

What You Need to Know about Wholesale Nurseries

What Nurseries Need from Customers to have AVAILABLE SUPPLY

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What You Need to Know about Wholesale Nurseries

1. Trend in Nursery Ownership
 - a. Small family ownership is declining due to age of owners with no succession to the next generation. The average age of owners is around 65.
 - b. Finding local qualified employees is difficult and getting worse.
H2A Visa program (Farm workers) is best source of labor but expensive
H2B Visa program (Landscape Contractors) is a mess and many contractors are short on qualified labor.
Landscape contractors are a significant customer base for Nurseries.
2. Successful Nurseries are Conservative Businesses that think Long term
 - a. Businesses must be profitable to survive and grow.
 - b. Speculation is avoided.
 - c. Nurseries are most comfortable growing what they know they can sell.
There is plenty of risk just to produce and sell existing inventory.
 - d. Expanding production usually requires 1-2 years of advanced planning.
3. Nurseries fall into 2 general categories. Propagation and Production
 - a. Propagation growers start plants from seeds, cuttings, Scion wood and tissue culture to produce a liner plant.
 - b. Production growers take liner plants and grow on to larger sizes before selling to customers.
 - c. Some nurseries do both
4. Nurseries are highly specialized within their own industry
This is by: Containers vs. B&B or Root Bag, Trees vs. Shrubs, Evergreens vs. Deciduous, Ornamentals vs Natives, Herbaceous
 - a. Focus on nurseries that grow what you need.
5. Some Nurseries will sell only what they grow, OR they will Broker plants from other nurseries as well.
This is commonly known as Re-Wholesaling.
 - a. If you are buying from a Re-wholesaler keep in mind they will have less control on what you will receive.
6. Availability
Availability is strongly influenced by product, nursery capacity and the Turn Time.
 - a. A new crop inventory runs from Fall to Spring
 - b. Most nurseries work to keep production areas full.
 - c. Think of plants moving through a pipeline.
 - d. Turn time is how long a plant is at the nursery before it is sold.

NOTE: THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE LEAD TIME TO PRODUCE THE LINER.

Nurseries with short turn time will cycle through inventory faster and can be more flexible with inventory. The opposite is true for long turn times.

GIVE EXAMPLES – HERBACIOUS-6 weeks, CRN 1-2 years, B&B 3-5 years

What Nurseries need from You

1. Know what you want and provide a list of species
 - a. Include estimated quantities, preferred sizes and tentative dates needed.
 - b. Split the list into what you need and what you would like to get.
2. Find the specialized nurseries that provide what you want.

Visit MANTS

Visit the nurseries on your short list.

 - a. Do not base your opinion just on the website, catalog or a phone call.
 - b. A good time to visit is July.
 - c. Best time to place orders is September/October
3. Build a professional connection to those nurseries you are confident in.

Match your plant expectations to
American Standard for Nursery Stock ANSI-Z60.
4. Prepare to make a financial commitment.
 - a. For institutions with a purchasing department put out a Quotation(RFQ)

A unit based contract with estimated quantities for a period of 3 years with 2 – 1 year extensions is best for both parties.
 - b. For individuals or organizations without a purchasing department

Place your order by early fall and plan to hold with a deposit.
This applies for spring orders if possible.