

New plants energize Canadian landscapes

Committee acts on research priorities for the green sectors

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By Michel Touchette, NPDC Chair



Since 2010, the New Plant Development Committee (NPDC) of the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA) has been heavily focused on providing industry direction and cost-share financing for rose breeding at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (VRIC). Breeding goals of this program continue to focus on black spot resistance and extreme winter hardiness. Agriculture Canada, CNLA and VRIC have shared in the costs and another agreement has just been signed to continue this partnership until 2023. In the current round, the

NPDC will invest up to \$250,000 over five years to secure \$2-million of project funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Vineland.

Roses bred through this program are marketed under the 49th Parallel brand (49throses.com), that was introduced in 2015. The red- and coral-coloured varieties Canadian Shield and Chinook Sunrise make up the collection so far. Aurora Borealis, a pink rose, will come to market in 2021 with future plans for a yellow rose in the works.

With rose breeding on a strong footing now, the NPDC has begun a process to determine breeding research priorities for the Canadian nursery and landscape



sector and to identify a new ornamental plant or tree breeding program to focus on. Some of the topics that have come forward are sterility in Acer and other ornamental plants deemed invasive, boxwood varieties resistant to boxwood blight, black knot resistance in Schubert chokecherry trees, seedless purple foliage trees, evaluation of American elm selections resistant to Dutch elm disease, and developing ash tree cultivars resistant to emerald ash borer. As you can see, there are many good critical requests for plant breeding from our industry, and as always, only limited dollars to invest.



Each of the NPDC committee members was asked to list their top three research priorities for their growing regions. There are members on the committee from all regions in Canada. The committee will identify their top priority by late June. From there they will begin the search for a Canadian research institution with the appropriate expertise for that selected research priority.

The NPDC committee welcomes your input on ornamental plant breeding research topics (and funding support!). Simply send us an email through CNLA's committee staff member, Jamie Aalbers jamie@canadanursery.com with your suggestions.

Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection

Roses in Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection are products of Canada's national rose program established in 2010 at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (Vineland) in partnership with the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA). Selections have been tested in field trials across the country through this partnership.

Canada has a long tradition breeding hardy roses beginning with the Dominion Department of Agriculture and continuing with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Morden, Man. The national program in place at Vineland upholds this fine breeding tradition with the added guidance of consumer insights research to ensure the roses are perfect for the 21st century gardener.

The roses include low-maintenance features, vibrant colours, deep green glossy foliage and will continuously bloom all summer long.

Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection makes it simple for both experienced and new gardeners to integrate the beauty of fabulous landscape roses into their outdoor living.

Roses currently in the collection include:

Canadian Shield, a red rose was launched in 2017 to mark Canada's 150th birthday; it has been a popular addition to gardens nationwide since then. Canadian Shield was named Canada Blooms' 2017 Plant of the Year.

Chinook Sunrise, launched in 2019, features unique coral blossoms resembling the bright, warm hues of a rising sun. The flowers start as deep apricot buds, revealing a riot of pink as they open.

Aurora Borealis: The bright dancing lights of the aurora are captured in the blooming clusters of this dramatic sunset pink rose set against dark green and glossy foliage. This rose is set for release in 2021.

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