

trends on display

Some plants tend to be more trendy and popular than others. For instance, the efforts put into creating new varieties of *Hydrangea macrophylla*, *Echinacea purpurea* and *Acer palmatum* are considerable and many of the results can be seen on the Plantarium stands. These trend plants seem to be everywhere.

Plants as products

Another obvious trend of the nursery sector in 2007 is that plants are no longer just plants. Like houseplants, garden plants have become products sold not only by their qualities as garden plants, but also by labels, packaging and concepts. From time to time, you even find that the labels have become bigger and maybe more important than the plant itself. Convenience is evidently also an issue that means a lot to the consumer of 2007. There were many stands presenting easy solutions for the not so keen and less experienced gardeners; three little matching conifers, heathers or herbs in a box ready to plant in a pot for instant effect; ready to use hedges planted in trays; screens of climbers already covering a fence; hedging plants in containers for today's garden owners who do their gardening and planting when they want to and not only in early spring or late autumn as recommended by specialists.

And the winner is...

The Plantarium novelty award is a prestigious prize that can make a real difference for the winning nursery. The winner is selected among the enrolled novelties by a panel of experts appointed by the Royal Boskoop Horticultural Society. Four novelties received gold medals namely *Skimmia japonica* Magic Marlot from Van Son & Koot, *Alstroemeria* Koprider (Inca Pride) from Könst Alstroemeria, *Cornus* KN30 8 (Venus) from the German



Skimmia japonica Magic Marlot literally stole the show when it won the title as best novelty at Plantarium 2007 as well as the press prize.

nursery Baumschule Eberts Gbr and the Dutch nursery W.J. van Ooi and *Liquidambar styraciflua* Slender Silhouette also from W.J. van Ooi. From the gold winners the jury chose *Skimmia japonica* Magic Marlot as the best novelty of Plantarium 2007. Magic Marlot also received the press prize from a jury of international trade journalists.

One plant one stand

Skimmia japonica Magic Marlot is not only a remarkable plant novelty because it is the first variegated *Skimmia* that is easy to grow, it is also an example of how much marketing can do for a plant. Van Son & Koot devo-

ted an entire stand to the introduction of the novelty and managed to create an exclusive and sophisticated atmosphere around the plant. The nursery first noticed this novelty 14 years ago and the propagation of the plant has been taking place ever since. It was the variegated leaves and the compact growth habit that initially struck the nursery as interesting features, but Magic Marlot has more qualities. During the season the plant undergoes a number of visual changes starting off in spring with the flowers shining bright white, followed later in the season by flower buds that fade to pink and champagne colours in August. <