

New Project

HNS 183

Development of a practical
propagation guide

Project Number: HNS 183

Project Title: Development of a practical propagation guide

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Contractor: ADAS

Industry Representative: Mr Bill Godfrey, W. Godfrey & Sons Ltd
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Start Date: 1st May 2010

End Date: 30th April 2012

Project Cost: £ 69,975

Project Summary:

This projects aims to produce a concise, practical propagation publication for hardy nursery stock that critically reviews and synthesises current best practice and technical information, drawing upon MAFF / ADAS / DEFRA / HDC funded research programmes. The narrative will also bring together other relevant information sources, most notably the IPPS proceedings (and other international sources) and commercial experience.

The guide will cover most aspects of commercial hardy plant propagation practice, and, where relevant, incorporate previously published leaflets, revised, appraised and updated to reflect current thinking. Practical case studies will also be featured throughout the guide to showcase good practice and illustrate how research outcomes can be successfully applied to commercial situations, for example to reduce losses and improve productivity.

The project will also help to assist the HDC to identify funding priorities for future HNS propagation initiatives.

Background & Objectives:

- The HDC has funded a considerable back catalogue of research relating to HNS propagation and liner production; a summary of which can be found at section 14 (related scientific and technical work)

- During this period (and, in fact, beyond it) there has also been a considerable programme of MAFF / Defra funded HNS R&D (e.g. various projects based at East Malling Research

Station and Efford EHS), which has been complementary to the more applied aspects of HDC funded work

- The principal findings from these research programmes are however widely scattered across numerous project reports and associated references, such as HDC News features, Open Day handouts and various fact sheets, and so not readily accessible by growers
- There is also a wealth of information from other sources, most notably the IPPS, which if critically reviewed, would inform and add value to the proposed HDC guide
- Much of this information would be of direct value to growers (e.g. for solving current problems, reducing losses, increasing efficiency) were it to be researched, critically reviewed, edited and collated into a single, practical publication which also brings together current commercial thinking, industry knowledge and best practice.
- Key to the success of this concept is that the publication must be practical and relevant to current practice – and accessible to nursery managers and their staff
- Equally important is the need to challenge and critically review past work, particularly within the context of applying it to current thinking and commercial practice
- Previous surveys (ref. HDC Index of Possibilities) and discussions with HDC HNS members and the HTA Ornamentals Technical Committee (and, members of the International Plant Propagators Society [IPPS]) have identified broad support for an HDC propagation guide and several ideas have been considered
- Against this backdrop, a Concept Note was presented and discussed at the HNS Panel meeting of October 2009, at which a Propagation Steering Group (PSG) was proposed to facilitate more detailed industry consultation and agree the broad structure and content of the proposed Guide
- The PSG then met in London (12th January 2010) and following detailed discussions agreed that the proposed Guide should focus on being a synthesis of current best practice and technical information, which also brings together relevant information drawn from past MAFF / ADAS / DEFRA / HDC HNS research programmes, which is considerable but perhaps difficult to access readily by growers. It was agreed that this should form the basis of the proposal submission to the HNS Panel (February 2010)

Benefits to industry

- The principal industry benefit would be access by HNS growers to a single guide or handbook, which critically reviews and brings together relevant R&D, commercial knowledge and best practice (similar in fact to the successful HDC Weed control handbook).
- This would also facilitate the wider uptake of HDC funded research, enabling HNS growers to exploit this for commercial advantage (greater uniformity, productivity, fewer losses, less waste etc).
- Equally, the project will provide a valuable ‘signposting’ exercise in terms of a) identifying where readers can find more detailed information on topics of particular interest to them, and b), identifying the principal technical areas where future research is needed – and resources should be targeted.

- Although other publications exist (e.g. Nursery Stock Manual [Grower Guide], Practical Woody Plant Propagation for Nursery Growers, Bruce McDonald, Plant Propagation Practices, Wells), the information is quite dispersed and not necessarily the most current – or relevant to UK HNS growers, particularly so far as UK funded R&D work is concerned.
- The publication will be in a generic form that can be easily tailored for use on individual nurseries.
- The work will also assist the HDC in identifying future funding priorities relating to HNS propagation.

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