

an F1 hybrid resulting from a cross of *C. kousa* 'Simpson No. 1' × *C. nuttallii* 'Gold Spot'. The original plant is extremely vigorous and dense, having reached a height of 8.83 m (29 ft) with a columnar spread of 7.07 m (23.25 ft) in 30 years. Plants of Starlight hybrid dogwood are vegetatively winter-hardy in USDA Zone 6a but are flower bud hardy only to USDA Zone 7b [+5 °F (-15 °C)]. The plants have shown high resistance to the major disease and insect pests of *C. kousa* and *C. nuttallii*, exhibit attractive, dark green leaves, and have been found to be floriferous in Winchester, Tennessee, and Boring, Oregon. Plants of Starlight hybrid dogwood have not been extensively tested in the Mid-Atlantic and south-eastern states, but their performance in these and other areas of the United States will be forthcoming soon.

Developments in Production and Use of Trees, Shrubs, and Perennials[®]

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The nursery trade currently is faced with some problems in The Netherlands. These include:

- 1) There are currently too many taxa of plants to choose from. This is creating problems for both nurseries and gardeners. This has resulted from:
 - a) Too many NEW NEW NEW plants.
 - b) Too many old (and/or unknown) plants.

Therefore, this has resulted in the need to distinguish products by marketing tools: labels, pots, and trays.

- 2) Pests and diseases.
 - a) Problems in nurseries.
 - b) Problems in urban and rural areas.

What needs to happen: we need to spread the risks by diversifying production and plant a wider range of plants.

- 3) Trends in gardening are causing problems and include the following:
 - a) Less-is-more garden design with use of fewer plants (are perennials "out"?).
 - b) Bringing inside living room outside: this has led to plants in pots with lots of hardware/furniture.
 - c) Short-term gardening.
 - d) Buying visually attractive plants only.

To overcome the above problems, consumers need more information on the wealth of plants to choose from. Suppliers of information include the following:

- The nursery trade itself.
- Inspection Service for Horticulture (NAK).
- For woody ornamentals and perennials: Royal Boskoop Horticultural Society (KVBC), which has been conducting trials for many years. The distribution of information is through Plant Publicity Holland.

Royal Boskoop Horticultural Society trials are organized as follows:

New Cultivars. These trials include their own finds or imports and are judged by a committee of specialists. The plants are judged on the following points:

- Is the plant new?
- Is the plant different or distinguishable?
- Does it have market potential?
- How does it propagate and grow (healthy)?
- Performance in the nursery.

Good plants receive an award. The results are meant for the nursery trade and are published in *Dendroflora*. Because new plants are hot, a lot of attention is focused on them by the press. This leads to the problem of availability.

JUDGING NEW PLANTS AT SHOWS

This leads to more attention on the show quality of the plant than on garden plant quality.

Merit Stars Trials. These are judged by a committee of specialists. These trials are conducted according to the following procedures:

- Field trials, 3–5 years, different soils in Holland.
- By genus or type of plants.
- Assessment of a range of aspects: vigour, performance, healthiness, hardiness, compare cultivars, identify cultivars, describe cultivars.
- Results published in *Dendroflora*.
- Although aimed for nursery trade, results are useful for (and used by) professional and amateur horticulturists as well.

New Initiative: EURO-TRIALS. There are many trialling organizations in different European countries. However, there is no communication or cooperation, resulting in duplication in the trials. The idea emerges of “why not get together?”

A pilot project, initiated and coordinated by KVBC, was started Spring 2005 in Great Britain, France, Germany, and Holland to evaluate *Hydrangea paniculata* cultivars. The judging committees were composed of nurserymen and consumer panels. The advantages are more information on performance (different climates), taste, and good promotional activity. A follow up activity is planned with *Buddleja* (under German coordination), and there is interest in participation from Austria, Sweden, Denmark, and Italy.

Promotion of Good Plants. Promotion of good plants can only be successful when a plant is available! There are two problems:

- New and unobtainable.
- Old, but good...not widely known, not in production so not obtainable.

We need to upgrade the award system: it has to be nominated. The advantages of this system would be:

- 1) It has proven itself by several years of experience (checked by specialists).
- 2) It has to be readily available (checked by tradespeople).

If it meets the above two criteria than it is a PLANT PLUS! plant.