
Minutes: Beautiful Gardens Taskforce

Baltimore Convention Center, Room: 334
3:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 10, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Fred Duis with the following people present:, George Machen, Jack Campbell, Rumen Conev, Rick Baker,

Minutes – it was moved to dispense with the reading of the previous meeting minutes, seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report – Jeff Miller gave a brief financial report and noted that we were starting on our second Tobacco Commission grant of \$145,000.

Executive Director's Report – Rumen Conev gave an update on recent activities of the Beautiful Gardens program. He announced that he had accepted to ornamental plant breeder position in the Virginia Tech Department of Horticulture, and had just moved from Danville to Blacksburg.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration: December Planning Session at Claytor Nature Center; TM status

Public Relations: Rick Baker presented label and pot wrap prototypes; “POS” posters and other materials. He noted that there hadn't been much feedback from growers' questionnaires.

Plant Selection: Linda Pinkham reported on the potential plants for the 2009 promotion. There was a discussion of plants on the 2008 promotion list and concern was expressed on some of the selections and availability for 2008 sales.

There was a work session to prepare for a presentation of the Beautiful Gardens program at the VNLA Breakfast meeting on Thursday morning and preparation for Thursday afternoon meetings with potential growers and retailers.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm

Notes from the Grower/Retailer meeting on January 11, 2007

- The goal of the Beautiful Gardens program is to help members sell more plants.
- Virginia growers should have the first choice to grow BG plants
- New plants should have a soft introduction until production is sufficient for promotion.
- Have to sell plant ideas to magazines (i.e. Southern Living), but have to have product ready
- Need to determine how to guarantee consumer interest
- Need enough time to get plants up to a saleable size
- Most growers propagate their own plants
- Need to have new or underutilized plants
- Should promote plants as Mid-Atlantic Plant Introductions vs Virginia Plant Introductions
- Should consider licensing fees to avoid creating legality issues of restricting to members
- Tags need to meet the new weights and measures requirements
- Need to determine a break even level for the program
- Need to create a sustainability level for the program
- Need to distinguish between “promotional” vs “introduction” program
- Where is the “WOW” in the 2008 program

Participants:

Rumen Conev

Jeff Miller

Tom Smallwood, Ingleside Plantation Nurseries

Jim Snyder, Riverbend Nursery

Sue Townsend, Riverbend Nursery

Ken Moss, Windy Hills Nursery

Chris Brown, Lancaster Farms

Art Parkerson, Lancaster Farms

Rick Baker, VDACS Marketing

Fred Duis, Duis Nursery

John Lancaster, Bennett's Creek Nursery

Sandy McDougale, Sandy's Plants

Jim Bruce, Hanover Farms

Tom Saunders, Saunders Bros

Laurie Jamerson, Saunders Bros

Gene Broughman, Nursery Supplies

Neal Beasley