

MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Herbaceous perennials – Many opportunities

Market drivers that provide many opportunities

- **Fashion/design, homeownership** and **indulgence** are key market drivers that provide broad product development opportunities for herbaceous perennial growers.

Specific opportunities

- Innovative herbaceous perennial growers who can create unique combinations using perennials will benefit from the overall fashion and design trend. These plants will benefit from year to year garden design changes, as the consumers try to cope with the new trends. Consumers who see these plants in garden shows or in gardening magazines will buy them to add more diversity in their garden. These plants are priority products for new homeowners. Thus growth in home sales and new home buildings will support gains from sales of perennials. Perennials are also part of the preferred floral gifts to new homeowners.
- Garden centers that offer different plant varieties, unique foliage and flower colors, and make different arrangements and combinations with annuals that are attractive to consumers will have many opportunities to increase sales of perennials. Herbaceous perennials can also benefit from a continued use of professional and DIY service providers who want to add these plants in their garden design and decoration elements. Home centers will be the preferred market outlets to consumers who want to buy these plants with other items like garden supplies or building materials at one stop shopping.
- Herbaceous perennial growers can also benefit from florists who can come up with unique ideas and flower recipes that enhance the use of herbaceous perennials in different plant mixes and container combinations. Supermarkets will be selective and carry only limited number of varieties. Sales through these market outlets can be raised, if growers are in a position to offer different combinations of annuals and perennials as container plants that are attractive for the consumer who normally wants to make one stop shopping in these markets. Mass merchandisers' focus will be on selected varieties that are available in relatively large quantities and at discount prices.

New product examples

- Proven Winners has introduced more than 240 new perennial varieties in recent years. The new hardy and green perennial varieties offer solutions for sun, part-shade and shade containers for the early spring, summer and autumn seasons.

Special issues

- One of the problems in selling plant products, especially perennials, until very recently has been how to label them. So some propagators have started introducing colorful and informative perennial labels and tags that are used to identify perennials by the consumer and to educate buyers about the special characteristics of the plant
- One of the main challenges for perennials is the shorter blooming time they have compared to annuals. The consumer currently appears to be looking for more perennial varieties and selections that could bloom for a longer period.

Key to success

- Product innovations on varieties, colors, foliage and flower texture, and innovations on containers that make these plants key elements in garden design and decoration concepts incorporating them with annuals, trees, shrubs and lawn use are key to success.

Sources

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