

## United States National Arboretum Plant Profiles

### **Susan E. Bentz and Ruth L. Dix**

USDA, ARS, U.S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave., NE, Washington, D.C.  
20002 U.S.A.

How should the U.S. National Arboretum effectively publicize its plant releases and products to its customers? The Plant Profiles system evolved to meet this long-recognized need. A group of award-winning plant materials and a high level of administrative support gave impetus to the development process.

A review of marketing materials generated by other institutions and commercial companies led to the formulation of a plan adapted specifically to the USNA. The targeted audience was identified as the arboretum's primary customers: commercial growers and the gardening public. It was determined that the information should be brief but accurate and accompanied by visually pleasing photographs showing the desirable characteristics of the plant or product.

The format for the Plant Profiles is a single, easily read sheet printed on both sides. The front of the sheet contains eye-catching color photographs plus a short, enthusiastic paragraph on the product. The back of the sheet contains all the pertinent data: correct plant name and accession number; hardiness; history of development; significance to industry; description, culture, propagation, landscape use, and availability. References are kept for the information contained in each Plant Profile.

Development of such a project necessarily involved a team approach. USNA staff members contributed information which was not available in print. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Information Service played a key role in developing and refining the design for the Profiles and having them printed. Printed Profiles required 1 year from conception to end product and, once developed, could then be added immediately to the USNA web site. The Plant Profiles system thus serves a dual role both as printed material and as a USNA web site feature.

Single copies are available free upon request (U.S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002, or can be downloaded from the USNA web site ([www.ars-grin.gov/na](http://www.ars-grin.gov/na)). Multiple copies can be obtained for a fee.