**Minutes of Plant Select® Marketing Committee
November 4, 2015**

**Echter’s Greenhouse**

**Present:** Colorado State University: Jim Klett, David Staats; Plant Select®: Pat Hayward; Denver Botanic Gardens: Mike Bone, Sonya Anderson; Gulley Greenhouse: Gene Pielin; Little Valley Wholesale Nursery: Keith Williamson; Fort Collins Wholesale Nursery: Ross Shrigley; Center Greenhouse: Charlotte Rose; Echter’s Garden Center: Harriett McMillan; Brown’s Greenhouse: Kelly Grummons, Jeremy Friedman; Sturtz and Copeland: Carolyn Toole; Paulino Gardens: Joyce Vagnini; EHR: Diana Reavis; Shelly’s Garden Country: David Buelow; City of Westminster: Shalene Hiller

The meeting started with introductions and then the minutes of the August 12, 2015 meeting were approved with a couple of minor corrections submitted by Keith Williamson.

The committee discussed the Dog Tuff™ Campaign. Pat Hayward commented that this is a new and different type of product for Plant Select®. It will be sold in plug trays and will require pre-ordering. Currently Brown and Gulley Greenhouses are the two members propagating Dog Tuff™ grass. It will be displayed on the cover of the 2016 Plant Select® brochure. A video has been made about Dog Tuff™ grass and is currently in the final review. There is also a discussion group as well as a separate page for Dog Tuff™ on Facebook. There will also be a separate brochure developed just about Dog Tuff™ grass.

The question was asked about how we get garden centers and homeowners excited about this new product. Kelly Grummons offered to write articles about it for garden center newsletters and conduct seminars explaining and promoting Dog Tuff™ grass. He stated that he would be willing to do seminars for garden centers’ staff; several members stated that they would be interested. It was suggested that garden centers plant up a small demonstration plot of Dog Tuff™ grass for their customers to observe.

The plant does need heat to green up. Garden center personnel present stated they preferred having a seminar for their personnel versus watching a video about the grass. Ross Shrigley suggested a 30 second trailer might be helpful in selling the product.

The grass will be displayed at both ProGreen 2016 and at the Garden & Home Show in Denver. Also, a where to buy Dog Tuff™ grass section will be added to Plant Select® website. Kelly Grummons stated it may be drop-shipped to push ordering for the fall of 2016 planting. The committee suggested we promote that this grass uses less water and we also compare prices for this grass versus Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue. It would be good to get some testimonials from users that we can also use on video being prepared.

Pat Hayward reviewed some of her findings from attending the Far West Show in late August 2015. One presentation was on the various types of plant buyers. One group, the “Apprehensive gardeners” will never buy so shouldn’t be pursued. The “Dedicated” group of buyers is getting older and buying much less. She learned that the “zen” group is a demographic to be targeted since they will spend the money. She stated this is the group that should be targeted along with the “practical” group. It is felt that our previous Plant Select® display cards had too much text on them and we will be utilizing more icons in the future.

She stated that the Proven Winner speaker commented that online plant purchasing is up and they feel it will continue to increase. Also they stated you should not try to do every social media but pick the ones that you feel would be best for your group and possibly add a blog to website for reader feedback.

Pat Hayward noted that the Botanical Illustration program at Denver Botanic Gardens is having a juried show from November 14, 2015 to February 14, 2016 at DBG. A reception is planned for November 22, 2015 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. She asked how Plant Select® may be able to tap into this talent especially for our 20th anniversary in 2017.

Pat Hayward noted that some Plant Select® classics will be promoted in future brochures and other materials for Plant Select®. Some of these classic plants will be listed in a section called “pairs well with” listing other introductions of Plant Select®.

The committee was informed that the Perennial Plant Association (PPA) wants Colorado to host the 2017 annual meeting. The committee felt it should be a team effort to be successful. The last time PPA was in Denver was in 1996 with about 500 to 600 attendees.

The Plant Select® website was next discussed; the suggestion for user location site capability on the demonstration gardens page is now functional. We will also create some new pages for special topics like soils and for photo submissions.

Pat Hayward gave a report on the new book to be published in 2017. She stated about half of the plant profiles are done and 95% of the photos selected. She felt that we can meet all the deadlines to have it published in 2017.

The 2016 brochure was next discussed. A maroon/red color will be used for the unifying color on tags, brochures and other promotional material. In 2015 we printed 35,000 brochures and currently have about 6,000 left. In 2016, we will print 30,000. The booklet printed in 2015 is about sold out; municipal utilities were the largest bulk purchasers of booklet in 2015. A new 2016 booklet should be available for ProGreen and Pat will advertise a special on 2015 booklets to hopefully clear inventory.

Harriett McMillan requested authors write promotional articles to be placed on Plant Select® website. The following members committed to write articles:

1. Delosperma ‘Alan’s Apricot’ – Pat Hayward
2. Delosperma ‘PWWG02S’ – Red Mountain® Flame ice plant – David Salman
3. Dogg Tuff™ grass – Cynodon hybrid – Kelly Grummons
4. Salvia reptans ‘PO16S’ – Autumn Sapphire™ Sage – Diana Reavis
5. Schizachyrium scoparium ‘Standing Ovation’ PP25,202 Shalene Hiller
6. Viburnum burejaeticum ‘P017S’ – Mini Man™ dwarf Manchurian Viburnum – Betty Cahill
7. Draba rigida – yellow stardust draba – Kirk Fieseler
8. Pinus monophylla ‘Blue Jazz’ – Ross Shrigley
9. Pterocephalus depressus – Moroccan pincushion flower – Mike Bone

Deadline to complete articles is February 15, 2016. Harriett McMillan will send updated templates to everyone ahead of time.

Pat Hayward announced there will be a new series of downloadable designs put together called “Simple Solutions for Small Spaces.” She stated a garden center in Lander, Wyoming has a demonstration area with plans for that garden and it sells a lot of plants. Pat Hayward suggested Carla Tews would create some landscape plans for smaller spaces with simple plans utilizing Plant Select® plants. Some ideas for plans included: 1) driveway garden and hell strip (full sun/ part shade); 2) low care patio or front entry garden; 3) house on the corner, “curb appeal”; 4) pathway garden (shade garden); 5) garden on a slope and 6) dry shade.

The ProGreen and Garden & Home Show displays were next discussed. There will probably be no live plants displayed at ProGreen Plant Select® display except Dog Tuff™ grass. At Garden & Home Show we will display some Plant Select® plants that have good winter texture.

Pat Hayward next reviewed current point of purchase materials currently available from Plant Select®. New signs, cards are being created with new logos. It was suggested to create a poster with a landscape orientation and have more bullets and fewer words. Pat will develop two styles of signs (vertical and horizontal). We will not create any new bench tape for 2016.

Pat Hayward also stated that dedicated displays generate about 35% more sales and wholesales should encourage garden centers to create dedicated displays for Plant Select®.

Discussion also followed on how garden centers arrange their plants in their displays. Various options were discussed and each garden center seems to be a little different. Whatever works best for them probably should be used.

Next marketing meeting: January 6 at the new CSU Horticulture Center.

Next propagation meeting: December 2nd at Center Greenhouse.