



Business Plan Summary 2010

The Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association established the Beautiful Gardens® plant introduction program in 2004 for the purpose of expanding ornamental plant production opportunities for Virginia growers. A committee of Virginia horticulture industry leaders was organized to manage and direct the activities of the program. This coalition was charged with finding new plants for consideration, setting up evaluation sites, collecting data from these sites, reviewing tissue culture as a primary method of propagation, demonstrating the potential of liner production with Beautiful Gardens® plants, encouraging Virginia producer participation, developing patent and ownership guidelines, marketing Beautiful Gardens® plants at selected Virginia independent retail garden centers, and securing funding for meeting the program's objectives.

The Beautiful Gardens® plant introduction program is chaired by Doug Hensel, President of The Great Big Greenhouse in Richmond, VA and recent past President of the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association. Program Coordinator is Lisa Lipsey, associated with the Horticulture Department of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. Secretary/Treasurer is Jeff Miller of Horticulture Management Associates in Christiansburg, VA. An executive committee oversees all functions and responsibilities of the Beautiful Gardens® program and is made up of Doug Hensel, Lisa Lipsey, Jeff Miller, Fred Duis (past chairman) and Rick Baker with VDACS – Marketing. Working committees include: plant selection, marketing and promotion, facilities management, propagation and distribution, administration and finance and advisory. The executive committee meets monthly and the full committee meets quarterly.

New plants for evaluation at the (4) test sites in Virginia are collected from numerous sources including university research programs, private collections, private breeders, growers and the National Arboretum (USDA). Plants currently being considered are bulbs, perennials, ornamental shrubs and trees. Within each of these plant groups, strong consideration is given to native plants. Plants are reviewed for a minimum of three years before they are selected for propagation or released from the program. Plants are selected based on resistance to disease and insects, climatic hardiness and overall beauty.

The Beautiful Gardens® program also identifies and promotes an annual list of 'plants of distinction'. These plants are already sold to the public, but we feel are underutilized. A group of 5-10 plants is identified by the plant selection committee each year, approved by the full committee and promoted in Virginia independent retail garden centers. Each of these plants will be promoted for (3) years. Virginia growers can elect to be on the list of suppliers of these 'plants of distinction'. The first 'plants of distinction' were promoted at retail in 2009. See the plants for 2009 and 2010 at www.beautifulgardens.org Growers and garden centers participating in the Beautiful Gardens® program must be or become members of VNLA.

Plants that prove to be good candidates for propagation and sale are considered for tissue culture review and liner production. The tissue culture lab is located in Danville, VA at the Institute for Applied Learning and Research within the Institute for Sustainable and Renewable Resources. Plants that can be successfully propagated by tissue culture will then be grown to liner size. Liners will be available for sale exclusively to participating BG growers. We are working with the tissue culture lab and growers to develop a successful and profitable protocol for liner production of plantlets. A demonstration greenhouse is being assembled at the J Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Goochland, VA for displaying selected plants and offering workshops to interested growers.

Each 'new' plant introduction offered for sale to the wholesale and retail market by Beautiful Gardens® will be patented and fully owned by Beautiful Gardens® or be part of a contractual agreement with the original owner. This is how the Beautiful Gardens® will generate income to support the financial needs of the organization. One of our primary goals is to improve the sustainability of the program within the next several years by the potential sources listed below and a reasonable ongoing VNLA contribution to BG activities which will yield a member benefit. We are currently on course to offer our first new plant introduction in 2013 - 2014.

Potential sources of future income:

- 2010 - Breeder Workshops, Plantlet sales from IALR (plants we contract them to grow)
- 2011 - Breeder Workshops, Plantlet sales - patents/agreements
- 2012 - Breeder Workshops, Plantlet sales - patents/agreements
- 2013 - Breeder Workshops, Plantlet sales - patents/agreements; tag sales
- 2014 - Breeder Workshops, Plantlet sales - patents/agreements; tag sales

As far as Breeder Workshops' generating income is concerned, Fred Duis is proposing that we charge \$200.00 per person per workshop and hold them regionally. Each person, for his \$200.00, will get 8 hours of instruction, an associate membership in VNLA with all of the benefits accordingly, a kit that includes whatever tools are necessary, an automatic partnership with BG for propagation, evaluation and marketing services, Lisa's contact info, etc. Lisa is working with the Horticulture Department to establish a prototype program and work with the VNLA, the Master Gardener program and extension agents to promote and coordinate the workshops. This will be a bring together amateur and professional breeders as potential sources of new plant introductions.

Beautiful Gardens® new plant introductions and plants of distinction will be sold exclusively through independent retail garden centers. In 2009 we had 24 participating garden centers; in 2010 we will have 30. This number will be increased each year. Garden centers are provided with a list of participating growers and growers are provided with a list of participating garden centers. The marketing plan includes point of purchase materials, written and visual media campaigns, the Beautiful Gardens® web site, presentations by staff, displays at key trade shows and events, linked web sites, e-newsletters and continuing personal contact by marketing committee staff with retail sales outlets. Additional efforts will be made this year and in the future to include landscape designers and installers in our promotional efforts. POP materials include: plant tags, Beautiful Gardens® stickers, banners, posters, brochures and plant display placards.

Beautiful Gardens® intends to promote the benefits of buying top quality plants from local Virginia growers. 'Locally grown' plants can provide consumers with improved planting success and enhanced satisfaction. Great new plants from Virginia increase the public's awareness of Virginia as a leader in the horticulture industry. Beautiful Gardens® is a positive approach that can help expand grower sales of BG plants and other plants in their inventory. While Beautiful Gardens might not be the right program for everyone – it can be a good choice for those who choose to fully participate in all aspects of the program.

Business Plan Detail Summary

Beautiful Gardens® Plant Introduction Program

- **JSRCC** – David Seward
 - Will continue to propagate 1,000 plus *Ilex Virginia* in the spring (they have about 750 rooting now)
 - Are acclimating some of the lilies in a cool greenhouse.
 - Will work on a propagation/tissue culture/breeding training programs if some of the VDACS Demo Greenhouse funding can be used for this.
 - Don Hyatt has PowerPoint presentations on these programs that can be used
- **IALR** – Barry Flinn
 - Will get dates for VNLA representatives to meet with IALR staff to discuss cooperative agreements with the new commercial tissue culture lab and he will send draft agreements to review before the meeting in December. (Tissue culture – one person can process about 2,000 plants per month at the commercial lab).
 - Don Hyatt will provide Azalea germplasm for tissue culture at IALR (**Evergreen Azaleas:** ‘Koromo Shikibu’, ‘Fairfax’, ‘Walter’s Pinwheel’, and ‘Cardinal’s Crest’) and **Rhododendrons:** *R. carolinianum* x ‘Crater Lake’, ‘Martin Keister White’, *R. metternichii* ‘Hyatt Form’, *R. makinoi*, ‘Hyatt Form’)
- Maymont Flower Show – BG will not exhibit at the 2010 show, but will provide brochures at the Colesville Nursery display and the Master Gardener’s booth.
- Alex Niemiera will chair the Advisory Committee for Beautiful Gardens and will establish more communications with the current and new advisors.
- Plants of Distinction plants will be announced 2 years out at each MANTS meeting.
- Executive Committee will meet by conference call once a month and will handle day-to-day decisions on Beautiful Garden’s direction and activities.
- Plant patenting – Jeff will check with Brent Heath about a group that works with plant patenting.
- BG Plant tags – it was the consensus to use 4” labels on pots, instead of stick stakes at the grower level, and they would be applied mostly at the retail level
- Newsletter Column – Lisa Lipsey will provide a Beautiful Gardens Column in each issue of the VNLA Newsletter.
- Plant Database – the committee will research database applications that can provide better database management and reporting of plant material, locations, production/testing status, source, availability, etc.
- New plant germplasm sources – Alex will work with Lisa in establishing more contacts with potential sources of plants for testing and possible introduction. More exposure will be given to plant nominations in the VNLA Newsletter and the E-News.
- The current business plan was reviewed and updates were made as needed. (see attached revised plan)
- Redefined job responsibilities – The responsibilities of the Beautiful Gardens Executive Director were re-evaluated and assigned to the Executive Committee, Program Coordinator and sub-committees.
- Develop timelines for major activities and goals: the committee will work on specific timelines for plant introduction, propagation and production time, distribution to growers and availability for marketing.
- Bringing some new people onto the committees for new ideas and new energy is a priority. A new chair of the Plant Selection Committee is being solicited to fill the vacant position.
- Continuing search and applications for grant/support funds – Rick Baker, Roger Harris and Alex Niemiera will work on identifying potential sources and filing appropriate applications.