Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)

Nursery Stock Licensing FAQ

Revised 6 November 2015

Q1: Who needs a nursery license?
A1: Any person, firm, partnership, association, or corporation engaged in the business of growing, selling, or re-shipping winter-hardy perennial plants must be licensed in Michigan. Winter-hardy perennial plants include trees, shrubs, perennials, mums, fruit trees, berry plants, rose bushes, vines, herbs, rhubarb and asparagus crowns, strawberries, bulbs and other plants capable of surviving the winter when planted outdoors in USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 6 (see planthardiness.ars.usda.gov).

Q2: Who does not need a nursery license?
A2: Those who sell only annual flowers, cut flowers, vegetable plants, cut Christmas trees, and cut herbs do not need a license to sell within Michigan.

Q3: What types of nursery license are there?
A3: There are four types of nursery licenses: Grower, Small-scale Grower, Dealer, and Registered Dealer. The grower licenses apply to those who grow and sell winter-hardy plants. The dealer licenses apply to those to buy and resell winter-hardy plants. For detailed differences see the “Explanation of Nursery License Types” at www.michigan.gov/mdardnursery.

Q4: How do I apply for a new license?
A4: Complete the application form at www.michigan.gov/mdardnursery or contact Stephanie Baughan at 517-284-5749. At this time there is no way to apply for a license online.

Q5: What if I sell nursery stock at more than one location?
A5: Separate nursery licenses are required for each location in which nursery stock is sold simultaneously. To determine what license is needed for each location see the “Explanation of Nursery License Types” at www.michigan.gov/mdardnursery.

Q6: How do I renew an existing license?
Q6: MDARD will mail you a license renewal form in late September or early October. Complete the form and return it with payment.

Q7: How can I change my license type?
A7: The license type may be changed through the license renewal form that is sent to all licensees in late September or early October. To request a change in license type through a renewal notice, please mark the box “Request a change in license type to _____” and write in the name of the new license type on the line provided.

Q8: When do nursery licenses expire?
A8: October 31st of each year.

Q9: What fees are required to obtain a license?
A9: Nursery Grower and Nursery Dealer licenses are $100 per year, Small-scale Nursery Grower licenses are $40 per year, and Registered Nursery Dealer licenses are $35 per year.
Q10: What can I do to avoid having my license application or renewal delayed?
A10: Sign the application, complete the nursery stock origin information section on the back side of the renewal form, and enclose the proper amount for payment. Licenses cannot be issued for unsigned applications or partial payment.

Q11: What should I do if there are changes in company ownership, name or address?
A11: Contact Stephanie Baughan in MDARD’s Central Licensing Unit at 517-284-5749.

Q12: What other fees are related to nursery licenses?
A12: Every year prior to sales or movement, Nursery Growers and Small-scale Nursery Growers must have their plants inspected by MDARD at $53 for the first acre and $32 for each additional acre. Nursery Dealers are subject to every-other-year inspections at $58/hour (one hour minimum). Registered Nursery Dealers are subject to random, no-fee audits.

Q13: How do I schedule an inspection?
A13: Growers and Small-scale Growers can arrange for an inspection by contacting their inspector directly or by contacting the MDARD Nursery Specialist, Mike Philip, at (517) 284-5649 or by e-mail at philipm@michigan.gov. Dealers do not have to arrange for an inspection; MDARD will contact them directly when they are due for an inspection. Registered Dealers will be randomly audited.

Q14: What are the recordkeeping requirements for nurseries?
A14: All nursery growers and dealers that purchase nursery stock must keep copies of shipping documents, including invoices and certificates of inspection, for a period of 36 months from the date of receipt. Further, growers and dealers that sell to wholesale customers are required to keep records of those sales for 36 months; this requirement does not apply to retail sales.

Q15: What is the legal basis for the licensing and inspection of nurseries in Michigan?
A15: The “Insect Pest and Plant Disease Act,” Public Act 189 of 1931, is the primary statute that regulates the sales and movement of nursery stock in Michigan.