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Green is Life (30 August - 1 September, 2013) offered visitors everything they need to grow their nursery stock business. Ideally located at the crossroads between the East and the West, this year's show was held at Warsaw's XXI Expo Centre and attracted 16,000 visitors and 250 exhibitors from eleven countries.

Green business at Poland's biggest trade fair for nursery stock

No nursery stock trade fair in Europe has such a powerful name as Poland's Green is Life. It's not only a memorable name but also has an intrinsic meaning with associative qualities. Green alludes to trees, shrubs and perennials while Life conveys consumer values and sustainability. Such a great name deserves a great multi-media strategy and this is something the event organisers, the Polish Nurserymen Association (Związek Szkółkarzy Polskich) and the Agency for the Promotion of Greenery (Agencja Promocji Zieleni) fully understand.

Brand building

Now that the organising body has successfully achieved one of their primary objectives - to bring buyers and sellers together face to face, in beautifully designed booths and under one roof at Warsaw's Expo XXI convention centre - it has discovered other benefits that include building the Green is Life brand and its audience.



The Green is Life Katalog Szkólek, for example, is considered one of the best nursery stock reference books, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. This popular guide for breeders, growers and buyers is available in Polish as well as in English and Russian, online or in print, and comprises all the important information regarding Polish nursery stock companies, their products and their services. As well as publishing their catalogue and another 'Green Bible' - the Katalog Roślin - (Available in Polish and Russian, this plant encyclopedia includes 2,080 descriptions and photographs of plants carrying the association's seal of approval), the Polish Nurserymen Association organises Green is Life conferences and workshops and publishes a gardening magazine with the same name (in Polish "Zieleń to Życie") as the successful trade exhibition which is now in its 21st year. The Green is Life gardening magazine

invites consumers, landscape contractors and garden architect consumers into Poland's most gorgeous gardens each month. It is not just another magazine for the coffee table, although the lay out and pictures are extraordinarily beautiful. It is an informative publication; it provides real gardening content and promotes the enjoyment, knowledge and public awareness of horticulture in Poland.

East meets West

Backed by a group of nurserymen that doesn't just lean lazily on a rake contemplating who-knows-what, but actually digs deep to get the work done, the 21st edition of Green is Life was sure to be a crowd pleaser even though show attendance was down slightly on the previous year. A survey by the organisers showed a decline of 5.8% in visitors. Figures indicated that the Gardens with Character-themed event attracted



16,000 visitors (including 5,400 industry professionals) and 250 exhibitors from eleven countries: Poland, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Latvia, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy and New Zealand. At a meeting with the press, general manager of the exhibition, Ms Agnieszka Żukowska stressed that the show's concept is unique as it allows 'East to meet West'. While at

Green is Life, visitors from over 30 countries, mainly Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Czech Republic and Slovakia, could take advantage of early season deals, meet new suppliers, find hot new products, learn about industry trends and network with the best in the international nursery stock business. The first and second days of the show typically drove the lion's share of professional

Grand opening

The 21st edition of Green is Life was opened at the Expo's foyer on Friday 30 August and the Poles know how to do that properly. Properly.. whether it is by inviting state officials, politicians, TV gardener presenters (Maja Popielarska of the gardening programme "Maja w Ogrodzie") diplomats and commercial representatives or by reading the congratulatory letter issued by Warsaw's Mayor, Ms Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz. Or, at competition level, by recognising new product launches at the Green is Life Innovation Awards (see The prize winners of Green is Life 2013).



activity, while on the last day, Sunday, hundreds of flower aficionados and hobby gardeners flocked to the show.

Around the corner

True to tradition, the expo hosted a strong contingent of local businesses from the Warsaw area and central Poland. A considerable share of these companies are export-oriented and, having access to a trade show 'around the corner' offers them the extra benefits of important savings in terms of transport, time, energy and accommodation in Poland's most expensive city. Upon entering the Expo's largest pavilion nr 1, visitors could shake hands, for example, with representatives of Szkołka Roślin Ozdobnych Homa (over 600, container-grown varieties of coniferous and deciduous trees), Szkołki Grąbczewscy (wide range of perennials, conifers, deciduous shrubs and trees both field and container grown) and Acrocona

by Ron van der Ploeg with special thanks to Alicja Cecot



Poland

(container grown conifers and deciduous shrubs).

Foreign exhibitors came mostly from the Netherlands, Germany, France and Belgium. A total of 53 firms from other countries, mostly nurseries, participated in the fair (over 25% of the total).

Central- East Europe's largest nursery stock offering

Speaking about trees, shrubs, perennials, roses, grasses, climbing plants, bedding plants, patio plants, fruit trees, bulbs and seeds, being touted by the organisers as 'East-Central Europe's largest nursery offering', the 2013 edition of Green is Life offered the perfect opportunity to view a 52% plant-focused event with a strong focus on ground breaking product developments and new trends. The plants on display here are destined for wholesale and retail trade, for plantings in private and public green spaces and also for further propagation by other nurseries. An impressive contingent of wholesalers, garden centre retailers



and landscape architects took to the show floor to engage, write orders and visit seminars and workshops, which hosted diverse, well-attended talks. 'Green city – the personality of place' is the title of the annual conference of specialists devoted to urban greenery that kicked off on Thursday, 29 August. An absolute highlight was the presentation of British garden writer and researcher, lecturer and teacher,

Noel Kingsbury, who gave a fascinating insight into the world of contemporary planting design on the occasion of Landscape Architect day, which was held on Saturday 31 August.

Distinctive features

Green is Life is continually reinventing itself and offered a different show with many distinctive features this year, but the most prominent feature was the artistic

staging of the booths. Perfectly in line with the 2013 motto 'Gardens with a Character', the flower and plant hall hosted a large number of booths that looked more like miniature show gardens than commercial displays. They were beautifully decorated with trees and shrubs with an ever growing presence of decorative grasses and perennials. Avenue trees were also presented, mostly for use by towns and cities, along with an extensive offer of half-finished shrubs and propagation material for further production. Exhibitors also offered seeds, bulbs, Christmas trees and a handful of seasonal flowers. The main feature of the show were conifers, and nothing could excel the beauty and variety of this display. III

The prize winners of Green is Life 2013

The Green is Life Innovation Awards provide a comprehensive overview of the most recent and readily available plant introductions on the Polish market. Each product was judged by an independent panel of renowned plant professionals and displayed at the Novelty Showcase at the entrance.

Gold Medal

The Green is Life Gold Medal was presented to the garden rose Rosa 'Anisade' from Szkołka Krzewów Ozdobnych Bogdan Hajdrowski. This butter-yellow, highly fragrant floribunda rose is the result of outstanding breeding work undertaken in 2004 by Tom Carruth. 'Anisade' bears beautiful clusters of flowers with an average diameter of 11cm and continuously re-blooms throughout the season. The major advantages over Hybrid Tea are the overall toughness (good blackspot and mildew resistance) and the bushier growth habit up to 65 to 80cm tall. It has very glossy foliage, is well-filled (30 to 45 petals), very hardy and can be used for beds and borders, patio pots, cut flower or garden. III



Rosa 'Anisade'.



Magnolia 'Genie'.

Silver Medal

The Silver Medal went to Magnolia 'Genie' from Gospodarstwo Szkółkarskie Zymon. This is a revolutionary new Magnolia variety featuring small, deep burgundy red, goblet-shaped flowers.

Genie is the first of a series of new Magnolias bred by Vance Hooper of Brixton, New Zealand and is the result of many years of breeding and selection in a line of Magnolia x soulangiana and Magnolia liliiflora 'Nigra'. It grows trouble-free in almost any garden and blooms in spring with a second flush of flowers appearing in summer. The crisp green foliage remains clean all summer and the tree maintains a good vigorous upright habit while young. Because it is naturally columnar, it is the ultimate tree for small to medium-sized gardens. III



Berberis thunbergii 'Natasza'.



Clematis 'Kaiser'.



Hydrangea paniculata 'Little Lime'.

Bronze Medals

One of the three Bronze Medals went to Clematis 'Kaiser'. This new addition to the Early Large Flowered Group has double, rosette-like, deep pink flowers with a soft pink spiky centre. 'Kaiser' was developed by Fukutaro Miyata and Kazushi Miyazaki from Japan but brought to the European market by Clematis Sz. Marczyński, W. Piotrowski nursery in Pruszków, southwest of Warsaw.

So far, Sz. Marczyński, who is also the breeder, has had a bumper year, with his Clematis 'Beautiful Bride' being crowned Best in

Show and Best in Category Hardy Nursery Stock at this year's HTA National Plant Show in the UK and Clematis Diamond Ball winning the 2013 Plantarium Press Award. In addition, Thorncroft Clematis from Norwich displayed several new Marczyński varieties at the 2013 jubilee edition of the Chelsea Flower Show with Clematis 'Lemon Dream' being awarded the second prize in the Chelsea Plant of the Year novelty competition.

Speaking of jubilees, the Polish Clematis company celebrated its silver jubilee in late August. To

celebrate the occasion, family friends and customers and long-serving staff gathered at the church in Pruszków on September 1st to celebrate a thanksgiving mass after which a cocktail party was held at the company's headquarters.

A second Bronze winner was Berberis thunbergii Natasza' from Szkoła Kurowscy with multi-coloured leaves and pink-reddish stems. The coloured leaf spots of this hardy cultivar are intense, sustained and maintained almost throughout the growing season. Finally, the third bronze medal

went to Hydrangea paniculata Little Lime from Pépinières Minier from France. This Proven Winner variety (a creation of Tim Wood of Spring Meadow Nursery in the USA) has the same refreshing colour as 'Limelight', on a hardy shrub about one-third the size. Hydrangea paniculata 'Little Lime'™ grows to 80-100cm tall and produces large, tightly-packed, green blossoms that turn shades of vintage pink with cool weather. Flowers develop on the current year's growth and will appear year after year. III

Marek Majewski, chairman of the Polish Nurserymen Association, said at Green is Life news conference that the nursery stock sector had a "tough time" due the "miserable spring weather". Nevertheless, growers kept their expansion plans firmly on course as mirrored in a series of ENA* maps showing the 'geography' of nursery stock production and consumption in Europe.

Fertile ground for growth

While the economy is wilting in large parts of Europe, Poland's nursery stock literally emerges as a lush green oasis with fertile ground for growth** whether it concerns production, consumption or market growth in home gardening. Map 2, 3 and 4.

Areas of production

The estimated areas of production for the range of nursery products for 2002 and 2011 are shown in Table 1. The area of ornamental nursery stock has increased from 4393ha in 2002 to 7316ha in 2011 due to an increase in the area dedicated to the production of containerised plants, conifers, avenue and park trees, heather, perennials and ornamental grasses. The area of rose shrubs reduced due to production moving 'abroad' to Belarus, Romania, Hungary and China where labour is cheaper and the climate milder. Polish nursery stock products are an important component of the country's agriculture industry. They are a typically high value crop with a relatively high output per unit area; only 0.03% of the country's total agricultural area is needed to generate 6.35% of the total value of Poland's agricultural plant production. The estimated annual value of Polish ornamental nursery stock production is €180,000,000***.



Map 1

The Warsaw (Mazowiecki region) and Lublin (Lubelski) areas are predominant in large scale and export-orientated production of nursery stock and benefit from the presence of residential and commercial properties in Poland's

largest urban agglomeration Warsaw, while Kraków/Katowice (Południowy) in the south rather supply quality product to the retail public. Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) has a long standing tradition in rose shrubs, although

PRODUCTION TREND



Map 2



Szkołka Byczkowscy

its area of production has decreased significantly. Map 1.

Exports

Ornamental deciduous shrubs and conifers are the biggest category of export but other crops such as rose shrubs, grafting material (Salix, Syringa) and tissue culture plantlets are also important. Russia, Netherlands, Germany, Slovakia, Czech Republic, the Baltic States, Kazakhstan and Ukraine are important export destinations.

For instance, the majority of the large conifers produced in Poland are being exported to Russia and rose bushes and perennial young plants are among the typical green export commodities that go to Western Europe. As for the Southern neighbors, Czech Republic and Slovakia are important buyers of Polish nursery stock, which is complimentary to their domestic production especially in terms of container sizes. Young plants (rooted cuttings as

well as liners) and avenue trees are mostly imported. Currently, there are 3389 nurseries in Poland among which 117 are members of the Polish Nurserymen Association. Together, these grower members cover a 4346ha gross area of production: 1248 ha dedicated to field production and 589 ha to container production. Although the small nurseries constitute 72.7% of the number of nurseries, they only sell the minority of the produce. In

contrast, it is estimated that the very large, 5ha plus nurseries, only 10% of the total, produce nearly 60-70% of the industry value. This shows that nursery stock output in Poland is concentrated on larger nurseries.

* ENA = European Nursery Stock Association.

** The maps refer to the situation preceding the Spring of 2013.

*** ENA's estimates.

CONSUMPTION TREND

Retailers
Landscaping
Private + Public



Map 3

MARKET GROWTH (home gardening)

% growth 2011-2012



Map 4

Table 1: the area of nurseries (in ha) in Poland in 2002 and 2011 according to GUS (Polish Central Statistical Office)

Type of production	Area (ha)	
	2002	2011
Ornamental nursery stock	4393	7316
Utility nursery stock	2601	916*

* Only qualified fruit stock, figure by PIORiN (Main Inspectorate of Plant Health and Seed Inspection)