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# Selecting ornamentals

**Understanding how different plants respond in different regions might help you find something new for your client**

BY DANIEL WEISS/  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

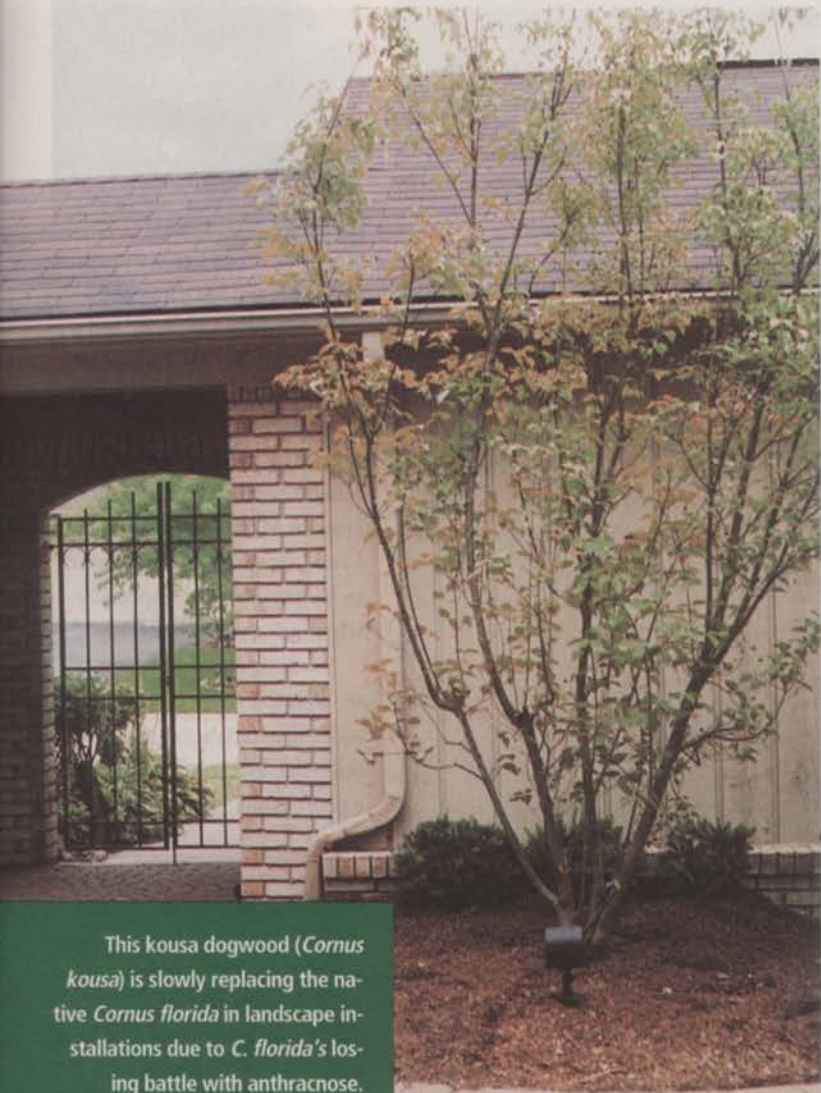
Over the years, hundreds of articles have been written on selecting plants. That's because there are hundreds of things to think about when selecting ornamentals. I want to propose two new ways of thinking about plants for your customers or yourself: Know the differences and try something new.

## Know the differences

Plants rarely browse the references written about them. If they did, they'd find many of these references are written at a national or even international level. With such a broad scope of coverage, there could be some confusion when palms, which don't survive in northern climates, are listed in a general reference manual. More confusion may occur when looking at plants that survive in Florida that have a related species that grows in Minnesota, or the same species grows in both locations to a much different outcome. The *Viburnum* species has plants adapted to Florida, but different ones grow in Minnesota. Plants installed in different regions, though the same, behave differently.

Also, plant catalogs advertise nationally. Though these catalogs may solve the problem of availability, plants listed may not live in a specific region.

Plants respond differently in Florida than they would in Minnesota and vice versa. Therefore, cast a



This kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) is slowly replacing the native *Cornus florida* in landscape installations due to *C. florida*'s losing battle with anthracnose.



TABLE 1

Plant	Location
<i>Cornus florida</i> (flowering dogwood)	<b>Michigan:</b> understory tree, protect from wind & salt <b>North Carolina:</b> full sun turf tree, street
<i>Buddleia davidii</i> (butterfly bush)	<b>Michigan:</b> tender woody plants, dies back down to ground, grows 4 to 6 ft., good use in a perennial garden <b>New Mexico:</b> woody shrubs, grows 6 to 15 ft., use in perennial border or informal shrub mass
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	<b>Kentucky:</b> can use for street tree (Canadian hemlock) <b>Michigan:</b> needs wind and salt protection, partial shade
<i>Rhododendron catawbiense</i>	<b>Michigan:</b> avoid western and southern exposure, protect from northern winds, grows 4 to 6 ft., possibly a little larger if well cared for. <b>Pennsylvania:</b> good evergreen screen, grows 10 to 16 ft.

TABLE 2

Plant	Substitution
<i>Cornus florida</i> (flowering dogwood)	<i>Cornus kousa</i> (kousa dogwood)
<i>Hemerocallis</i> (daylily)	<i>Liriope spicata</i> (creeping lily turf)
<i>Craetaegus sp.</i> (hawthorne)	<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i> (white fringe tree)
<i>Acer sacharum</i> (sugar maple)	<i>Cladrastis lutea</i> (yellowwood)
<i>Euonymus alata</i> 'Compacta' (burning bush)	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i> (arrowwood viburnum)
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> (common lilac)	<i>Vitex agnus negundo</i> (lilac chaste tree)
<i>Azalea sp.</i> (rhododendron)	<i>Daphne x burkwoodii</i> (burkwood daphne)
<i>Juniperis horizontalis</i>	<i>Microbiota decussata</i> (Russian cypress)
<i>Spiraea bumalda</i> 'Goldflame'	<i>Callicarpa dichotoma</i> (beautyberry)
<i>Picea abies</i> 'Conica' (dwarf alberta spruce)	<i>Sciadopitys verticillata</i> (Japanese umbrella pine)
<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i> (rockspray cotoneaster)	<i>Erica</i> or <i>Caluna sp.</i> (heath or heather)
<i>Hydrangea sp.</i>	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> (black chokeberry)
<i>Amelanchier sp.</i>	<i>Amelanchier sp.</i> (nothing beats a good amelanchier!)

critical eye at reference information. References describing zone and habit often give a wide range of variability. For example, a plant that thrives in zone 3 acts differently in zone 9. Sometimes it's difficult to gauge what the difference will be. It may be a matter of sur-



This white fringe tree is a multi-stem tree, and has a fragrant white flower in late spring and a yellow fall color. The flowers are pendulous and delicate looking.

vivability. When I told a customer that Bougainvillea didn't grow in Michigan, she thought I was joking! These items need to be kept in mind, especially when using new plants.

Looking at Table 1, you can see that the range of behaviors and characteristics detailed in reference lists may not hold for a plant installed in multiple regions.

#### Try something new

The good old favorites we select are often our good old favorites for many reasons. They're hardy where they're planted, offer



This amelanchier creates a beautiful arch over some hydrangea. It's difficult to beat as a total package: hardiness, availability, cost, white flowers in spring, open shrub or tree, edible berries, apricot fall color, few disease and pest problems.

good flower, form or color characteristics, are cost effective and readily available. You can never replace a good burning bush, hydrangea or sugar maple, but there are situations where other plants you haven't thought of recently can be used.

Plant selections also change due to pest and disease problems associated with specific plant species. For instance, *Cornus florida* has had a problem in recent years with anthracnose, and cultivars of *Malus* can be selected for hardiness to fireblight and applescab if these diseases are prevalent in a certain region.

Table 2 is a listing of plants with plant



substitution suggestions. These new plant suggestions aren't supposed to replace the old favorites, but, in an installation, one new plant in place of an old one might prove to be exciting not only to the cus-

tomers but to you as well. **LM**

— The author is president of *Natural Landscape Design and Maintenance, Inc.*, Keego Harbor, MI. He can be reached at 248/333-4986.

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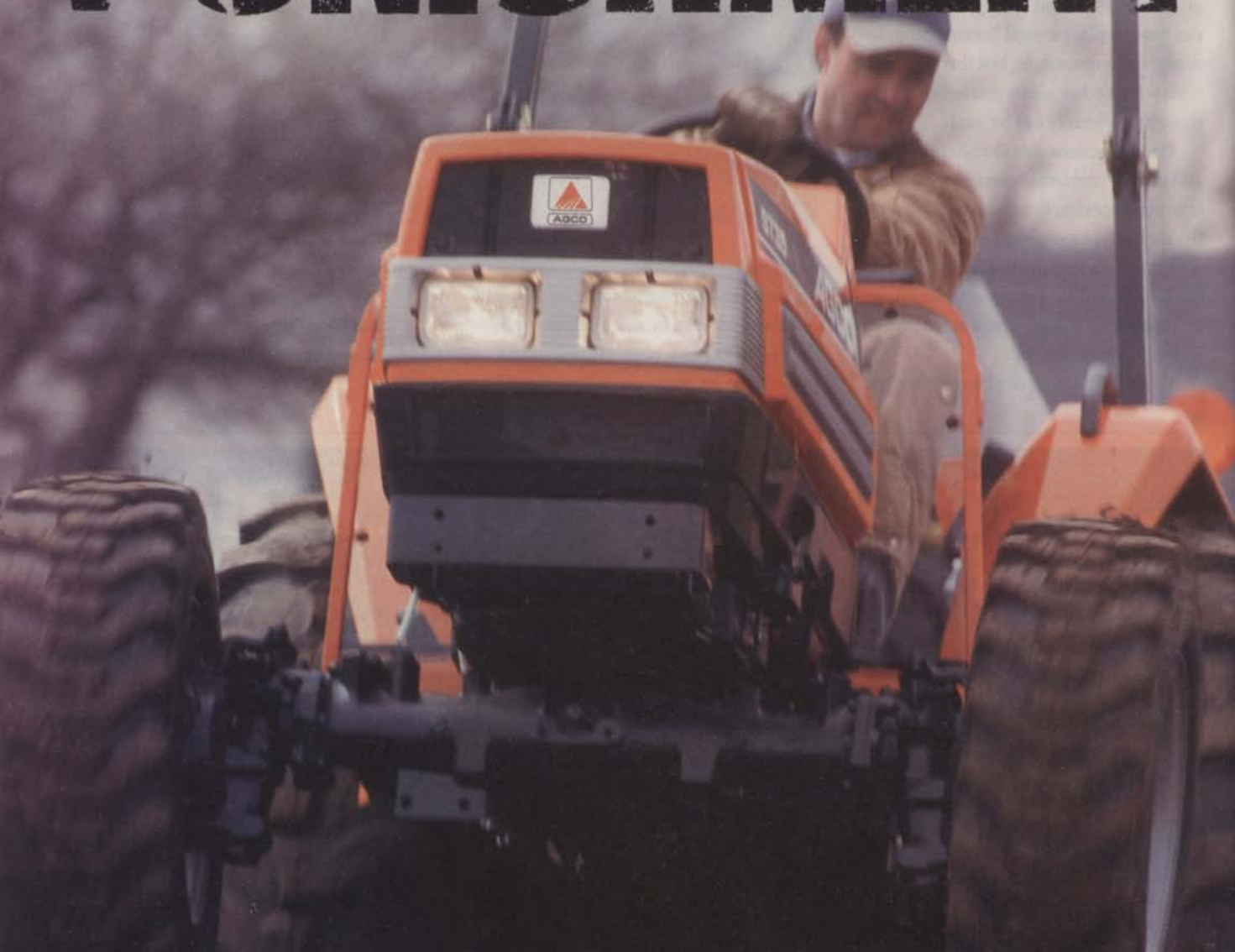
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## Tree tools go high tech

BY CURT HARLER /  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Tree management has gone high tech. While the old standbys like tree trimmers and tree spades remain important parts of the landscaper's toolbox, the business has changed.

Injectable and sprayable materials are making it easier for landscapers to keep trees healthy in an environmentally friendly manner.

The environment gets a boost from new mulching products, too. One product contains at least 80% recycled tire rubber. The recycled material forms protective decoration for trees and shrubs in areas where cypress mulch or bark chips are unavailable or impractical.

Of course, there are plenty of traditional tools available as well. Check them out below.

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[www.banditchippers.com](http://www.banditchippers.com)

Chip whole trees, tops, limbs or gnarled material with limited need to trim. Reduce an 80-ft. whole tree to dimensional chips in under a minute with the 1850 Track Bandit from Bandit Industries, Remus, MI. It will produce a 25-ton load of chips in an hour's time. Units are available in 14-, 18- and 19-in. models, towable or self-propelled.

Circle #283

### BENNER'S GARDENS

800/753-4660

[www.bennersgardens.com](http://www.bennersgardens.com)

If deer are a problem, check out the Deer Shield system from Benner's Gardens, Conshohocken, PA. Combining motion detection, physical barriers and low voltage elec-

tronics to keep deer from entering through driveway openings, it's a good alternative to gates or cattle grates. It detects the presence of large animals and deploys a physical barrier to keep them out.

Circle #284

### BIG JOHN

800/643-8039

[www.big-john.com](http://www.big-john.com)

Truck-mounted tree transplanters from Big John, Heber Springs, AK, can handle tree trunks from 3 to 12 in. in diameter. The 12 to 15 gpm hydraulic system on the Model 45 can handle a root ball up to 42 in. wide, 38 in. deep and 1,500 lbs. The Model 90 can handle a root ball up to 90 in. wide, 60 in. deep and 11,800 lbs.

Circle #285

*continued on page 58*



▲ Tree Toad can move trees up to 3 in. in diameter

## Buying questions for chippers

- ▶ Does it have enough horsepower?
- ▶ Is it towable or self-propelled?
- ▶ How much material can it handle?
- ▶ How quickly can it do the job?
- ▶ What size models are available?



# Im reports

RECENT

## John Deere's CS62 heavy duty chain saw ▶

continued from page 57

### FINN CORP.

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[www.finncorp.com](http://www.finncorp.com)

Specially designed for tree work, the Tree Fork from Finn Corp., Fairfield, OH, features a hydraulic fork which grabs trees and large shrubs for accurate placement. Hydraulically operated, it handles tree balls up to 36 in. in diameter. The company also has a line of adjustable forks that can carry or maneuver fence posts, plant materials, pallets and other bulky supplies. Either unit will attach to the Finn Eagle compact skid steer loader.

Circle #286

### GROWTH PRODUCTS

800/648-7626

[www.growthproducts.com](http://www.growthproducts.com)

ArborCare 15-8-4 with 40% slow release nitrogen plus micros is one of several professionally formulated tree care products from Growth Products, White Plains, NY. The full line is made up of a microbial inoculant, high-analysis liquid fertilizers, chelated micronutrients, a natural biostimulant and rooting compound, and a pH reducer. Companion microbial inoculant restores beneficial microbes to the soil.

Circle #287

### HUSQVARNA

704/597-5000

[www.husqvarna.com](http://www.husqvarna.com)

The 325P4 pole trimmer from Husqvarna,

Charlotte, NC, weighs just 10.4 lbs. but is powerful enough to do most jobs. Its 24.5cc engine develops 11,000 rpm at 1.2 hp. It has a reach of 13 ft., 1 in. Unit comes standard with 12-in. bar, but a 10-in. bar is available as an option.

Circle #288

### JOHN DEERE

800/537-8233

[www.johndeere.com](http://www.johndeere.com)

The line of professional grade chain saws from John Deere, Research Triangle Park, NC, includes the CS36 and CS40 lightweight professional saws, the CS56 and CS62 (pictured) heavy duty professional saws, and the CS71 and CS81 professional saws. The lightweights have 32.5cc and 39cc engines with 2.1 and 2.4 hp and bars from 12 to 18 in. The CS56 and CS62 develop 4.1 and 4.7 hp respectively and offer bars from 16 to 24 in. The CS71 and CS81 come with 20- to 32-in. guidebars and 3/8-in. chisel chains.

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### LEBANON TURF PRODUCTS

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[www.lebturf.com](http://www.lebturf.com)

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flowering and the 18-5-10 long term formulation. All feature IBDU (isobutylidene diurea) slow-release nitrogen. Products come in tablet form, packed in a re-sealable bucket.

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Circle #291

continued on page 61



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