

Landscaping & GROUNDSKEEPING

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Each year, Landscape Ontario's Congress attracts over 10,000 people from around North America to Canada's largest horticulture, lawn and garden trade show and conference. For the 2010 show, which runs from January 12th to the 14th (with a pre-conference symposium on the 11th), Landscape Ontario has joined forces with the Canadian Fence Industry Association, the Ontario Parks Association, and Communities in Bloom Ontario. The Green Forum is also back for its second year and will be dedicated to the exchange of information and best practices on sustainable green initiatives.

This year, conference seminar topics are geared toward the Six Pillars of Business Success: Sales Success, Financial Health, Developing Customers for Life, Professional Operations, Leaderships Excellence, and Technical Expertise.

"One of our main goals at Congress 2010 is to educate attendees with current information that is integral to their professional development within the industry," says Sally Harvey, CLP, CHT, Manager of Education and Labour Development, Landscape Ontario.

On Tuesday, January 12th, and new to this year's show, the Ontario Parks Association is partnering with Landscape Ontario and Communities in Bloom for the creation of the first Green Communities and Green Parks event. This is an opportunity for municipal leaders to meet, share information and build consensus on how to celebrate, protect, reclaim and build sustainable parks environments in their communities.

"This event is extremely important because it provides municipal leaders with an opportunity to properly plan for a future that needs to include municipal green spaces," says Paul Ronan, Executive Director of the Ontario Parks Association. "There are a lot of great topics being discussed and seminar attendees will gain new insights into successfully integrating more important environmental elements into planning strategies for their own communities."

Other show highlights include Ontario Parks Association's 54th Annual Education Forum, the Canada East Equipment Dealers Association Equipment Dealer Forum, Tailgate XIV, feature gardens designed by local horticultural students, a New Product Showcase, and Landscape Ontario's Awards of Excellence Gala and Annual General Meeting.

Tickets for Congress 2010 events range from \$75 for Landscape Ontario members to \$250 for non-members, depending on the program. Admission to the trade show is included when purchasing tickets to the pre-conference programs or conference programs. Visit www.locongress.com for the show's full list of events and details.

Hope to see you there.

Best of the season from all of us here at Landscaping & Groundskeeping magazine.

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Inside this issue

These new EDGE mini backhoe attachments will turn skid-steer loaders into powerful excavators and simplify jobs such as digging trenches and footings.

Read more on page 6.

Designing landscapes with cool-season foliage plants

Thinking outside the box of traditional flower beds

by Adam Woods

With new availability from growers and plant brands throughout North America, foliage plantings can create striking and alluring contrasts in off-season beds and borders.

Foliage plants have recently become one of the popular trends among homeowners, thus providing professional landscapers an outlet for thinking outside the box of traditional flower beds. Adding natural appeal and unique interest to any overall landscape design, foliage plants provide texture and colour unlike any blooming perennial or annual. This is particularly relevant for landscapers needing to turn profits and maintain steady business in off-season and colder periods of the year.

New foliage plant varieties that are cold-hardy and with varying and creative characteristics have not always been readily available. Thus, horticulturists such as Dan Heims, president of Terra Nova Nurseries out of Portland, Oregon, and his laboratory team, have specifically directed attention to cultivating breakthrough new foliage plants. The result has encompassed the introduction of a wide range of cold-hardy foliage varieties with bold colours and unique textural attributes.

"So many fall and winter palettes are composed of grey, depressing colours. Our goal at Terra Nova Nurseries is to offer an entirely new range to extend the vivid purple, reds, and yellows of fall through winter and into spring," says Heims.



Top: Many foliage varieties, such as *Heuchera* 'Midnight Bayou', are cold hardy and can withstand the season's colder temperatures.

Bottom: *Brunnera* 'Emerald Mist', has variegated leaves that provide a double-shot of colour. Photos courtesy of terranovanurseries.com.

Fran Hopkins is the founder of the STEPABLES brand of creeping perennials, and has dedicated a good deal of energy over the years to educating landscape and plant business professionals about cold-hardy, low-growing groundcovers to fill in the barren spaces between larger plant material.

"Landscapers should select plants that change colours with every season for cool-season interest as well as year-round colour," says Hopkins. "For example, *Sedum* 'Coral Carpet' from STEPABLES is practically five plants in one. In fall, the foliage turns a deep crimson, and then brightens to a striking scarlet at the end of winter."

Ambiance matters

Foliage plants can bring just as much interest to clients' landscapes, and provide nearly as many combination options, as blooming plants in the fall or early winter. However, these combinations often exist in the form of variegated textures and untraditional colour contrasts. It is important for landscapers to keep in mind the differences between a flower bed and foliage design. Foliage is all about leaf shapes, vein colours and outlines, textures and flow. Foliage selections can be tall, dramatic and thin, while others are short, soft and petite. Combinations are often subtle and focus on creating a mood, drawing the eye forward, and creating dimension in spaces.

Because common foliage colours include variations of blues, greens and deep reds, a soothing design concept is often a favourite amongst landscape designers, especially in autumn landscaping. To achieve this, it is best to use strong textural contrasts to insert supplemental interest instead of bright colours. A mix of matte and velvety-like foliage may be best for this style, with combinations of smooth and serrated edges. The maroon leaves of *Heuchera* 'Midnight Bayou' (shown left) are accented with deep-purple veins which harmonize with lighter foliage such as the bright green of *Heuchera* 'Electric Lime'. These two plants from Terra Nova Nurseries introduce eye-catching accents with soft hues blended with striking colours.

Begonias, lamb's ear and thyme are also excellent options for providing unique textures, as many of these come with fuzzy-type leaves. Plant colours such as silver, auburn, russet and deep green will also add to the overall atmosphere and develop a sense of design diversity without over-complicating an installation plan.

By choosing light colours such as yellows, chartreuse, bright reds and greens, a foliage-filled landscape will take on a more vibrant energy. While vivid colours are less common in foliage plants, many are now cultivated with high-level genet-



Foliage can be one of the most important additions to a landscape design or installation project, as it can bring varying textures, colours and contrasts that are otherwise difficult to accomplish with other plant types. Photo courtesy of STEPABLES.



Without the blooms from summer and spring, it can be a challenge for landscape designers and contractors to create a colourful landscape during cooler months. Combining colours such as cinnamon and chartreuse will create a unique contrast and increase the overall visual appeal of the landscape design. Photo courtesy of www.terranovanurseries.com.

ics, from breeders like Heims, to tackle the need. When trying to make an impact, pair several bright- and true-green foliage varieties of different textures in an area with one or two unusual foliage colours. Supplementing a heavy green palette with plants of crimson or wine will become an instant focal point. For example, mixing the dappled, variegated green of *Tiarella* 'Happy Trails' from Terra Nova Nurseries with the soft chartreuse *Sagina* 'Irish Moss' from STEPABLES will bring together two very unique textures of green. Embellish this combination with the bold, crimson-red colour of *Heuchera* 'Autumn Leaves' and the space will pop with natural interest. Plants such as these are produced specifically to provide more foliage colour options and excellent season-long and off-season performance, even through the fall and early winter of colder zones.

Landscaping with foliage is especially powerful in small areas, as many foliage plants can evoke a sense of depth when planted correctly. By tapering bright, large-leaf foliage in small spaces with smaller plants showcasing in-sync colours in front, the area is brightened

and visually elongated. Though, unifying unlikely colour partners such as the dappled silver of *Pulmonaria* 'Silver Bouquet' with the glossy, warm-pink foliage of *Heuchera* 'Milan' can draw admiring attention while ultimately extending the space. Stretch the space even further by planting bright gold creepers such as *Lysimachia* 'Aurea' or *Sedum* 'Golden Tip Stonecrop' along the ground.

Landscaping with foliage plants can not only supply a possible new form of off-season revenue, but it will lead homeowner and commercial property clients to appreciate the value of bed and border replacements. As a start, it is imperative for landscape professionals to explain the options for and benefits of cool weather plantings to clients. Taking the time to do so and knowing about plant availability can equate to unexpected installation projects and the profits that come with them.

STEPABLES

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Terra Nova Nurseries

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