

Title Postharvest vase life of leafy ornamentals
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Abstract

Since the beginning of the industry, postharvest quality of plants used for potted or cut foliage is affected by many different factors throughout the production and supply chain. Since these plants often originate in tropical climates, quality is usually related to environmental conditions during production, conditions encountered during shipping and transit, or conditions in the consumer environment. Over the past two decades, research has been focused on how to address the problems through the manipulation of these environmental conditions at all points in the supply chain. This has raised the bar for quality across the industry, and has allowed for standards to be established across the industry. Growers have always been aware of the value of good genetics, and have adopted foliage varieties with good performance across the supply chain. However, there have been few focused breeding programs or successful biotechnology programs focused on improving the postharvest life of foliage crops. With new advancements in genetics and biotechnology, there are new opportunities now available that could be adopted by this industry to help improve the postharvest life of new varieties in the future. To best understand how to exploit these new opportunities, we believe it is important to understand what consumers expect out of both cut and potted foliage products, and then determine whether these expectations can be met through use of genetic resources for different crops. The concept of how 'Consumer-Assisted Selection' can be used to guide this process will be elaborated.