

## Use of Healthy Plant Material in Nurseries

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### INTRODUCTION

Use of healthy plant material in nurseries seems to be the most obvious and logic thing of all. Somehow, however, healthy plant material does not always move forward as fast as expected in the nursery business. The reasons for that are many and one should know these to help improve the situation.

There are advantages and disadvantages of using healthy plant material from a nursery operators point of view. The most important disadvantages are the direct investment of time and money and the problems with estimating future advantages. In addition, blocks may develop.

### LOOKING AT HEALTHY PLANT MATERIAL

**Advantages.** Economic benefits result from a reduction in plant losses and better growth resulting in more uniform plants. In addition, healthy plants need less chemical treatment and are in high demand by consumers.

**Disadvantages.** Healthy plant material is more expensive to use in the beginning. This is true whether budwood is bought from The Danish Elite Plant Stations or healthy mother plants are established. Additionally, a new healthy clone may require its own protocol for growth and handling and in the end may require extra nursery effort in selling the product. Finally, a new product can create replanting problems at the user.

**Blocks.** The nurseries may have experienced problems in the past with new healthy crops. For example, healthiness did not last or the demand for the new healthy crop was not present either because the consumer was not sufficiently informed about the new product or because there was no interest in the product.

A breeders new products are always said to be better than products seen before! However, nurserymen and landscape architects want to continue to produce and use products which have already proved to be good enough.

**Important Factors.** In order to have more healthy plant material used in nurseries it is important to strive towards large and visible benefits for the industry. Blocks should be avoided as far as possible by making the costs and risks clear and small. Bad experiences make people say “let others try first “, and then the market and production will never meet. Important to growers and consumers are true and lasting improvements of the new product. Timing of production and marketing of the new product is one of the most important factors.