata*

new colors
mildew resistance

Natural Feelings
Peppermint Twist
Coreopsis

Lemon Punch

Rum Punch

Little Penny

hardy?
Coreopsis, Sedum trials
Ball Horticultural, W. Chicago
Sedum trials
Chicago Botanic Garden
> research
> plant evaluation
Low perennials

Brands, eg. Steppables, Nooks and Crannies, Jeepers Creepers

(freezing trials in VT)
Ornamental grasses

still strong in market

more accent than masses
Perry’s Perennial Pages
perrysperennials.info

Research
Plants of the month
Gardens of the month
Articles and leaflets
Book Reviews
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