

## Mixing it up

By Charlee Storner

The naturalistic trend of mixing permanent botanicals alongside live plants is becoming increasingly popular in workplace settings. Permanent botanicals are botanically accurate replica plants made with authentic, dried stems and flowers from natural plant materials or with silks and plastics. Live plants integrated with faux plants offer a creative way to blend artistry, color and style.



Selaginella are grown for their eye-catching, scale-like foliage and are used for covering pillars, planting in hanging baskets and decorating terrariums.

### Integrated plantings

Live plant species that integrate well with faux foliage include:

**Succulents.** Succulents offer a variety of colors, shapes, styles and textures that work well with permanent botanicals. Adding gravel, sand and stones to the succulent container allows for drainage and also provides for some styling variations.

**Selaginella.** *Selaginella* is a genus of plants often referred to as spike moss, fern allies or as the resurrection plant. These perennials are grown for their eye-catching, scale-like foliage and are used for covering pillars, planting in hanging baskets and decorating terrariums. Most of these plants are found wild in tropical America and Asia, but some come from China, Japan, North America, South Africa and Australia.

**Tillandsia.** A genus of over 500 species in the Bromeliad family, tillandsias are found in the wild in forests, mountains and deserts in Central and South America, Mexico and the southern United States. The *Tillandsia* genus mixes well with permanent botanicals including hydrangea.

**Living mood moss.** Living moss, which is recommended by Feng Shui masters to help create a space where one feels safe and energized, offers a natural bed that succulents thrive in. The thick moss, which grows in mounds, has a soft look and feel to it, which provides a center stage setting for permanent botanicals.

***Dracaena marginata.*** While they are sometimes mistakenly identified as palms, *Dracaena* is a genus of forty species of sub-

tropical, evergreen, woody plants grown for their statuesque form and ornamental foliage.

### Permanent botanicals

My top five permanent botanical picks that are gaining increased interest in integrated plantings include:

**Yarrow.** Plantscaping veterans look to *Achillea millefolium* to complement live plantings in arrangements.

**Moss balls.** Preserved moss balls made of real or artificial moss can add substance and style to a natural décor. These balls are also found as decorative faux moss balls with duckweed and natural twig.

**Reindeer moss.** Preserved or dyed reindeer moss, which is really a lichen, can add a naturalistic finishing touch to potted plants and is an ideal decorative covering for plants. It assists in drainage for living plants and allows air to reach roots on amaryllis and orchids.

**Bamboo/wood.** Mixing a bundle of spiral, curly bamboo or bamboo reed stalks can complement live plantings.

**Hydrangea.** Permanent reproductions of hydrangea, which is a popular and colorful ornamental grown for its large flower head. GM

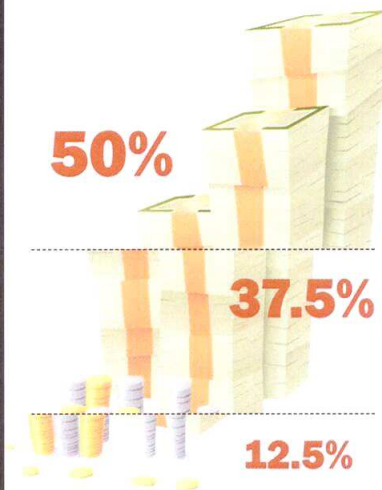
Charlee Storner is a botanical stylist at Ambius, charlee.storner@ambius.com; www.ambius.com.

## CONTACT US

801 Cherry St., Suite 960, Unit 2  
Fort Worth, TX 76102  
Ph: (972) 957-0059  
Fax: (817) 885-7875  
www.GreenhouseManagementOnline.com  
David Kuack dkuack@gie.net  
Kelli Rodda krodda@gie.net

## MONTHLY POLL

Have you made changes to your marketing budget to promote your spring plants?



I have increased my marketing budget for spring plants this year. 50%

I have decreased my budget for marketing spring plants this year. 12.5%

My marketing budget for spring plants has stayed the same as last year. 37.5%

## From twitter

Gardening for the birds, bees, and butterflies is a kiss for the earth.

—@seedsforthought