

Marketing Native Grasses, Special iLandscape Coverage and Several Valuable Resources





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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Benefits of Native Grasses
Native Grass Publications
iLandscape
Spring Trials
Floriculture Guide
Bugfinder App
Marketing Webinar

Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market



Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'
New to Proven Winners Perennials
for 2025-2026!



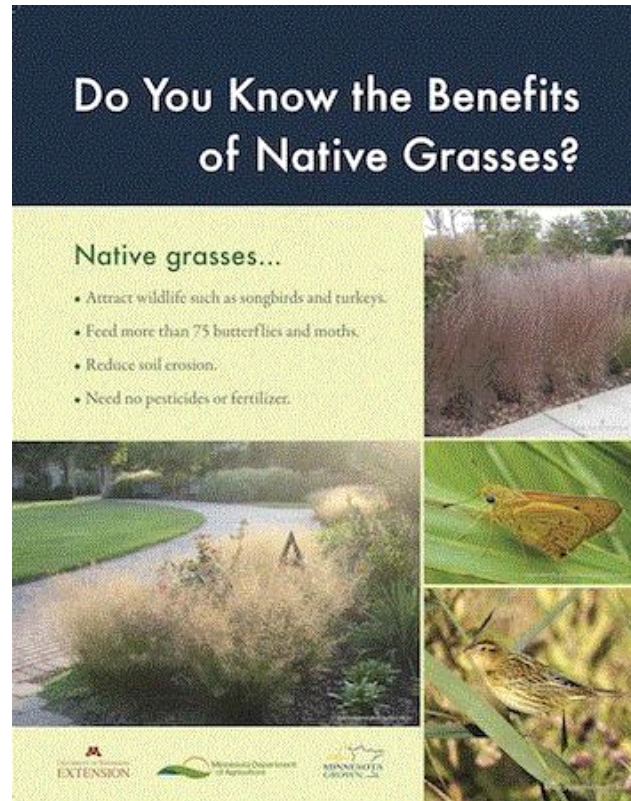
The Benefits of Native Grasses



Schizachyrium scoparium Blue Heaven has beautiful fall coloration.

Native grasses have become increasingly popular, however, many garden centers have a difficult time selling them in the spring without showy flowers. The University of Minnesota, thanks to grants from

the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the USDA's Specialty Crop program, has developed marketing materials to help retailers sell more grasses.



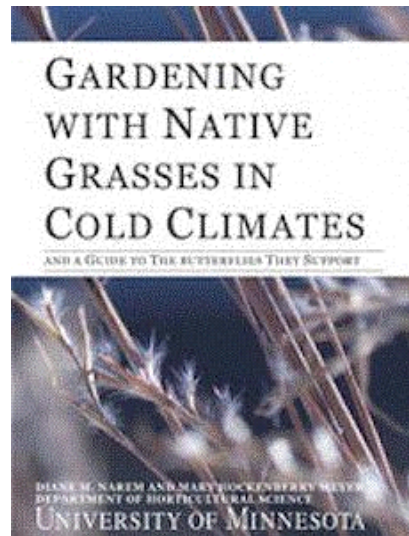
Point-of-purchase posters, such as the one above, can effectively inform customers of what they're buying, how grasses benefit butterflies and the environment, and tells them how easy they are to grow.

Speaking of butterflies, did you know that native grasses support over 30 species of *Lepidoptera* as host plants for their small and often unnoticed caterpillars. The University of Minnesota, in conjunction with MasterTag, has also developed informative stick and hang tags. Click [here](#) to learn more about this signage and these plant labels.



Native Grass Publications

Wait, there's more! I've only scratched the surface. The University of Minnesota has compiled a number of publications developed to increase consumer awareness of the benefits of native grasses. Some of the titles I encourage you to check out are:



- "Gardening with Native Grasses in Cold Climates"
- "Grasses: 30 Special Features and Uses"
- "The Native Grasses Benefit Butterflies and Moths" handout
- "Using Native Grasses in the Landscape"

Click [here](#) to download these publications and several other valuable resources.



Braving the Elements to Discover Them

One of my Ball Publishing colleagues, Jen Zurko, recently attended iLandscape and offered to share some of her observations with us. Here's the commentary she provided:

People in our industry are tough—especially landscapers and the companies who supply them with plants, pavers and everything else they need. Attendees put on their Carhartts and made sure they had enough gas in their Ford F-150s in order to brave the record-breaking -25 degree temperature the first day of the iLandscape trade show right outside of Chicago on January 30.



Water was well-represented with various ponds and fountains, complete with Koi fish.

This was the 6th annual iLandscape show and every year the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA) have been seeing in uptick in attendance. This year, it was down a bit (probably because of the weather), but 5,300 people still walked through the trade show with 275 exhibitors and attended the educational sessions during three days.

There's a heavy focus on nursery and machinery at this show, which isn't just for those who have landscaping and growing businesses in Illinois, but also Wisconsin and other surrounding Midwestern states.



Earth featured a meandering pathway through foliage plants and a cute little cottage in the background.



The Wind display had wispy tall and short grasses with iridescent curtains that moved gracefully when the fans attached to the top of the arches blew their way.

There wasn't a lot of "new" stuff that was noteworthy, but the theme and the displays that ILCA built around it were interesting. For a smaller show—and with it only being my second time attending—I was curious to see how they would switch things up to keep it fresh. But they did that with four interesting vignettes that invited people to "Discover Your Element," centering around Earth, Wind, Fire and Water (cue the song "September" by Earth, Wind & Fire).



The Fire display caught your eye with the bright orange colors, heat-loving tropicals and a cozy fireplace.

Thank you, Jen, for sharing this with me and the *Perennial Pulse* subscribers. I'm glad you survived the cold and look forward to catching up with you later in the year (perhaps at Spring Trials).



Spring Trials



One of the Terra Nova Nurseries displays at the 2018 California Spring Trials.

That reminds me ... the California Spring Trials will be here before you know it. I guess I better get looking ahead and make my travel arrangements while it's on my mind.

If you're not familiar with Spring Trials, here's a recap: There are 18 trial locations spread out across Central and Northern California. At each trial site, one or more exhibitors (over 50 of them) showcase their newest introductions.

Originally, Spring Trials was an event devoted to annuals, but that's no longer the case; there are new perennials being exhibited at a majority of the trial locations. Here are some of the companies who'll have new perennials on display: 2Plant International, Ernst Benary of America, Danziger, Darwin Perennials, Dümmer Orange, Green Fuse Botanicals, Kieft Seed, Pacific Plug & Liner, PlantHaven, Proven Winners, Skagit Horticulture, Star Roses and Plants, Syngenta Flowers, and Terra Nova Nurseries.

Spring Trials are scheduled for March 23 to 27. This is three weeks earlier than in past years. With the earlier dates, maybe you can join us this spring. Visit www.springtrials.com for a listing of participants and trial locations. I hope to see you there.



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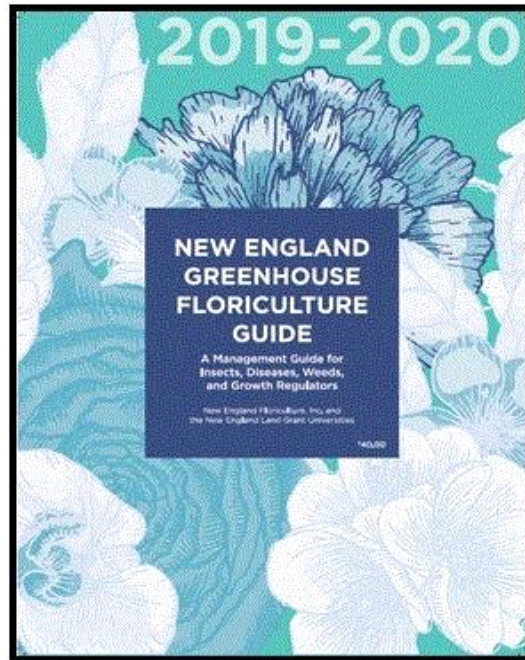
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Icons representing various greenhouse services: a house, a greenhouse, a computer monitor, a thermometer, a bench, and a light bulb.

New England Greenhouse Floriculture Guide

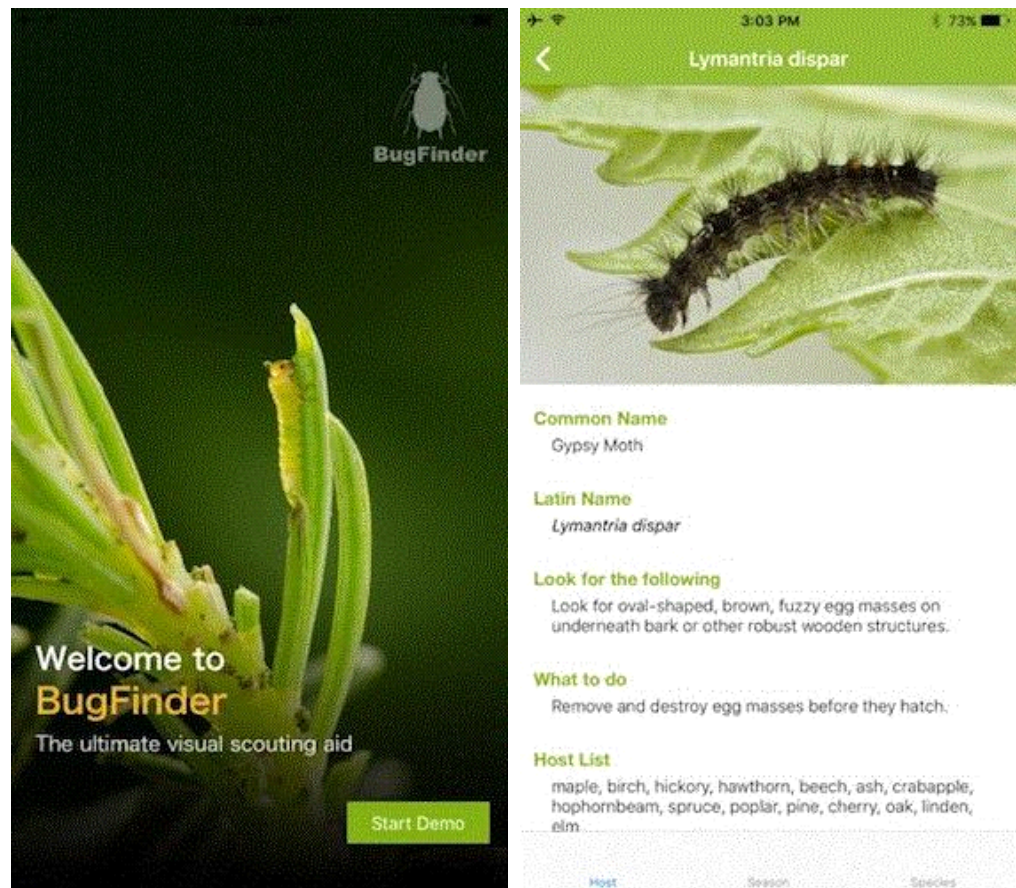
After sharing the native grasses resources above, I remembered another resource I thought you'd appreciate. It's the 2019-2020 edition of the New England Greenhouse Floriculture Guide.



Whether you're in the Northeast or somewhere else, this guide is an invaluable resource. It's updated every two years by staff from six New England State Universities and is published by New England Floriculture, Inc. The guide contains detailed, unbiased information on insect and mite management, disease prevention and management, weed control, and plant growth regulation.

This up-to-date resource also contains information on using natural enemies and best management practices. It costs \$40.00 per copy, and in my opinion, is well worth the price. Get yours today at www.negreenhouse.org/pest-guides.html.

Bugfinder

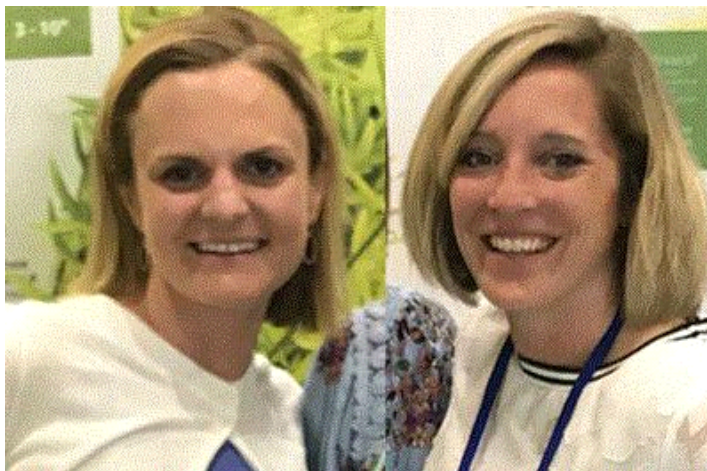


Here's a pretty cool app for nursery and landscape scouts. It's called Bugfinder and was developed to help scouts of woody ornamentals in Ontario, Canada. It contains tons of high-quality images of pests and plant damage. There's well over 800 photos covering 82 of the most common nursery and landscape pests.

For each pest, you'll find information on what to look for, life stage descriptions, vulnerabilities, active ingredients and suggested management strategies. Oh, and there's more: for each pest, there are 14 different time segments based on growing degree days (GDD) and phenology.

Even if you don't reside in Ontario, this is a great resource for anyone (particularly if you're in the Northeast). It's FREE and available at Google Play and the Apple App stores. Search for Bugfinder (one word), download and enjoy. With over 800 images, it will require some storage space on your device (150 MB), but it's worth it.

5 Trending Marketing Tips for IGCs



Come join industry experts and regional account managers for Proven Winners, Jessica DeGraaf and Meghan Owens, as they share some of the hottest new retail trends and marketing ideas on the planet in an upcoming FREE webinar.

Join them at 1:00 p.m. Eastern/12:00 p.m. Central on Wednesday, February 13 as Jessica and Meghan share their findings on trendspotting, what's new for 2019 and disclose some tools you can use for the coming year.

Thanks to our sponsor, Proven Winners, this webinar is absolutely FREE! Visit www.growertalks.com/Webinars/ to register for this awesome educational opportunity.

Thanks for reading this edition of *Perennial Pulse*. Feel free to drop me a line with any questions or article ideas you may have. You can also send me a quick "hello" anytime. I'd love to hear from you.

My email is ppilon@ballpublishing.com.

Take care,

Paul Pilon
Editor-at-Large
Perennial Pulse

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