

CNLA's research coordinator. Besides the transfer of rose and weigela genetics, Rick has also undertaken to evaluate the remaining genetics at Morden Nurseries. All genetics considered to be of value for future breeding programs must be moved by the summer of 2011.

This new industry-directed breeding program has attracted the attention of growers from across Canada. In August of this year, growers from every region of the country met for two days at Morden to evaluate roses and other remaining genetic materials. A number of roses, to be marketed as part of the new Canadian Artists series have now been selected.

This is clearly an exciting new approach for the ornamental industry across Canada as it gives the sector real ownership over their new plant and research needs. There are numerous ways for growers to participate and to make a real difference to the future of their industry: 1. Identify and communicate industry's research needs; 2. Provide your expertise by participating in the evaluation of new plants; 3. Recognize the value of growing newly introduced plants under license to CNLA; 4. Most importantly of all, continue your support of new plant breeding through the on-going payment of royalties on all AAFC introductions. These monies will be directed to the Heritage Fund in support of much-needed industry research.

A New Approach to Plant Breeding

IMPORTANT TIMELINES



An improved Morden Sunrise with a larger bloom, darker yellow with more orange pigmentation in petals, increased disease resistance and no winter kill. Mature plant is 2-3' and bushy. Introduction date is 2012.



A tricolored flower with more pink during cooler summer temperatures, 6-8 petals, continuous bloomer, 2-3' (60-90 cm) spreading habit, reasonable disease resistance and good winter hardiness. Introduction date is 2013.



A vigorous grower, large medium-pink flowers with 15+ petals, strong, sweet fragrance, repeat bloomer, resembles Hybrid Tea and mature plant is approx. 4' (1.25 M) and upright. Introduction date is 2014.

2008 & 2009	AAFC's Dr. Campbell Davidson consults with industry to determine their level of interest in becoming more directly involved in an ornamental plant breeding program.	MARCH 2010	CNLA signs an MOU with Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. Terms of the Agreement call for CNLA to invest \$30,000 per year for three years in support of a rose breeding program, with funds coming from the Heritage Fund. CNLA hires Rick Durand as a Research Coordinator to evaluate, supervise and distribute the genetic material for both stations.
JUNE 2009	AAFC issues a Request for Proposal for the right to breed ornamental plants using the genetic resources available from former AAFC breeding programs at Morden and St-Jean Research Station.		
AUGUST 2009	CNLA submits a proposal in response to AAFC's RFP. The association proposes to access AAFC genetic materials and especially their rose breeding program, and to access royalty funds on existing AAFC introductions.	APRIL 2010	Under the supervision of Rick Durand all roses and weigelia material from St-Jean Research Station are shipped to Aubin Nurseries in MB.
JANUARY 2010	After successful negotiations, CNLA signs a Material Transfer Agreement and a Sole License Agreement with AAFC.	AUGUST 2010	Growers from British Columbia, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick spend two days at Morden Research Station and local nurseries to evaluate roses and woody plants.



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Growers from across Canada undertook the daunting task of evaluating hundreds of selections at Morden Station to select new varieties for immediate release as well as genetic material for future breeding programs.

A number of exciting new selections will be grown on and marketed as part of the new Canadian Artist rose series. As yet, these roses are unnamed. It is anticipated that new varieties coming from the Vineland Station breeding program will follow, with a first introduction in Spring 2015. The goal is a prairie hardy, disease resistant, floriferous yellow rose.

Dr. Rumen Conev (left) Vineland Station's ornamental plant breeder and CNLA president Cary van Zanten (Pan American Nursery Products, BC) compare notes on just one of the many rose selections they were tasked to evaluate.

Out With The Old and In With The New

Continuing the tradition of developing hardy plant material

To many of Canada's nursery growers, the winding up of the ornamentals' breeding program at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Morden Research Station was more than the termination of the highly popular rose and hardy landscape plant breeding program. It had come to symbolize in a very tangible way the lack of federal government commitment to research on behalf of the wholesale nursery industry.

Particularly in the Prairie Provinces, where the lack of variety in suitable and hardy plants is acutely felt, and given the close proximity to Morden Station, whose ongoing activities were closely intertwined with the future of the ornamental industry, this lack of commitment at the federal level was of real concern to the nursery sector.

Who could have predicted, therefore, the happy circumstances in which the industry now finds itself? Rather than an outright termination of the ornamentals' breeding program, AAFC sought to maintain the valuable work that had been accomplished by their research scientists at both



Morden Station in Manitoba, and St. Jean Research Station in Quebec. Following extensive consultation with the industry, a Request for Proposal was developed. Ultimately, CNLA's proposal was accepted by AAFC.

CNLA's proposal to AAFC consisted of two main components. One was to acquire access to all remaining genetic materials, including the rose breeding program that had been maintained by AAFC. The second was the right to collect royalties on existing AAFC introductions.

"Together these have the potential to be the cornerstone of a hugely successful ornamental plant breeding program," explains CNLA's research chair Michel Touchette. "AAFC's signature hardy rose breeding program is recognized around the world. We are now able to take advantage of the hard work of St. Jean and Morden Station staff, and especially Dr. Campbell Davidson, Dr. Claude Richer-Leclerc and Larry Dyck, in maintaining this program for the past few years to continue this tradition of hardy and disease-resistant varieties."

Royalty funds, paid on a voluntary basis by growers, and monitored and collected by COPF (Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation) will provide



Larry Dyck of Morden Research Station (left) and Rick Durand, CNLA's research coordinator address the group at the start of the evaluation meetings held at Morden Station this past summer.

much-needed funding to support the breeding program. "It's no secret that plant breeding is a long-term and an expensive undertaking," explains Michel. "It would not be practical to think we could undertake a project such as this with volunteer help only. Royalty funds will go directly to a CNLA-managed Heritage Fund which, under the terms of our agreement with AAFC, is earmarked to support research."

It is important to keep in mind, notes Michel, that CNLA is not getting into the plant breeding business. "Our role is to find and work with industry partners necessary for a successful, industry-directed plant breeding program."

A number of partners have already been identified. Earlier this year, CNLA signed an agreement with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (VRIC) to undertake the rose breeding. Genetic materials have already been shipped to Vineland's ornamental plant breeder, Dr. Rumen Conev.

The very substantial task of transferring the rose breeding program to industry from the research stations at Morden and St. Jean would not have been possible without the hiring of Rick Durand as