



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 11, 2010

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** Audio Clip Attached*

GO LOCAL, "NATIVE" FOR SMART, SUCCESSFUL PLANTING

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - "The next time you wonder what plants to use in your landscaping, take a hike," says Andy Sudbrock, owner of Nashville Natives in Fairview, a plant nursery specializing in plants native to Tennessee, including wildflowers, ferns, grasses, aquatic plants, trees and shrubs.

"The flowering vines, bushes, trees and other attractive plants you'll find along wooded trails, in open glades and beside rivers and ponds are there because they've spent thousands of years thriving in Tennessee's climate," says Sudbrock. "If they do well all on their own, imagine how great they'll look as pampered plants around your home."

Rob Beets, horticulture marketing specialist with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, says, "In the same way, if you go to a local nursery or garden center, and see young trees and other plants growing out on the grounds, you know they must be able to take Tennessee's potentially extreme weather conditions in stride."

"Most of us know to buy plants for sun or shade, but another consideration really ought to be the amount of care, including water and fertilizers, those plants will require to thrive," says Beets. "A whole flat of plants for a dollar is still not a smart purchase if those plants die. Include the cost of disease and pest control, watering and fertilizer when you plan your landscaping."

The best way to determine what will go into the care of a plant is to choose plants grown locally, then simply ask the grower what's involved in proper care for those plants. If the plants have already been growing in Tennessee, they should continue to thrive when transplanted to your landscape.

Interest in plants native to an area is growing for just such reasons, says Beets, and growers like Sudbrock, a restoration ecologist, are responding with a wide variety of plants and "green" planting options to help customers get the most out of their natural and financial resources. One of Sudbrock's specialties is growing plants for "green roofs" which keep city buildings from generating unwanted heat.

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"Local plant growers are looking for loyal customers, so they're anxious to help you succeed," says Beets. "They'll tell you exactly what you need to know about proper planting and upkeep so that the next time you need plants, you'll come back. They're working on a tight profit margin, too, so they grow the kinds of plants that require the least amount of 'inputs' to look their best."

Beets recommends www.picktnproducts.org to find local plant growers, nurseries, and garden centers with locally grown plants. Directories on the site list Tennessee plant growers by county, with contact information.

"Plants are not a luxury," says Beets. "They increase the value of your home, and if chosen and planted wisely, can save money and natural resources." For locally grown plants or for farm direct foods, visit www.picktnproducts.org.

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