

MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Foliages – Overview

Products included in the product line

- These are finished plants in pots or hanging baskets for indoor or patio use. They are not intended for landscape use. The product line includes ivy, cacti, and ferns.

General market trend and information

- Foliage plants represented 12% of the 2004 sales of floricultural products. Sales from these products have shown a significant increase in the past ten years, although slightly declined in the last two years. Sales in 2004 stood at \$616 million.
- Foliage plants have relatively remained unchanged in the last few years. It appears to show a declining trend over a longer period of time. There were 22.7 million units of foliage plants sold in 1995. That number for 2003 was 19.3 million.
- Foliage plants are normally purchased for the buyer's own enjoyments and are mostly used for indoor and outdoor decorations.

New product trends

- There are different new foliage plant varieties and cultivars that have been introduced in recent decades.
- Foliage color has been the most important factor considered in developing the new varieties.
- Longevity has also been one of the focuses in developing the new varieties. Some of the new ficus cultivars offer appealing aesthetic appearances and perform much better under low light conditions.
- New ivy varieties have been introduced in various sizes, shapes, colors, and patterns of variegation making them an important houseplant.

Manufacturing and distribution issues

- In contrast to most consumer products, many flower and plant products are not marketed or recognized by brand names. Though several companies are interested in establishing a brand identity in the floral market (e.g., Dole, Sunkist, Gerald Stevens, Hallmark), this is still in its infancy. There are, however, some plants that are currently sold in some home centers and mass merchandise stores are becoming less of a commodity.

Overall assessment of opportunities

- Growers who can develop new design and decoration concepts, planting arrangements and combinations adding foliages in indoor and outdoor plant mixes, and product innovations to develop varieties with unique colors and foliage textures and increase health benefits of these plants can increase sales.

Sources

Chen, J. et al. 2002. Development of new foliage plant cultivars. In: Janick, A. and Whipkey, A. (eds.). Trends in new crops and new uses. ASHS press, Alexandria, VA.

USDA/ERS. 2004b. Floriculture and nursery crop outlook, electronic output report from ERS – www.ers.usda.gov, FLO-03, September 23, 2004.