

Development and marketing of new hardy woody plant varieties based primarily on native Newfoundland flora

New hardy, wood plant varieties are currently in development to meet demand for Canadian-bred plants and provide new revenue opportunities for plant producers.

Researchers at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Gardens, led by Todd Boland, have selected nine plant varieties that are now undergoing commercial trials with eight nurseries across Canada.

These include a more drought-resistant andromeda (*Andromeda glaucophylla*), a white-flowered kalmia (*Kalmia polifolia*), a silver-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster franchetii*), golden forms of both Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) and white spruce (*Picea glauca*), a prostrate blue-green juniper (*Juniperus communis*), a dwarf mounding willow (*Salix calcicola*), a silver-leaved willow (*Salix candida*), and a creeping larch (*Larix laricina*).

Each nursery received plant information including height, spacing, hardiness zone, growing conditions, and foliage and flower attributes, as well as how the plants propagate at the Botanical Garden and approximately how much time each will need to reach a marketable size.

All partner nurseries are propagating the plants and keeping records of their propagation protocols, success and growth rates, disease and insect issues, and overall impressions. This information will be used at the end of the project to identify the varieties that are suitable for moving into the commercial market.



Silver leaved willow (*Salix candida*)



Cuttings gathered on the Great Northern Peninsula



Creeping eastern larch selection (*Larix laricina*)



Bog rosemary (*Andromeda glaucophylla*)



Common juniper (*Juniperus communis*)



Dwarf willow (*Salix calcicola*)

Throughout the project, the team from Memorial will continue their search for new potential plants by undertaking field trips into the different regions of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as continue with their own breeding and selection programs too.

As each nursery has its own protocols for which plants they propagate at what time of year, the team from Memorial

continues to send out plant material on an ongoing basis. This may give some nurseries only a single full growing season to the end of the project during which to evaluate plants, but now that relationships with commercial nurseries have been established, Memorial is committed to continuing the work beyond the end of the funded project.

Why is this project important to the ornamental horticulture industry?

This project will identify new Canadian-bred and/or selected plant varieties to bring to market, opening new market opportunities for plant producers and providing consumers with hardy plants suited to the Canadian climate.



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