

Atlantic Provinces Garden Centre Roundtable - 39 participants as of 9:45am (I believe most stayed on but a few dozed off.

This is round table of owners and operators throughout the Atlantic provinces some are members some are not. Participants sent in concerns prior to the meeting, these points will be discussed within the meeting.

Quick introductions:

Jim introduced himself, the provincial association representatives, and CNLA. Review of what the Provincial associations do and the benefits in being a member. Quick summary of training like RED SEAL and CNLA certification.

HR

We don't have a human resource problem we have a development problem. We need to get youth engaged in our careers. Lets take a look at the different demographics of our staffing make up

Hiring the locals – Seniors

Hiring of seniors/retirees vs students - different views coming from different parts of the Maritimes. Some find younger staff, recruited through social media works well, others prefer hiring older, experienced staff.

The advantage of the 50+ demographic is:

- that they want to work, they have good work ethic, keep themselves busy, clean up after themselves, they bring knowledge, experience and have common sense.
- With COVID there was some loss in this group due to health concerns and vulnerabilities.
- To begin hiring new staff you have to reevaluated how you hire. Consider the needs of the employee what they want in the way of hours, responsibilities, skill levels.
- The younger generation brings technology into the workplace which can assist in time efficient processes.
- In some cases COVID brought old employees back due to loss job and school not running.
- People may feel more comfortable working at garden centres because they are outside.
- Replacing the 50+ employees often means replacing them with 1.5 or even 2 people to for fill that responsibility.
- It is important to accommodate the staff to make them comfortable. High priority is service oriented, garden experienced, etc.
- It's hard to hire higher level, manager it's tough to find the quality people who know how to merchandize, margins, etc. Tough to find the higher end retail experienced people.
- Management level employees are tough to find, where do we find those? Need people who can manage staff, (lower part of New Brunswick)
- One has to have a plan several years ahead to bring people on and begin to prepare them, need a succession planning.

Hiring suggestions:

- The young demographic can be found on social media, look for someone that is passionate about plants. Indeed, is also good.
- Mentorship programs older staff take on a younger staff
- Succession planning – how to work young to management positions.
- Sure employees
- Have a procedural manual, an operational manual is key to illustrate people how they can move up in the organization and try new things.

Students – how do we get them engaged.

- During COVID you can do outdoor activities, talk to the students about food security, tree planting etc.
- Pre post COVID you can bring kids into the garden centre.

Temporary Foreign Workers

- There is not a temporary foreign worker program for retail.
- Atlantic immigration program you can bring people in through that
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/atlantic-immigration.html>

Newcomer Groups

- Evan Murray Gdn Centre has had very good luck with the association of new Canadian's. From that have come out a couple of good employees.
- Canada is the world's 3rd leading destination for International Students, they contribute approximately \$22 Billion dollars to this country's economy and sustain over 170 000 jobs
- Get newcomers involved go to their communities

Funding and Support

There is funding for HR. WorkingNB seems easy to work with. Opportunities to work with our provincial dep'ts of education. Many now have departments to deal with Educational corner. "Experiential Learning" in NB - <https://www.nbjobs.ca/explore/cdtoolkit/experiential>

Wages

Wages - how the increase in minimum wage makes it hard to justify paying students at the higher rates, with little to no experience. And whether to pay the existing full time and returning employees at higher rates as well.

How much are people getting paid. There is not a great deal of regional, recent data. Let's do a Survey. We will send you a link so everyone on the call can contribute for mutual benefit.

GCC Survey : <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C9GLJBH>

- Concerned about minimum what do we pay others since there is an increase.
- RG – with wages going up we pay a bit more and really look at the production side things, good work ethics have good rewards .

This is from Susan Mosher at Ocean View (thanks Susan)

Career Opportunities

 <p>CREW MEMBER/ LABOURER</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$15.00- \$25.00/ Hour</p> <p>Perform manual duties to maintain landscaped environments including cutting and raking lawns, weeding gardens, pruning shrubs and trees, etc.</p>	 <p>CREW LEADER/ FOREPERSON</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$16.00- \$33.00/ Hour</p> <p>Assign tasks based on work schedules, keep workers on task, complete time sheets and inspect the quality of work to ensure job requirements are met.</p>	 <p>EQUIPMENT OPERATOR</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$20.50- \$30.00+/ Hour</p> <p>Operate heavy equipment for landscape construction projects and maintenance contracts. i.e. skid steers, backhoes, bulldozers, loaders, tractors, site dumpers, mini excavators, mini backhoes, compactors, etc.</p>	 <p>NURSERY/ GREENHOUSE WORKER</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$15.00- \$20.00/ Hour</p> <p>Plant, cultivate and harvest trees, shrubs, flowers and plants; and pest and disease monitoring, detection and control.</p>
 <p>GARDEN CENTRE/ NURSERY MANAGER-GROWER</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$16.00- \$50.00/ Hour</p> <p>Manage and control the operational activities involved in growing, maintaining or marketing trees, shrubs, flowers and plants, etc.</p>	 <p>GARDEN CENTRE/ NURSERY SALES</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$16.00- \$32.50/ Hour</p> <p>Plan, organize and direct tasks involved in the sale of plants, flowers, trees, shrubs and garden supplies. Advising customers on selection of plants, shrubs and trees; methods of planting and cultivation; and proper care.</p>	 <p>LANDSCAPE TECHNICIAN</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$16.60- \$31.00/ Hour</p> <p>Reads plans and interprets landscape designs to install and maintain landscape environments and construction.</p>	 <p>LANDSCAPE TECHNICIAN SPECIALIST</p> <p>SALARY (JR. TO MORE SR.) \$16.00- \$30.00/ Hour</p> <p>Certified/licensed to perform specialist functions to construct and maintain landscape environments which include flowers, trees, shrubs, lawns and construction landscapes including irrigation and lighting specialists.</p>

Supply Chain

-RG mentioned Dr. Halls webinar and his forecasting these recording can be found in the CNLA membership portal <https://cnla.ca/login> after you are in the members portal click on Business-Intel, scroll to Garden Centres Canada Resources and click on Webinar Recordings.

-this year there is an increase from growers, they are not ruling out a double price jump in nursery stock

-Growers Canada is currently conducting a survey to help growers decide what might be in demand going forward

-freight cost continues to increase

Destination Garden Centres

- entice people to come out and stay there for a while
- Bob Osborne – Corn Hill has a destination garden centre which saved them during covid as people came to be outside and enjoy
- pro's and con's for these some like to get away, things like petting farms are high maintenance and some just come for the animals and not the centre.

Retail Pricing Increases

- Murray's Garden Centre – will be doing a 5 % increase
- RG told that growers are going up 13%
- Ordering well in advance is important.
- We have found that the foliage plant sales have levelled up a bit. The trend markets are predicting the next big thing is going to be larger floor plants.
- Possibly consider sharing truckloads for bringing in product
- Re: plants - how to keep up the sales increase with the tropical plant trend - MacArthurs is bringing in more unusual and rare plant material to keep millennials interested and purchasing. And in conjunction, how much are people willing to pay for these rare and unusual items? (Marina - Cedarcrest)
- Andrea - Mayfield's - market seems to be flooded with tropicals, sales have leveled off and could be dropping

Year round Business

- it is important to keep good staff and support core staff if you have a growing operation
- some cases might not be worth being open
- Cedarcrest Garden Centre is open year around now, houseplant industry has taken off, however seeing a slight decrease. Others feel it is levelling out and now trying to increase by using rare and unusual plants.
- Extending season - by growing, selling poinsettias. And wondering how to heat efficiently. He uses
- grew 20% more, sales/fundraising through schools.
- If I was starting into this business, I would be advising to stay open year round because of the need to maintain staff.

COVID

- Unvaccinated staff are tested weekly.
- Insurance may not be provided if you don't have a fully vaccinated staff
- Some have offered bonuses to get vaccinated. It's hard to mandate. Must balance the health safety of all employees.
- It would be catastrophic if the business had to shut down due to vaccination.

Robin mentioned to reach out to Alan White in Ontario to see how pull it all together on work safe manual and signing off for employees. (lots of good information)

Cross Boarder Shopping/Shared Loads/Piggy backing

- has been a rough go due to boarder closures
- Combining shipments. May be something to be facilitated through Landscape NB
- Cross border shopping - Andrea's concern
- Lack of CFIA certification, and gov't creating easier systems that aren't easier to navigate. Requirements of phyto certificates

Box Stores

- Vancouver box stores here aggressive and bought more product on the second year to monopolize on the sales of the pandemic (2021)
- Independents were able to react faster, and purchase more products, where box stores didn't restock or increase product amounts. Independent GCs benefited from this for

past few years, however landscapers could not keep up unless they increased their workforce.

- Mayfield Garden Centre they do not have returns on live plant material because they cannot control what has happened once the product has left their store
- Scott's Nursery has gone to a 2-week policy only, started as of January 1st. Hard goods is 30 days with receipt. Increase demand and limited supply now is the time.
- One garden Centre sells a lot of Myke (Mycorrhizae) Products from Premier and therefore have a 5 year warranty which is backed up from the supplier.

Cell phone

- lunch time only put your cell phone into your locker not on the floor. Make them accountable for their wage.

International Garden Centre Association (IGCA)

- has an employee exchange program great for younger people they could work all over the world
- IGCA Congress will be in Canada in 2024



This is a great opportunity to learn from one another, a very intimate group of independent garden centre owner and operators who come together to learn from one another as well as listen to industry experts. You will come away from this event more motivate and with inspire for the year to come.

Year of the Garden To order promo material go to <https://landscapenb-pei.ca/yotg>

SAVE 50% ON YOUR MARKETING DOLLARS



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada

The Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA) and Garden Centres Canada have partnered with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to offer a 2-year AgriMarketing Program, to help promote Year of the Garden 2022 by providing 50% reimbursement for marketing campaign activities occurring between April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 (year one), and April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023 (year two).

Don't miss out! Contact [Anne Kadwell](#) today, for more information!

GET STARTED

Year of the Garden
Année du jardin



Support the Year of the Garden
2022 and Get Important
Benefits

Marketing & Advertising opportunities are available through the Canadian Garden Council that qualify for the AgriMarketing 50% rebate program.

MORE INFORMATION

OTHER Resources and information:

GCC Survey : <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C9GLJBH>

GCC Enews sign up and keep informed:

https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001qnsa3ujmSgUZU7TIRx7ySV7wbBfkv4hu1E1xL-TxoXn6iyfNLITfeMII5H6tCVv5JM5wjrTCIIeRWIZiaQKIW_XS1nlgbPzSmwEcmg3ELzJcHsVfut3bqzF1VXuoAw1d