

# LEAFLET

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EARLY FALL 2021 1

Those who faithfully read these missives and commit them to memory will remember that I promised to trim the tall new growth from 12,000 pachysandra flats last June so that they would be nice and short and branched and perfect. The promise was made in good faith and then the sales personages sold everything early and we got hardly any trimmed. At least we did not run out of product and now, with continuous production going on, it looks like we will have lots and lots of product to sell the rest of the year, and on through 2022.

One of the stranger things that has come our way in the ground-cover business is the big demand from a very few customers for a very many gallon containers of pachysandra; who could have seen that one coming? And then our traditional method of production, which was to take a big handful of two-year-old peat pots all thickly grown together, thus unsaleable, and plop them on top of a nearly filled pot of dirt, did not work out well. We trimmed them and the tops were very thick with all of the new rhizomes coming up and new shoots going out, but the roots did not go down very far into the soil. I have no idea unless it was fungus gnats eating the roots and no one has been able to diagnose that one. The solution is to direct stick about ten cuttings per pot, let them root all the way down because this is what they want to do when direct-stuck, trim them once or twice, and then ship them out to happy satisfied customers. We are making them by the tens of thousands and loving it.

We learned from the last Leaflet that trying to unload excess and excessive plant inventory on the unsuspecting public is not easy to do—I think because there are too many suspicious public. Anyhow, we sold very few of our 32's of *Lirope spicata* which leaves us with more and better all of the time. We also did not sell hardly any *Acorus gramineus* 'Ogon' liners, thus destroying my faith in advertising as a means of getting rid of an inelastic commodity, which is what plants are, by definition. Being of above average intelligence we are now producing plants that sell, in fact, ones that we are always historically sold out of. Therefore, we doubled production and now have plenty of Hakonechloa, or Hakone Grass, or Japanese Forest Grass which is Zone 5 with some people saying that the green species, *H. macra*, is Zone 4. We would have no idea living near Lake Michigan and being toasty warm in the winter except that it snows all of the time. We now have, in #1 pots, 3,500 m. 'All Gold' and 4,000 m. 'Aureola' and 1,200 m. 'macra.

The only problem is that our customers—most of whom are of slightly above average intelligence—think that we are of slightly below average intelligence or we would not be running out of this highly desirable product in the first place. Therefore, they did not expect us to double our previous production numbers, which is why we have this amount on hand, enough even, to put some into 2 gallon pots which are in even higher demand. We have inadvertently educated the customer base into thinking that we are always going to be short and thus our sales have not increased dramatically. We expect to see a jump in sales from here on out because

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we are not going to run out as we used to do by late summer. While I would like to sell them all it would be good to have some left over for early spring sales. We will let you know how that goes.

Speaking of plant promotions, we follow carefully the Perennial Plant Association Perennial Plant of the Year® business, PPOY®, a blatant promotional scheme filled with great and eternal hope. Last year it was *Aralia cordata* ‘Sun King’ and we have 600 #1s ready now and 250+ #2s with plenty more in the pipeline. This year’s PPOY® is *Calamintha nepeta* ssp. *nepeta* of which we have 700+ #1s and more coming on. Also lots of 38 count liner plugs for those who think it is fun to grow your own gallons. This is a nondescript, but great plant, that covers the ground and shades out weeds.

Getting back to shameless promotional schemes, next year’s PPOY® is Little Bluestem, one of my favorite plants because it does not ever need to be trimmed and babied. Professional horticulturists will know this plant by its Linnean Binominal Nomenclature—*Schizachyrium scoparium*. The perennial plant people figured out that there were so many

named and patented varieties because everyone and their dog is making selections and breeding and whatever that they are leaving named varieties selections up to the locals. That is fine with us. We have ‘Jazz’ which Brent Horvath selected but did not patent and which is shorter and upright, and we have ‘The Blues’ which has good color and is back in vogue because it lodges just like the original prairie grass that it came from, and we have three patented varieties: ‘Blue Heaven™’ PP#17,310 ‘Carousel’ PP#20,948, ‘Standing Ovation’ PP#25,202, all for which we are licensed. These latter are all more upright and more colored and so are more better. Our Little Bluestem availability list as of September 1 is printed as follows. Note that we seed the native type for those who like the native look and who suffer from that ideology. These are in the deep 50 flat because they are hand seeded. All projected availability times are for this year.

Here is the Scoparium current and projected availability list for this year.

SCHIZACHYRIUM LIST Plant Name	Size	Qty Avail- able Now	Qty Avail- able Later	Next Available Week	Price
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. Blue Heaven® (‘MinnblueA’ PP17310)	#1 Pot		1,000	46	\$7.05
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. Blue Heaven® (‘MinnblueA’ PP17310)	18ct Flat		50	44	\$46.80
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Carousel’ PP20948	#1 Pot	557	3,471	37	\$7.05
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Carousel’ PP20948	#3 Pot		480	35	\$19.00
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Carousel’ PP20948	18ct Flat		151	36	\$46.80
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Jazz’	#1 Pot		2,417	40	\$6.00
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Jazz’	18ct Flat		200	44	\$37.80
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Jazz’	50ct Plug	43			\$47.50
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Standing Ovation’ PP25202	#1 Pot	1,452	3,000	46	\$7.05
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Standing Ovation’ PP25202	#3 Pot	238	250	46	\$19.00
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Standing Ovation’ PP25202	18ct Flat		399	44	\$46.80
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘Standing Ovation’ PP25202	50ct Plug	15			\$70.00
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘The Blues’	#1 Pot	3,000	5,000	48	\$6.00
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘The Blues’	#3 Pot	452			\$17.00
<i>Schizachyrium</i> s. ‘The Blues’	18ct Flat	109			\$37.80
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	18ct Flat		180	37	\$37.80
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	32ct Flat	122			\$41.92
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	50ct Plug		100	44	\$47.50

Speaking of liners of perennials, you will note that we have them listed in our catalog for the first time here in 2021. The seedling liners are offered in a shorty 50 plug because that fits under our needle seeder and the vegetatively propagated ones are in a 38 plug tray. If I were smart I would have gotten into this perennial liner business years ago, which makes it difficult for me to claim that we, here at Twixwood, are of above-average intelligence. Several things have changed with the liner plug market more recently with the main thing being internet sales. In olden times a liner grower had to grow the entire long list of all of the perennials—seedlings, divisions, cutting grown, root propagated, tissue culture, and be licensed to sell the patented or trademarked varieties. Times have changed. Times have changed three different ways—there are now sales reps who know how to find plants, because someone is always out of something sometimes, and if the plant is in high demand it is worth going anywhere to get it, and secondly the shipping of liners is much easier and better using the common carriers and cardboard boxes or disposable one-way pallet based wooden racks. Thirdly was the aforementioned in-

ternet sales. Therefore, a grower does not have to be good at all ways of propagation, they can specialize. We are good at sticking cuttings and putting them under intermittent mist. Every year we practice by doing 5 million pachysandra, 4 million vinca minor, and we are too embarrassed to mention how many euonymus ‘Coloratus’, speaking of crown gall and scale, but it is at least good practice and so when we need to do some perennials from cuttings we are all set up. Therefore, any plant that we list in our catalog can be produced as a liner, all we need is some hint, feedback, encouragement, something, and we will make extras while making our own.

The latest thing, I see, is the native American plant—half perennial, half small shrub—Baptisia, wild indigo or false indigo. This plant has the distinct advantage of being both deer resistant and no maintenance. It gets 2 ½’-3’ tall. It is long lived. Still suffering from some vestiges of a conscience, I will not wax eloquent about the artistic aesthetic value of its brown persistent seed pods after its spectacular bloom period. We have lots of it and we can make as many liners as you want, whenever it is the right time to make liners.

BAPTISIA LIST Plant Name	Size	Qty Available Now	Qty Available Later	Next Avail- able Week	Price
Baptisia alba (macrophylla)	#1 Pot	35	1,050	46	\$7.05
Baptisia australis	#1 Pot	71	2,451	46	\$7.05
Baptisia australis	38ct Plug Flat	39			\$57.00
Baptisia australis ‘Blue Mound’ PP25902	#1 Pot	338	279	46	\$8.20
Baptisia australis ‘Blue Mound’ PP25902	38ct Plug Flat		25	37	\$76.00
Baptisia australis var. minor	#1 Pot		682	46	\$7.05
Baptisia australis var. minor	18ct Flat	12			\$46.80
Baptisia ‘Lavender Rose’ PP25876	#1 Pot	483	274	46	\$8.20
Baptisia ‘Lavender Rose’ PP25876	38ct Plug Flat	8	25	28	\$76.00
Baptisia ‘Lunar Eclipse’ PP25875	#1 Pot	569	289	46	\$8.20
Baptisia ‘Midnight’ PP20432 (Prairieblues™)	#1 Pot		752	46	\$8.20
Baptisia ‘Midnight’ PP20432 (Prairieblues™)	38ct Plug Flat	22			\$76.00
Baptisia ‘Mojito’ PP25987	#1 Pot	563	281	46	\$8.20
Baptisia ‘Mojito’ PP25987	38ct Plug Flat	25			\$76.00
Baptisia ‘Purple Smoke’	#1 Pot	22	1,026	46	\$7.05
Baptisia ‘Royal Purple’ PP25508 (Prairieblues™)	#1 Pot		80	46	\$8.20
Baptisia ‘Solar Flare’ PP20408 (Prairieblues™)	#1 Pot	658	757	46	\$8.20
Baptisia ‘Sunny Morning’ PP25479	#1 Pot	150	271	46	\$8.20
Baptisia ‘Sunny Morning’ PP25479	38ct Plug Flat	17			\$76.00

While on the grass promotional tour, and in spite of my projections in the past being inaccurate, I will continue being optimistic by saying that we should have a good supply of *Sporobolus* 'Tara' liners for next year. At least we know how to propagate it whenever we have sufficient stock. We have been planning ahead. The regular well-adjusted *Sporobolus* is grown from seed we collect from our own seed orchard. We usually have lots of it. Things work best when it is seeded in March, and so it will be ready in June. A lot is ready right now.

The other high-demand kind-of-a-grass is *Carex pensylvanica* which is the sedge to grow. This last season we ramped up liner production significantly and still sold out, leaving us with only 12,000 nice heavy gallons to sell. It is not a good idea for the customer to try to divide these gallons themselves because this is a cool weather grower. When divided when it is hot half of it dies and the other half looks poorly. Of course we are increasing production numbers of liners again for next year. We have plenty of stock for division and a nice history of getting this done right most of the time. I have promised an unlimited supply and one of these days I will be right about this one also.

Speaking of grass liner plants, we had a customer service problem a few years ago because there was a weed problem at one of the farms and grass liners shipped out with weed seeds in them, a deeply unethical situation, not to mention embarrassing. When apprised of this problem I mumbled something and said that the broad leaf herbicide Confront® was a possibility. Confront® is a nonphenoxy herbicide that combines Triclopyr and Clopyralid, thus not having the restrictions around vineyards that happens with 2,4-D. It is to be used with mature well-established grasses. I have learned the same lesson three times already when using it with new seedlings of *Sporobolus*, although if one were going to be technical about it, I have been taught the same lesson three times, but not learned it—one of these days.

Anyhow, that mumbling was not an acceptable response even when I added that we had hired an experienced Purdue educated nursery person to help us in the future with quality control—weeding, spacing, trimming, propagating. We are doing much better now with our quality and I am learning to be more accommodating when a good customer asks me what I am going to do about the problem.

We have also either learned or been taught that just because such grass-like plants as *acorus* and *carex* are listed in the grass section in the catalog and *Liriope spicata* looks a lot like a grass, they are not to be treated with the same broad leaf herbicide as a real grass. We also note that the traditional grasses such as *Miscanthus* and *Molinia* are diminishing in popularity due to over-use, mealy bug, and rust while *Sesleria* popularity is increasing. While on that subject, it is humbling for me to keep promoting *Sesleria* 'Greenlee's Hybrid' over and over with no bump in sales at all. Maybe it is good for me to be humbled, however, it would be better for me to prosper, which would happen with more sales as we have a really big stock bed of 'Greenlee's Hybrid'. It is a little shorter by a few inches than the species, otherwise very similar. Let us know before the ground freezes so we can dig it for production.

*Bouteloua gracilis* 'Blonde Ambition' PP#22,048 is not in the price list because some of our staff suffers from a conscience and thus do not like to sell plants that reliably die in the winter. You will notice that the older, more bald-headed persons here at Twixwood do not have such sensibilities. We think that spelling the name correctly and then saying that everyone else has had this plant die in the winter is good enough so that we can wash our hands, sleep well at night, and take the money to the bank. We have 2,000 gallons ready now for sale, although a little light and not all in full flower.

We're well stocked on *Heuchera*. Everything from the seed Palace Purple to the ones we do from our own URCs like Plum Pudding, Green Spice, Steel City, Silver Scrolls and Chatterbox. Steel City is one hardly anyone else grows yet it was one of the top performers in the Mt. Cuba Center *Heuchera* trials. We also have plenty of the patented ones like Caramel, Obsidian, Georgia Peach, Lime Marmalade, etc. Plus we have added new ones including the Lucid Dreams series from Plants Nouveau, the Forever series from Terra Nova (Red and Purple) and some of the Proven Winners ones (Apple Twist, Black Pearl, Cherry Truffles, Silver Gumdrop, Spearmint, and Wildberry.)

Here's the *Heuchera* section from our latest availability list:

HEUCHERA LIST Plant Name	Size	Qty Avail- able Now	Qty Avail- able Later	Next Available Week	Price
Heu. 'Apple Twist' PP31221 (Proven Winners® DOLCE®)	#1 Pot	201	511	39	\$9.25
Heuchera 'Autumn Bride' (villosa)	#1 Pot	158	750	45	\$6.00
Heuchera 'Autumn Bride' (villosa)	18ct Flat		50	46	\$46.80
Heu. 'Black Pearl' PP29395 (Proven Winners® PRIMO®)	#1 Pot	205	462	36	\$9.25
Heuchera 'Caramel' PP16560 (villosa)	#1 Pot	1,475	5,862	36	\$8.20
Heuchera 'Chatterbox' (x brizoides or sanguinea)	#1 Pot	80	355	37	\$4.85
Heuchera 'Chatterbox' (x brizoides or sanguinea)	38ct Plug	22			\$33.44
Heu. 'Cherry Truffles' PP31396 (Proven Winners® DOLCE®)	#1 Pot	234	511	37	\$9.25
Heuchera Forever® Purple ('TNHEUFP' PP26358)	#1 Pot		496	36	\$9.25
Heuchera Forever® Red ('TNHEUFR' PP29644)	#1 Pot		752	37	\$9.25
Heuchera 'Georgia Peach' PP19375	#1 Pot	476	626	37	\$8.20
Heuchera 'Grape Expectations' PP26894	#1 Pot	46	975	36	\$8.20
Heuchera 'Grape Timeless' PP31640	#1 Pot	267			\$8.20
Heuchera 'Green Spice'	#1 Pot	418	1,000	48	\$6.00
Heuchera 'Lime Marmalade' PP21861	#1 Pot	749	650	47	\$8.20
Heuchera Lucid Dreams™ 'Kaleidoscope' PPAF	#1 Pot	271			\$8.20
Heuchera Lucid Dreams™ 'Mysterious' PPAF	#1 Pot	157			\$8.20
Heuchera Lucid Dreams™ 'Vivid' PPAF	#1 Pot	251			\$8.20
Heuchera 'Midnight Rose' PP18551	#1 Pot	157	358	37	\$8.20
Heuchera 'Obsidian' PP14836	#1 Pot	944	850	47	\$8.20
Heuchera 'Palace Purple' (micrantha var. diversifolia)	#1 Pot	2,285	5,145	36	\$4.85
Heuchera 'Palace Purple' (micrantha var. diversifolia)	18ct Flat		56	36	\$37.80
Heuchera 'Palace Purple' (micrantha var. diversifolia)	50ct Plug	21			\$32.50
Heuchera 'Peach Flambe' PP17195	#1 Pot	220	350	47	\$8.20
Heuchera 'Plum Pudding'	#1 Pot	486	2,289	37	\$6.00
Heuchera 'Plum Pudding'	#2 Pot		152	36	\$12.00
Heuchera 'Plum Pudding'	38ct Plug	22			\$45.60
Heu. 'Silver Gumdrop' PP29207 (Proven Winners® DOLCE®)	#1 Pot	376	513	39	\$9.25
Heuchera 'Silver Scrolls'	#1 Pot	161	471	36	\$6.00
Heuchera 'Steel City'	#1 Pot	211	200	44	\$6.00
Heuchera 'Steel City'	38ct Plug	2	25	31	\$45.60
Heuchera 'Wildberry' PP31222 (Proven Winners® DOLCE®)	#1 Pot	3	490	40	\$9.25
Heucherella 'Gold Zebra' PP22104	#1 Pot	269	350	47	\$9.25

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And then there are alliums, which I love to death because they do not need to be trimmed or spaced or coddled. And they are easy to propagate. The only problem being that the really good high demand ones do not make splits fast enough but we are increasing our field growing production as fast as we can. We still have too much 'Summer Beauty' out in the field. We have quite a bit of 'Summer Peek-a-Boo®' which is a trademarked name belonging to Midwest Groundcovers. We have paid them their fee for the use of this name, so we are legal, and besides they come to visit us every so often which helps us to be more naturally ethical. This is a strange plant in that most of the blooms are right down in the foliage with the occasional one growing up to normal height. We were trying to rogue them out until someone told us that this is what the plant did. Now we are happy. The high demand alliums are 'Millenium' and 'Windy City' PP#28100 and we have lots of little chive types and short ones and fall bloomers and more strange sizes and shapes than you can imagine which shows that we have no taste whatsoever, to begin with, and at this stage in our lives, very little pride left.

Almost everything else is in good supply due to

the skill and diligence of our computer wrangler/sales manager/production scheduling person. Here is also a listing of perennials that the grower noticed while walking around supervising the growers and trimmers: Agastache 'Blue Fortune', Alchemilla 'Thriller', Amsonia 'Halfway to Arkansas', Calamintha 'Montrose White', Coreopsis 'Zagreb', and Hemerocallis 'Going Bananas' PP#17,164 Proven Winners®. This is just to show that we have lots of product for sale and more coming on every day.

Shipping this time of the year—from the first of August on—is interesting because we are selling tall plants such as the grasses and the echinaceas which take up lots of volume in the trucks. The heat of August slows down our sales and so we need to keep the regular deliveries going to maintain a happy customer base. Everything works out perfectly because instead of sending out half-full trucks, they are packed, although with only half the dollar value. Psychologically we feel good about it and the customers continue to get good service and only the bean counters notice.

*Tom Kruegel*



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