

Assessment of the visual quality of ornamental plants: Comparison of three methodologies in the case of the rosebush

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R�sum� en anglais	<p>The quality of ornamental plants can be appraised with several types of criteria: tolerance to biotic and abiotic stresses, development potentialities and aesthetics. This last criterion, aesthetic quality, is specific to ornamental plants and objective measurements are required. Three methodologies for measuring aesthetic quality have been proposed. The first involves classical measurements of morphological features, such as flower number and diameter or leaf size. The second is based on sensory methods recently adapted to ornamental plants. The third, used by the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) for distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS) tests, is based on morphological characteristics calibrated on specific reference varieties. The aim of this work was to compare these three methodologies for assessing some flowering and foliage characteristics of rosebushes. Six plants from 10 rose varieties identified by UPOV as reference varieties were cultivated for two years in a greenhouse and outdoors in Angers, France. They were measured and photographed weekly during flowering. Photographs of the plants in full bloom were submitted to a panel of judges for sensory assessment. The results of the three assessment methodologies were compared. Sensory and morphometric measurements were highly correlated and sensory measurements confirmed UPOV scales, whereas some morphometric measures diverged slightly from UPOV scales. We discuss the advantages, disadvantages and complementarity of these three methodologies.</p>
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