

MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

Funding: USDA Rural Development Cooperative Service Market Advisor: The Hale Group

[Use of this material is subject to caution.](#)

Ornamental trees and shrubs – Selective opportunities

Market drivers that provide selective opportunities

- **Wellness, convenience, ethnicity, demographics** and **indulgence** are key market drivers that provide selective opportunities for products in this product line.

Specific opportunities

- Market promotional efforts that focus on the health impacts of garden trees and shrubs will help increase sales. Trees and shrubs are relatively large, and are mostly sold as bare-root, balled and container-grown plant materials. So, convenience will play a selective role in increasing sales. Innovations that focus on plant management and container design may help improve sales to convenience-oriented consumers.
- Men and older adults will be the main purchasers of trees and shrubs. Many households will also see these plants as a significant investment. Ethnicity will also play an important role in raising sales. Different ethnic groups from Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and other regions that are purchasing houses in different regions will have their own tree and shrub preferences and garden designs that affect the future market for trees and shrubs. So, growers need to watch these trends and adjust production based on needs.
- Ornamental trees and shrubs are not suitable products for impulse purchasers. They are normally purchased by consumers who have experience with the plants or by those who are planning to have these plants. But these consumers may not buy these plants every year. Consumers who are looking for variety and high quality trees and shrubs will buy these plants at garden centers. Sales will be high, if the centers offer new varieties, colors, etc.
- Trees and shrubs are mostly needed by professional landscapers. Home centers, supermarkets and mass merchandise 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 too small to carry a large volume of trees and shrubs.
- Ornamental trees and shrubs are key elements in creating green belts and spaces in downtowns, residential quarters and other areas or in establishing green corridors along highways, rail lines, etc. In China, some ancient cities are being transformed into a modern garden city, with hotels and public facilities incorporating gardens, pools, bridges and rockeries. 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

<http://www.floracultureintl.com/archive/articles/767.asp> - Hamrick, D. German ornamental production.

<http://www.floracultureintl.com/archive/articles/1152.asp> - Moody, H. Urban greening in China. Floraculture International.

http://www.kennedycountrygardens.com/shrubs_n_trees.htm New plant 2004, Trees & shrubs.