

Questions in Picking New Varieties for Retailers

Choosing new varieties for retail can be complicated! The first two questions to ask are:

- **Is it good for the consumer?**
- **Can I make more margin on it?**

Here are some important legal and marketing questions to consider.

Legal Aspects

- Is there a Plant Breeders' Right (PBR) or trademark on this plant? Through a Plant Breeders' Right in Canada or a plant patent in the US, breeders can control who gets to propagate their plant(s) and how they are reimbursed for new plant development.
- Is my supplier licensed to propagate it? Although there is no website to verify this, the first place is to ask your supplier. If you are paying below-market prices, there is a chance the supplier might not be paying royalties and may not be licensed. Just like those bootleg movies we hear about in the media.
- What are the rules set out by the trademark holder about use of their trademark(s)? Can I use it in my advertising?
- Are there restrictions on the sale of the plants by the holder of the PBR or patent?
- Are there tags required that I need to leave in the containers? Some breeders are strict on tags in hanging baskets and some are not. Have you asked what the requirements are?

Marketing

Most of you know this already, but just in case. . .

- What type of customers do you serve, i.e. price-sensitive customers, specialist gardeners, novice gardeners, eco-gardeners, too-busy customers, customers who need fool-proof plants, the upscale market, and/or landscapers, .
- Will this variety have special appeal for your customers? Which ones and to what extent?
- How many can I sell?
- What is the availability?
- Are there consignment opportunities?
- Does it have multi-month appeal or should it be removed once it stops blooming?
- How well does the new variety hold up on the shelves?
- Will it need special care?
- Does the producer offer in-store care? How much and how often?
- Is there promotional support from the breeder or producer?
- Where in my store displays will this variety fit?
- How does the variety mesh with the rest of the inventory? Will it fulfill a particular need?

- Are there add-on goods that would help boost sales of this variety?