

Title: Weed Suppressive Groundcovers

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Abstract:

Cornell research found certain that certain plants can be used to naturally suppress weeds. These attractive plants represent a new market potential for NY greenhouse producers. We have published a color brochure and website to describe these plants and promote their use to suppress weeds. We also coordinated the establishment of demonstration gardens at several locations across the state. The recently published brochures have been well received. The increase in sales of these plants will be tracked prior to and during the two year period of this project. An analysis of the results will be conducted. The results will be shared state wide.

Background and Justification:

New York greenhouse producers want to meet the demands of their customers. Many gardening consumers are now motivated to use techniques that involve less labor and fewer pesticides. The use of these weed suppressive groundcovers has the potential to help meet those needs. Research was conducted over the past six years with the intention that weed suppressive plants would be used along NY highways to reduce maintenance. However it is apparent that that there would be a use for these plants in NY greenhouses, garden centers and the home landscapes of New York residents.

Objectives:

This project promoted weed suppressive groundcovers both to producers, who are growing them, and the public who can use them in their landscape to suppress weeds. Any producer or retailer who grows and sells perennial plants will be able to promote these plants with the brochure and website information produced in this project. Ultimately, the New York consumers purchasing these plants will benefit from having plants that suppress weeds and from reduced herbicide use in landscapes.

Procedures:

Brochure Development: Research data on 85 plants from Long Island and Ithaca plots was screened for effectiveness in weed suppression as well as appearance. This process yielded the 14 plants that are featured in the brochure. Photographs of these plants were taken and cultural information was compiled. A graphic artist designed the brochure to have visual appeal. The brochure was posted to New York's IPM website.

http://nysipm.cornell.edu/nursery_ghouse/weed_supp_grcovers.asp

Demonstration Plots: Demonstration sites of these groundcovers were established at retail establishments and public areas in Long Island, Orange County, and the Albany, Rochester, Ithaca and Buffalo areas.

Promotion: In 2008 the demonstration, the at retail establishments and public locations, were used in to promote these plants to other growers.

Results and Implications:

The response from green industry professionals was positive. The second printing of the Weed Suppressive Groundcover brochure was delivered in 2008. At this point over 10,000 copies of the brochure have been distributed.

Attendance at the open-houses at cooperators farms was very good. We were able to combine two of these with a separate presentation on greenhouse bio control (another IPM

and Farm Viability Institute sponsored project) so that growers could learn about both in one location.

Since this project began growers are increasingly offering these plants to NY consumers. The potential herbicide saving on consumers properties where these are being used is high.



Greenhouse growers listening to Brian Eshenaur pointing out characteristics of the groundcovers in October 2008.