

Diversity of Plants and What This Means to Losely Nursery®

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INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank the IPPS for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you. I stand here today humbled in front of my peers for which I have great respect. Nothing today that I have to say about plant material will be new to any of you. I will instead try to explain how these plants impact our operation thus making it somewhat easier to survive in today's economic conditions with a diverse line of plant material.

DIVERSITY OF PLANT MATERIAL AND WHAT THIS MEANS TO LOSELY NURSERY

Many of you remember Edward Losely. I was 21 years old when I started working at Losely Nursery. I was fresh out of Ohio State and ready to tackle the world. It was not long after starting to work for Mr. Losely that I realize how much I still had to learn. I was very fortunate to learn from whom I feel is one of the best talents we had in our industry. With the passing of both of my parents while I was in college the Losely family were kind enough to take me under their wing. Mr. Losely had a love and a passion for our industry. He started out with his father in landscaping and quickly became frustrated with the ability to find certain kinds or sizes of plant material. So he began the growing operation and the landscape was slowly phased out after the passing of his father. Over the past several years, there were many plants that Mr. Losely recognized as potential winners in the landscape world. *Hemerocallis* 'Stella de Oro', *Acer triflorum*, *Stewartia*, *Franklinia*, and *Chionanthus retusus*. These are just a few of the plants that he recognized as being winners in the landscape. When he identified one of these plants he did not hesitate to start production and in a big way. He was always looking for new plants or growing plants in a unique way to lend to the landscape. The staple plants were always on his list of items to grow also. Together the two lists grew into an expansive list of diversified plant material.

I would like to show you a few items that we are currently growing. I don't mean for this to be a plant identification session but rather a way to show you what a range of plant material can do for a nursery. Before you can do anything you have to have a good staff which we are very fortunate to have.

NOT SO COMMON PLANTS

Abies koreana, a great fir selection, with awesome characteristics is another winner we offer. *Acer griseum*, not a new plant, but offering it as a larger size is something that can set you apart as seen with these other familiar selections. *Acer triflorum*, a selection that I mentioned earlier, was one of Mr. Losely's favorites. It offers great fall color and exfoliating bark like *A. griseum*, but it can be used in much colder climates than *A. griseum*. Again this is not a new selection but offering a plant like this expands your market area into colder climates of the country. Offering color is

always a good item to have in your line. Offering borer-resistant taxa of birch makes this staple item useable in many different areas. A plant that has become very popular over the past several years is boxwood. 'Vardar Valley' and 'Green Velvet' are very popular cultivars in different parts of the country. *Cephalotaxus* is a great plant that is not widely known. It is limited because of hardiness but a great alternative in high deer population areas. Redbud is a great plant with many super cultivars, such as 'Covey' Lavender Twist® redbud, that was discovered by our own Tim Brotzman. Regarding *Chionanthus retusus* versus *C. virginicus* the latter is the more popular species. However, *Chionanthus retusus* with all the ornamental features it offers from glossy foliage and fruit to a great winter feature of exfoliating bark, has great future potential. This plant often wants to grow as a large shrub but we have trained it into a tree form. Many taxa of *Cornus kousa* are available with offerings from the very common to less known taxa is always a plus. Cultivars like 'Square Dance', 'Madame Butterfly', and 'Lustgarten Weeping' are just a few. We are very excited about a new cultivar we are watching. I will talk more about that later. Another genus that has become popular is the *Fagus sylvatica* line offering many shapes, sizes, and color. We offer several different cultivars at a wide range of sizes such as 'Riversii', 'Tricolor', 'Aspleniifolia', and 'Rohan Obelisk'. More recently we started to grow the American beech. This is becoming a very good seller for us. *Fothergilla*, *Franklinia*, and *Halesia*, genera offer special characteristics in their own way. *Franklinia* is known for its great fall color and flower and we offer this plant up to 10 ft in height. There are many ways to offer color — some common and some not so common as I will next discuss. *Ilex opaca* and *I. pedunculosa* among the other selections of *Ilex* are two plants that certainly add diversity to a line. Again, there is nothing new about *I. pedunculosa* or *I. opaca*, but just offering them for sale and in large sizes reduces the competition. *Larix decidua* 'Pendula' might be easy to find but offering a cultivar like *L. Varied Directions* can be a diamond in the rough for a customer looking for something different in the landscape. *Magnolia*, *Malus*, *Nyssa*, and *Oxydendrum* are all great plants that will attract attention. There are many outstanding cultivars within each genus such as *N. sylvatica* 'Hayman's Red', 'Red Rage™ tupelo'; this selection has nice red new growth all season long.

EVERGREEN SELECTIONS

Evergreen selections are important to have in a diverse mix of plant material. There are more selections of *Picea* than I have time to talk about today. Just look at the differences and features offered from *P. abies* 'Pendula' to *P. pungens* 'Hoopsii'. Many lists will only offer *P. pungens* or *P. pungens* Glauca Group; including a selection like 'Hoopsii' adds a great deal. *Pinus aristata* is a great selection for that landscape with limited space. *Sciadopitys verticillata* is a difficult plant to propagate but well worth the effort once they are saleable. There are a few plants in a list that draw people in to you and this is one of those plants. In today's economic conditions it is nice to have a plant that still holds its value.

MAIN-STREAM PLANTS

I have talked plenty about not-so-common plants but it is very important to have the main-stream plants also. *Syringa* is one of these. This is a plant that is probably common to most lists, but grow French hybrid lilacs up to 5, 6, and 7 ft and that is where you can set yourself apart from others. *Stewartia* is a plant that speaks for

itself. With great summer flower, beautiful fall color, and bark characteristics, it is truly a plant that you could add to the list of order starters. *Tsuga canadensis* and its many cultivars such as 'Gentsch White' or staked 'Pendula' (syn. 'Sargentii') are great selections to have in your list.

So whether you are talking about *Abies* or *Viburnum* it is important as to what is in between the two. Diversity of plant material has almost, and I do stress the word almost, made this current recession for Losely Nursery somewhat easier to tolerate. Being that we along with all of you are dealing with a non-essential item we have to find reasons for our customers to want the product now.

THE FUTURE

We are always looking for new items to add to our list. Some of these items are new items from many of you and some are our own selections. I would like to share a few of them with you:

Amelanchier canadensis 'Glenform', Rainbow Pillar® serviceberry, a plant found by one of our employees in a seedling block of *A. canadensis*. It exhibits a nice compact habit, great fall color, and is very mildew resistant. This plant is now being grown in tree form by many growers on the West Coast.

A *Stewartia pseudocamellia* seedling we found in our seedling block has large dark green leathery foliage and attractive red stems. We will continue to watch this plant.

A selection of *C. officinalis* with dark glossy foliage and a cinnamon-colored exfoliating bark is being observed as a possible new selection.

Cornus kousa 'Champion's Gold', and no I did not name this plant, is a new selection of ours that we are very excited about. The foliage emerges green in the spring. As the growing season continues through the summer you start to notice a hint of yellow. As August ends, the yellow starts to become more intense and by early September it finally shows off this brilliant yellow leaf; as the season continues shades of pink will emerge. I have had people stop out in front of my house and ask me what is flowering. We are very excited about this selection and are working on a release date. We do have a #1-gal plant we donated for the auction tonight. Propagation is prohibited.

It is important that we are always pushing ourselves to look for new plants or see what other nurseries are offering in their new selections. Diversity in plant material does help.

I would like to share a favorite story Mr. Losely liked to repeat. He used to tell how Henry Kohankie would tell his customers, "Sure I have the 3-in. *Stewartia* you are looking for, but if you want it you will buy the 18-in. *Taxus* from me also." Now I don't think you would get away with that today necessarily but the basic principle is true. Diversity of plant material will have a positive effect on your business.

I hope I have offered a few good ideas for you this morning. I want to thank you for your time and I am honored to have had the opportunity to speak to you this morning.