

## Plant Select® at Denver Botanic Gardens®

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### WHAT IS PLANT SELECT®?

Plant Select® is a program designed to seek out and distribute the very best plants for gardens from the high plains to the intermountain region. Plant Select® is a cooperative program administered by the Denver Botanic Gardens and Colorado State University together with landscape and nursery professionals throughout the Rocky Mountain region and beyond. Plant Select® is a private not-for-profit Colorado corporation.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Plants are given to Plant Select® from members, cooperators, private breeders, and plant collectors. Plants are then propagated and distributed to testing sites and grown and evaluated. During this time propagation protocols are developed and marketing tools are developed. Plants get their first debut at the ProGreen Expo, Colorado's green industry trade show. In March, marketing packets and press releases are mailed out to garden writers, newspapers, landscape architects, and trade magazines. The plants are sold for the first time at the Denver Botanic Gardens annual spring plant sale. By controlling the initial sales date we are able to control the patent and trademark "clock."

### INTRODUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Plant Select® works hard towards introducing plants that will not only thrive in the front range of Colorado but will grow in a variety of conditions around the country and world. By making selections, that we can call introductions, we are able to patent plants and trademark varieties. We also work at recommending native plants that have a place in the home and commercial landscape. Recommended plants can also be plants that have been grown in other climates but not thought to have been hardy.

**Plant Selection.** Plants that are to be promoted by Plant Select® must meet three criteria. Plants must: (1) have more than one season of interest, (2) be able to be produced locally, and (3) also thrive in the front range of Colorado.

**Where Do the Plants Come From?** We seek out plants that are from similar or worse climates such as the Asian steppe, high elevation in South Africa, high elevation Mediterranean regions, Turkey, Morocco, Greece, Spain, and desert regions of the world, South Western U.S.A., Pakistan, and Mexico. We also study Mountain regions like the Rocky Mountains, Caucasus, Andes, and Alps. In identifying areas we look at annual precipitation and high and low temperatures. Seeds are brought back from the expeditions. Plants that are blooming are identified and later either collected or purchased on the open market. Also watch for new color breaks and chance hybrids within collections on site.

**Testing the Plants.** Plant Select® tests for multiple factors in multiple locations. We are testing for invasive potential, cold hardiness, drought tolerance, and niche potential. Potential plants are tested in formal row trials at Colorado State University as well as at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Plants are also tested at multiple xeriscape demonstration gardens around the country. All participants in the trial process work under trial agreements to keep the material secure. Plants can be tested for years before they are introduced or potentially scraped from the program if they don't perform well enough.

**Some Plant Select® Facts.** Plant Select has been operating for 26 years and introducing plants for 11 years. Plant Select® has sold more than 8 million units and has promoted more than 80 plants.