

## MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

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### Ornamental trees and shrubs - Many opportunities

#### Market drivers that provide many opportunities

- Fashion/design and homeownership are key market drivers that provide many product development opportunities for ornamental tree and shrub growers.

#### Specific opportunities

- The product line benefits from professional landscapers who focus on garden design and decoration, adding trees and shrubs in their seasonal design elements. In particular, consumers with large garden spaces will buy these plants to use them as shade trees, border plants or to add some color combinations in their plant mixes.
- The growth in new home building will also be key in raising sales from these plants. These consumers see trees and shrubs as part of their investment. So they are willing to buy quality plants in order to raise the value of their homes. Others are interested in planting trees and shrubs that are attractive to different birds or other animals. These are also consumers who can buy trees and shrubs they were not aware of in the previous years, setting a new trend in using ornamental trees and shrubs. So, innovative growers and landscapers who can develop new preferred varieties, and show and educate consumers how to use these unique and new trees and shrubs will have many opportunities to raise sales.
- Garden centers provide many market opportunities for tree and shrub products. Home centers, supermarkets and mass merchandise retail stores buy standardized plant products that fit into their selection and space. Consumers who want to have one stop shopping will use these market outlets to purchase both plants and other home building and garden supplies. Retail florist shops are normally small to carry a large volume of trees and shrubs.
- There are many non-traditional market outlets that could be developed. The creation of green belts in residential quarters and green spaces in urban and suburban areas are continuous goals of many municipal offices. Ornamental trees and shrubs are key elements of these efforts. Establishment of long green corridors along major highways, ring roads, rivers, rail lines, etc. using ornamental trees is common in some places. There are also other much bigger trends in some countries. For example, in China, some ancient cities are being transformed into a modern garden city, with hotels and public facilities being encouraged to follow the models of ancient gardens, incorporating pools, bridges and rockeries. All these are untapped market opportunities for ornamental tree and shrub growers.

#### New product examples

- The Kennedy's Country Garden introduced different new tree and shrub varieties in 2004. Albizia "Summer Chocolate" is a new tree designed for smaller gardens. The "New Bradford" pear tree is a new variety that particularly carries all the traits of a flowering pear.
- Shrubs such as Fragrant Sumac "Konza", Silky Dogwood "Indigo" and Ninebark "Nugget", and trees like River Birch "Little King" and Western Larch are new native trees and shrubs of eastern and northeastern U.S. and are said to be especially suitable for organic gardening.

#### Special issues

- One challenge is the difficulty to establish plant categories for different market segments.

#### Key to success

- Innovations in landscape design and decoration and expanding the use of these plants in garden plant mixes and in non-traditional markets are key to success in this product line.

#### Sources

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