

Chicagoland Grows® Plant Introduction Program  
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The Chicagoland Grows® Plant Introduction Program is a consortium of three organizations—The Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanical Garden, and Ornamental Growers Association (OGA) of Northern Illinois. The Program was established in 1986 to introduce new plants that are well adapted to the growing conditions of the Upper Midwest.

The Program's focused mission emphasizes the fact that today's landscape requires plants that can adapt to challenging environments. Plants should not only have unique ornamental qualities, but also the ability to survive the region's rigorous winter. They must also tolerate diverse growing conditions including the urban environments with compacted, clay soil and polluted air.

The Program's efforts to select, evaluate, and promote superior plants that can adapt to the above conditions are well organized. The New Plants Committee is responsible for identifying plants with potential value and recommending them to the Executive Committee. Through rigorous evaluation and testing, only proven performers of unreleased and limited selections are distributed to the Contract Liner Producers for propagation and sale to OGA members and Licensed Growers. The Licensed Growers then can propagate and sell patented/trademarked plants to the open market.

The majority of plants that have been introduced are woody plants, many of which originated from The Morton Arboretum Collections. The Arboretum's Collections contain over 3,300 different kinds of plants and represent diverse and rich genetic resources. They will continue to provide us an exciting opportunity to select promising plants.

Plants that originated from the Arboretum include: *Acer x freemanii* 'Marmo' (Marmo Freeman Maple), *Acer miyabei* 'Morton' (State Street® Miyabe Maple), *Ulmus* 'Morton' (Accolade® Elm), *Syringa pekinensis* 'Morton' (China Snow® Peking Lilac, and *Rhus copallina* var. *latifolia* 'Morton' (Prairie Flame™ Shining Sumac). (For further information, see <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/chicagolandgrows/index.html>.)

The Program has become recognized as one of the country's leading introduction programs. The current effort is to diversify its offerings by including superior perennials. Recently, it has introduced a new cultivar, *Echinacea* 'Art's Pride' (Orange Meadowbrite™ Coneflower). This exciting cultivar, developed by the Chicago Botanical Garden, is the first orange cornflower ever in cultivation and is gaining great popularity in the gardening community.