



Dragon Wing begonia
in an urban setting.

Landscape Trends & Opportunities

Tips for greenhouses with their fingers on the pulse

BY CLAIRE WATSON

The U.S. housing market is on the rebound, and with it comes an increase in demand for landscaping services. According to a November 2015 IBISWorld market research study, Landscape is a \$76 billion industry, and greenhouse growers searching for opportunities to reach new customers will want to give landscape businesses a fresh look.

As the growing expert, you are in an ideal position to make excellent product recommendations each season that meet landscapers' needs. However, private homeowners and residential landscapes are only part of this equation; commercial landscaping accounts for 51 percent of the industry's revenue. This market includes municipal buildings, commercial facilities, campuses and more. The good news is the plants that work and thrive for these spaces are just as desired by homeowners, who are looking for durable flowers with impressive color.

At PanAmerican Seed, we've begun to focus some of our breeding efforts specifically toward the landscape market. We have identified several varieties in our collection that have stood the test of time, as well as some new introductions that make

the grade. Some of the traits we've selected for are:

- **Durability.** Will a landscaper get a full turn of color in a season?
- **Maximum color.** 55 mph color will help a landscape stand out.
- **Reduced cost.** Our seed inputs and pelleted technology versus vegetative propagation oftentimes results in a cost savings in the greenhouse.
- **Efficiency.** Being able to grow in packs — yet still provide varieties that fill in fast — gives landscapers a scheduling advantage.
- **Easy to grow.** Less labor and maintenance overall is always appreciated — from the greenhouse to installation to the end user.

The following list of plants from the PanAmerican Seed landscape collection meet most or all of the criteria above.

Early Spring Turn:

- Spring Matrix pansies
- Cool Wave pansies
- Sorbet viola
- Dash dianthus
- Akila osteospermum
- Snapshot snapdragon

Main Season Suggestions:

- Wave petunias
- Serena and Serenita angelonia
- Dragon Wing begonia
- Titan vinca
- Valiant vinca

First-Year Flowering Perennial Options:

- 'Cheyenne Spirit' echinacea
- PowWow echinacea

In addition to selecting varieties that fulfill the landscape market's needs, greenhouses can follow the tips below to further promote landscape varieties to their customers:

FOLLOW CONSUMER TRENDS

We've all seen the reports from the West Coast: water restrictions are here to stay. Today's end user is environmentally conscious and is striving for "mainstream

sustainability." Keeping your finger on the pulse of consumer gardening trends can put you ahead of the game. So when you read about movements toward eliminating turf grass and an increased awareness in pollinators, it's time to take stock of your plant list. Beyond



Cool Wave pansies are a great option for early spring turns.

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just growing water-wise flowers, end users are looking for a natural balance in their design. They still want low maintenance, but also high color. Their plants must have a purpose, whether it's providing habitats for bees and birds,

preventing soil erosion, or an edible landscape — pay attention to the hot topics.

PROVIDE THE WOW FACTOR

The flowers you grow need to look special! Your clients won't be

impressed with small plants that look like box store leftovers. Grow and sell quality, healthy plants in the formats landscapers require. And don't forget "wow" color for the shade, too, especially in urban spaces where direct sunlight

can be a challenge. Offering colorful shade alternatives like Divine New Guinea impatiens or durable Dragon Wing begonia can round out a landscaper's plant portfolio.

COOL TOOLS

Online tools from PanAmerican Seed are available to growers and landscape designers to help you present the best options to a discerning clientele. Some of the tools we developed include a



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plant calculator to help determine quantities and ultimately costs or manpower. You can also create your own custom sell sheet on any of the landscape plants in the PanAmerican Seed collection, complete with landscape-specific information and plant benefits. In a few steps you can print out or email a one-page brochure: Simply select a crop, choose from an album of landscape photography, add in your company logo and information, and

you're ready to inform clients about your plants. Overall, the landscape industry is projected to grow over the next few years. Besides the rebounding housing market mentioned at the start of this article, renewed

government investment around infrastructure and green building will fuel an opportunity for the next-generation of plants to make a statement in the landscape. Make sure your greenhouse is ready for the future! *gpn*

Claire Watson is product marketing manager for PanAmerican Seed, stationed in West Chicago, Illinois. To learn more about the landscape plant collection, visit www.panamseed.com/landscape.



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The landscape industry is projected to grow over the next few years as renewed government investment around infrastructure fuels opportunities for the next generation of plants.