



# THE STATE OF *color*

Contractors learn about new varieties during Ball Horticulture's Landscape Day.

**C**ONTRACTORS BELIEVE the market for annuals might wither like, well, a drought-stricken annual in the heat of the noonday sun.

According to a survey conducted by Ball Horticulture, 75% of landscape contractors say the number of color change-outs will stay the same or decrease over the next three years. At the same time, 96% expect their expenditures for perennials will stay the same or increase during the same period.

"This year has been flat-line stable for us," said Ed Mrozinski, a buyer for Acres Landscape, Wauconda, IL. Mrozinski was part of a panel of growers and contractors at Ball Landscape Day, held last month at Ball's headquarters in West Chicago, IL. Ball released its 2010 Landscape Contractor Survey at the event.

**CONTRACTORS EXPECT THE PERENNIAL PLANT MARKET TO GROW WHILE ANNUALS MARKET TAKES A DIP. BUT NO MATTER WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR, GROWERS CAN BE A CONTRACTOR'S BEST FRIEND.**

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS

PHOTO BY: DAN JACOBS

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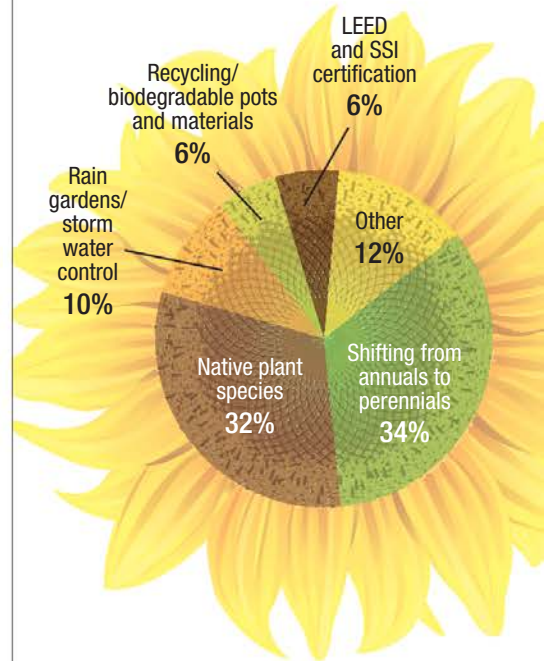
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**> SURVEY**

Which ONE of the following areas pertaining to landscape sustainability are your clients asking you about the MOST?



**Notable trends**

When asked which area pertaining to landscape sustainability clients are asking about most, nearly 34% responded “shifting from annuals to perennials.” The second most common response was “native plant species” at 32%.

Fewer annuals mean fewer color change-outs, which could have an impact on the bottom line.

“I like annuals,” said Bruce Hellerick, senior horticulturist for Brickman. “I’m very nervous for the industry right now.”

Whether it’s annuals or perennials, when contractors are looking for new varieties, the most popular source of information is to speak with the local grower. And nearly nine in 10 contractors (88%) are willing to trial those new varieties on customer jobsites. Just over half of contractors (51%) want growers to trial samples at the grower’s production facility. 🌱

*Results based on Ball Horticulture survey with responses from 376 U.S. landscape contractors, 29% commercial and 46% residential, primarily maintenance (49%) and design/build (29%).*

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