

March 31, 2020

Governor Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer:

As the national and state trade organizations representing America's and the Michigan's horticultural industry, we write to respectfully urge swift action to enable Michigan's independent garden retailers to resume business operations consistent with federal and state health and safety guidelines to protect workers and customers. These mostly small and family businesses are a critical link between your state's greenhouse and nursery crop growers, which are properly recognized as agriculture and therefore critical infrastructure, and your consumers.

These businesses' very survival is in jeopardy as the short season for peak demand for plants and supplies is upon us. Please consider the following rationale for enabling them to operate, at least in limited fashion, to serve the people of Michigan:

- Garden retailers constitute the last link in our industry's supply chain, the link that puts essential products grown by greenhouse and nursery farmers into the hands of consumers. These products include vegetable, fruit-producing, and other plants, seeds, tools, and essential supplies.
- Millions of Americans already engage in home food production, which contributes to community resilience. Many more wish to do so now. All need access to plants and supplies provided by garden-oriented retailers. As consumers remain at home under official state or local orders, home gardening is one of the healthiest ways they can spend time. Residents need ways to access plants and supplies while supporting their local business community.
- Independent garden retailers are typically locally-based businesses, sourcing from mostly local suppliers. They tend to have the best handle on which varieties work in local areas because they, too, are local.
- Independent garden retailers in Michigan are enduring a grave injustice, generally being prevented from sustaining even limited operations while corporate mass-retailers are being allowed to operate. Garden-focused independent retailers are often in a better position to innovate to serve customers via strategies like online or telephonic ordering, home deliveries, or order assembly for "curbside" pickup. Independent garden retailers are often better able to manage customers onsite, limiting numbers and ensuring social

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distancing, than are mass retailers. Most merchandising and shopping happen out-of-doors, in fresh air.

- Considering that locally-based garden retail businesses see 60- to 80-percent of their annual sales occurring in an eight week window in the Spring, this is the critical period in which even limited operations will help to enable these businesses to survive.

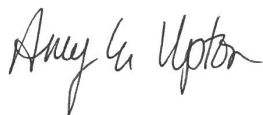
We are monitoring the situation on a national basis, and Michigan is one of only a few states precluding operations by garden-focused retailers. Most states are enabling at least some operations. Garden-focused retailers should be treated with equity relative to mass-merchandise garden centers, and farm markets. We and the industry we serve fully understand and embrace the imperative of adhering to the health and safety guidance coming from the Centers for Disease Control and state/local health authorities. Protection of employees and customers are essential priorities.

This said, we believe that garden-focused retail businesses that are in a position to innovate to serve their customers consistent with health and safety guidelines should be allowed to do so. We respectfully urge timely consideration and action to recognize these businesses as essential and enable them to operate. Please feel welcome to contact us if we may provide further insights.

Sincerely,



Craig J. Regelbrugge
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Research



Amy Upton
Executive Director, Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association

Cc: Gary McDowell, Director, Michigan Dept of Agriculture & Rural Development

We as Michigan independent retail garden centers wish to affiliate with and support the position and recommendations put forth in the March 31, 2020 communication to Governor Whitmer by AmericanHort and the Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association.

Abele Greenhouse & Garden Center	Fruit Basket Flowerland
Agroscaping, Inc.	Gee Farms Nursery & Greenhouses LLC
Altermatt Farms	George's Livonia Gardens
Alwood Landscaping & Nursery	Glorious Gardens and Associates Inc.
American Tree, Inc.	Greenscape Services
Andy T's Farm Market	Greystone Gardens
Apol's Water Gardens	Griffin
Auburn Oaks, Inc.	Harder & Warner Landscape & Garden Center, Inc.
B & C Greenhouses, Inc.	Harger's Garden Center
Ball Horticulture	Henrich's Greenhouse
Barbott Farms & Greenhouse	Hessell's Greenhouse
Barson's Greenhouses	Homegrown LLC
Begick Nursery & Garden Center	Howe's Greenhouse
Bill's Greenhouses	Huizenga Bros. Greenhouses Inc.
Boehlers Greenhouse, Inc.	Hulett Farm Market & Greenhouse
Bogie Lake Greenhouses, Inc.	Huntree Nursery
Bordine Nursery Ltd.	Jeannes Flower Shop
Bosch's Best Bushes	Jonker's Garden
Boyne Avenue Greenhouse/Florist	JRK Farms Inc.
Brian's Fruit Market	Jusko's Greenhouse
Bridge Street Blooms	Kalamazoo Flower Group
Brohls Greenhouse, Inc.	Kalamazoo Garden Solutions
Carriage House Floral	Kapteyn Farms
CDS Greenhouse	Keits Greenhouse & Floral Center
Cherry Valley Gardens	Key Blooms, Inc.
Chips Groundcover, LLC	Kluck Nursery, Inc.
Clink Landscaping & Nursery, Inc.	Koetsiers
Cottage Gardens, Inc. (The)	Kraker Greenhouses
Country Oaks Landscape Supply	Kregel's Landscape, LLC
Countryside Greenhouse & Farm Market	Landscape Direct
Dale's Landscaping Supply, Inc.	Landscape Source
DeClark's Landscaping	Lodi Farms, Ltd.
Deneweth's Garden Center	Lotus Gardenscapes
DGI Propagators	Meadowridge, Inc.
Diegel's Greenhouse	Mellema Nursery, LLC
Dobias Landscaping & Garden Center, Inc.	Michigan Wood Fibers LLC
Drew's Garden Center II LLC	Mike's Garden
Eckerts Greenhouse	N.W. Kaltz & Sons Farms
Elm Creek Ltd.	Natures Needs Landscape Construction
English Gardens	Netta's
Evergreen Greenhouse	Norl Schut Greenhouses, Inc.
Faber's Greenhouse and Floral	Northland Farms, LLC
Farmer John's Greenhouse	Northshore Garden Center
Fraleighs Landscape Nursery, Inc.	

Olejnuk Farms & Greenhouses
Opel Growers
Outback Greenhouse
Outdoor Landscape & Supplies
Pell Greenhouses, Inc.
Piechnik Greenhouse
Piechniks Greenhouses
Planterra Corporation
Polly's Planting & Plucking, Inc.
Post Gardens Greenhouse
Ray Brohl Greenhouse
Ray Wiegand's Nursery, Inc.
Robson's Greenhouse
Rohloff Nursery LLC
Rose City Greenhouse
Rosebush Farm Market
Ruggirellos Greenhouse and Garden Center
Ruhlig Farms & Gardens
Ruhlig Farms Wholesale
Saunders Greenhouse
Schram's Greenhouse
Schwartz's Greenhouse
Second Nature Gardens, LLC
Sherwood Forest Garden Center

Spring Meadow Nursery
Stone Quest Inc.
Telly's Greenhouse
The Village Florist
Theisen Greenhouse
Turner Lawn & Drive
Turner's Greenhouse & Garden Center
Twin Lake Greenhouse
Twin City Landscape, Inc.
V&V Nursery LLC
Van Atta's Greenhouse & Flower Shop
Van Neste-Wilson Landscape Nursery
Van Thomme's Greenhouses Inc.
VanderMolen Greenhouses, Inc.
VanOoteghem Farms and Greenhouse
Vite Greenhouses, Inc.
W.W. Greenhouses, Inc.
Walker Farms and Greenhouse
Weesies Bros Garden Center & Landscaping
Wenke Greenhouses
Wilson's Garden Center
Wojo's Garden Splendors
Wojo's Greenhouse
Wurtzel Greenhouse