



## 2016... The year of applying the 3 F's of Design.

From our opening article of 2015 "Why plant material is short in 2015" to the closing "Plant Material outlook for 2016" we have been telling you why availability on everything from groundcovers to shade trees will be tight for the 2016 season and beyond.



Our buyers have been hard at it since June 2015 (yes, that's when I wrote my first order for the 2016 season) securing the plant material that you will need this year, but the economic downturn of the past 8-10 years, combined with the increases in housing and commercial projects have combined into the "perfect storm" of sorts - lots of demand and limited availability of plant material. The reality of the matter is, at some time we are not going to have what you have put on your design. Now what to do...

Design from the beginning with what I am going to call the 3 F's in mind:

**Form, Function and Flexibility**, and you will save yourself some headaches along the way.

**FORM** – What kind of look am I trying to achieve? If it is a small flowering "lollipop" on a standard you might want to specify small flowering tree on standard, instead of something more specific (say Coralburst Crab for example) this will give you a wide selection of material to choose from to fit the "form" that you are trying to achieve. Or it also might read "clump ornamental tree 8'", again leaving you some options.

**FUNCTION** – What is the purpose of the plant or plants? Are you using them for a screen or a low hedge? Specifying, where you can, 30' of boxwood hedge 15" high, leaves you open to what we have in inventory that looks really good and does not tie you to a specific variety. It would also allow you to take advantage of our yard specials to add a little extra profit to the project.

**FLEXIBILITY** – Form + Function = Flexibility. If you set yourself up to be as flexible as possible, you can make it a sustainable practice in your business. It will not eliminate your headaches, but will most certainly cut down on them.



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