

Interesting research projects on perennials in The Netherlands

Perennials for Urban plantings

Why are local councils using so few perennial ornamental plants in their parks and gardens? Because they think it is expensive and requires a lot of maintenance. And this is a misconception. A misconception Applied Plant Research (PPO) has been able to refute.

Many councils have for years been designing their green areas in the same way. When it needs to be cheap and low-maintenance; grass or a shrub plot provide the solution. Disadvantage of this approach is that it is boring: green – the same type of green – and without any other colour.

Growers of perennial ornamentals have known for years that there were other options. The range of perennial plants has expanded vastly over the last few years. And this includes many plants that require little maintenance and that can give parks and gardens a colourful outlook. But there was no demand by councils.

Upon commission by growers PPO investigated why councils are not using more variation when designing their urban green. Surprisingly, the researchers discovered that the price does not need to be an obstacle. Planting a green plot with perennial plants does not need to cost more than a shrub plot, sometimes it is even cheaper. And there are plenty of perennial species.

Knowledge of the green managers is the largest obstacle: they often are not aware that such perennials exist and how they are to be managed. The researchers are therefore focusing on communication. They make the knowledge about perennials available to councils via professional journals and brochures.

An increasing number of councils are recognizing the added value of perennials. They, e.g., start with perennials on a roundabout and if successful they make the rest of the council green areas more colourful with perennials.

Literature for more information (in Dutch):

M.E.C.M. Hop (2011): *Vaste planten in openbaar groen* – Brochure edited by Plant Publicity Holland, 47 p.. Online available at: <http://edepot.wur.nl/164009>.



Many perennials that require little maintenance and can give our urban environment a colourful outlook

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