

Ziswiler Othmar

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IGCA E-News

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Welcome from our IGCA President

Hi All!

Many parts of the world had a positive start to Spring and I hope in your Country as well! After Winter, the lockdown and difficult times, I hope we can slowly start to meet people again, travel and host IGCA congresses!



We are lucky to sell a beautiful product that encourages people to be outside and that brings happiness as we see flowers and plants grow - even when the world around us is standing still, nature doesn't care about the virus....

For our IGCA friends on the other hemisphere we wish you a sunny golden Autumn!

Wish you all a good time and stay safe.

Ciao from the sunny Italian Alps,
Martina

Update from Australia

by Leigh Siebler



Hello everyone,
Australia is still performing well as far as Covid -19 is concerned. Thankfully Melbourne is looking good too after long restrictions in 2020. However, some states have faced and are facing the challenge of extreme storms and floods.

At this stage, late March, we are not aware of Garden Centres being damaged apart from loss of business but have reports of many growers suffering damage.

No states are in full lockdown and in fact Australia has very few restrictions due to Covid-19. However, as I write, Brisbane (QLD) is in partial lockdown that could be extended. Some states therefore close their borders to affected areas. It is difficult to get flights overseas except for extreme personal reasons and probably two weeks mandatory quarantine on return puts most of us from travelling overseas at this stage and probably for most of 2021.

Sales in Garden Centres continue to be very strong. Sales growth in some areas is quite extraordinary particularly in regional areas that were not affected by restrictions as much as metropolitan or city centres.

It seems that everything is still selling with the big movers being:

- Potting Mix
- Pots – most from overseas so out of stocks are common
- Flowering pots and seedlings
- Herbs and edibles
- Roses

Our industry suppliers, plant and allied, have done an amazing job in helping keep Garden Centres stocked and satisfying demand.



Bay Road Nursery, Sandringham



Wombat Gully Plant Farm, Geelong

The industry is really positive for the future as we are now seeing many of the new or returned customers from 2020 coming in again for their garden fix. We all know that our industry needs to keep these lovely people gardening and we must ensure that they are successful in their endeavors. Easier said than done but so important.

We are finally able to have face to face meetings with larger numbers but some parts of Australia are still cautious as we head towards Winter. There is no doubt that our Governments have done an amazing job.

Covid -19 vaccines are now rolling out although some are critical of delays. It is a major, complex task that has not been done for many years, if ever, so we need to be patient.

Regrettably our Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS) was

cancelled due to Covid-19. This was a real blow as it is a major promotion for the industry.

Our Winter starts in June so if we are going to see Covid -19 jump that is when it will happen. The industry presses on regardless of Covid-19 but being cautious and sensible.

We are looking forward to being able to travel overseas again and pass o our best wishes to some other IGCA countries who are grappling with Covid – 19.

Warm regards, Leigh Siebler, Garden Centres of Australia

News from Canada



Communities in Bloom (**CiB-Cef**), a national foundation of the **Canadian Nursery Landscape Association**, have partnered with **Garden Centres Canada**, working together to summon **everyone** to create **Hope Gardens** for 2021.

Across Canada and beyond, our goal is to see the land awash with gardens featuring yellow, the international colour of hope. Whether it's flowers, fruits, shrubs or vegetables – just plant the seeds! From parks to playgrounds, front yards, back yards, balconies, baskets, boulevards, barrels and planters, wherever there's an empty space to grow, there is room for a plant.

We acknowledge the difficulties that have been faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and recognize that people are ready for positive, peaceful change, and opportunities

to bring brightness and light into their lives. Most people associate hope with a situation that they wish would end and that they could move past. Desmond Tutu once said, *“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness. **Hope whispers that things will get better.**”*

The international colour for hope is yellow; the colour of sunshine and it is often associated with joy, happiness, intellect, and energy. It has also been declared the Pantone colour for the year for 2021. Communities in Bloom has created the Hope is Growing Campaign as a rallying point that is simple, inclusive, easy and fun with a positive outcome for whoever participates. After all, the garden is where **Hope is Growing!**

Between March and August, anyone and everyone, including municipalities, organizations, schools, churches, colleges and universities, clubs, businesses, and individuals can participate by planting a **Hope Garden with yellow as the primary colour.**

The team at Communities in Bloom has created a website, www.hopeisgrowing.ca that promotes shopping at Garden Centres Canada members and provides gardening information to the public to support the campaign. The interactive map allows people to register their hope gardens and find their closest Garden Centres Canada member. We are encouraging our retail garden centre members to ask their customers to plant a hope garden this year, and help them choose yellow flowers, trees, shrubs, fruits and vegetables to plant hope for 2021,

It’s certainly been a tough year for many but we’re optimistic with our Hope is Growing Campaign that yellow will be seen from coast to coast. For more information visit www.hopeisgrowing.ca or contact Communities in Bloom – communication@cib-cef.com

China Horticultural Society 2021 Annual Congress Held with a Great Success

by Reef Wang



China Horticultural Society (CHS) 2021 Annual Congress was successfully held in Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan Province (also known as the hometown of panda), China on April 1-3, 2021 under the direction of CHS President, Larry Lee.

The Congress consisted of a guest presentation, roundtable forum, garden tour and gala dinner, which gathered over 150 members from different horticultural enterprises all over China.

CHS selected “**Let’s grow!**” as the slogan of the Congress, aiming to lead the domestic industry to the brand-new future against the strike of COVID-19.



Update from Ireland

by Fergal Doyle

Like for like Garden Centre Sales for Q4 2020 finished +13.40% ahead of Q4 2019. Closure due a second wave of COVID-19 in November caused pent up demand in October and December in garden and Christmas sales.



A further third wave of COVID-19 post-Christmas caused the closure of all non-essential stores from 1st January and aren't expected to open full until early May as per the recent Government essential retail including Garden announcement. That has caused a massive divide between essential retailers such as grocery and convenience stores claiming a larger market share and blurring the lines as they expand into non-essential products. The latest closure during the prime Spring season has had the potential for a devastating impact on Garden Centres and numerous representations have been made to ask the Irish Government to allow them to reopen as an essential retailer. As of today most garden centres have remained open as they carry essentials such as fuel and Pet and food categories, garden centres are continuing to do very well through the spring both online and Physically.

There has been a significant increase in online sales for garden centres growing over 200% in the run up to Christmas and have continued to grow this Spring. This has made many garden centres improve their online presence, offer click & collect and increase their logistics capabilities. This will no doubt stand to them in the long run. So far this Spring, some centres are seeing 15% of the total 'green' sales through their online sales channel.

With another summer of staycations likely in Ireland due to our slow Vaccine rollout, some garden centre sales may be reclaimed later in the year as consumers continue to invest in their home and outdoor spaces to relax and enjoy.

Feedback from Japan

by Akihiro Ozaki



There are many warm days since February this year, and the cherry blossoms are blooming two weeks earlier than usual.

Usually, we enjoy eating delicious food under this beautiful cherry blossom, drinking a pleasant drink, and enjoying the flower "Sakura" that we love most, but this situation is not allowed this year as well as last year. How long will the world where masks are indispensable in daily life and social distance continues?

However, contrary to the inconvenient daily life, the Garden Center is lively every day. This is because the government is still requesting refraining from going out, and more and more people are doing gardening that they can enjoy at home. The media also frequently introduces on TV to look for bright news. Among them, foliage plants that can be enjoyed as indoor interiors have become very popular, especially among young people. With this amount, it is worried that supply will be insufficient during the coming spring demand season.

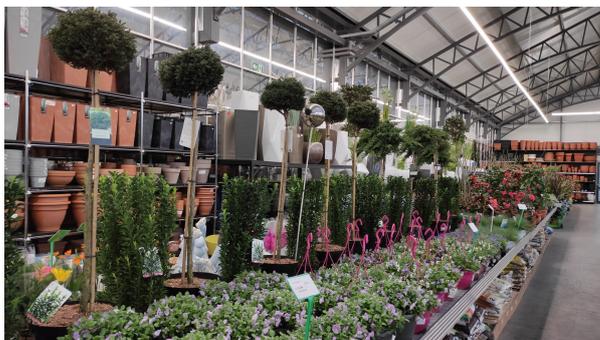
Anyway, I just hope that I can meet you again as soon as possible.

Akihiro Ozaki

Update from Poland

The situation in Poland is very dynamic, the third phase of the pandemic has come, what we write today may be out of date tomorrow.

So far, all the garden centers are open and ready for the season, with plenty of pre-season orders. Producers inform about price increases that will soon occur due to rising prices of plastic, steel, oil and transport. Nevertheless, new garden centers are emerging. A few days ago one of our members opened a new center.



Since last year, there is still a lot of interest among customers in the care of their gardens, terraces and balconies, and the demand for fruit trees and shrubs is constantly growing.

There is a new phenomenon in the horticultural market - the reactivation of large

florists in city centers. These stores mainly sell potted flowers in a stationary and mail order. They are run by experts.

The prices of potted flowers have risen considerably, especially for new collectable varieties. Currently, it is not possible to organize any fairs, exhibitions or live conferences in Poland.

Since the beginning of 2021, our Association (PSCO) has been organizing weekly industry training courses or presentations from gardening companies for members and employees of zoom garden centers. It is very interesting, practical and easy to use. These online meetings are of great interest.

News from Spain

by Santiago Gonzalez

Expogarden returns in online format to guide the garden in times of pandemic



Despite the exceptional circumstances caused by the pandemic, the AECJ wished to hold its annual meeting and convened garden centres and collaborating companies, but on this occasion, for the first time in their history, in a virtual format.

The association has been coordinating with great success its tools, over the last few months, to meet the challenge of digitization, with an innovative formula so that restrictions do not pose a barrier and green sector professionals have been able to meet again, share and establish networks of exchange and mutual support. A collective effort that reflects the unrepentant march of gardens in Spain.

This annual congress, which brings together the collective of garden centres and suppliers counts, as always, with a program of lectures given by frontline experts who have marked, through their talks, the key routes to follow, according to current reality, with an overview, as necessary in times of diffuse goals as those we go through.



A space of reflection that has attracted the interest of managers, managers, customers, suppliers... all of them agents from a market working to overcome the threats of this health and economic crisis, and thus embrace the opportunities that can be glimpsed.

For 3 days (2 hours a day) more than 200 people were connected daily to conferences and presentations. It was subsequently published on www.expogarden.org the videos of each day and the views have almost doubled, that is, the partners have seen or seen congress for the first time. AECJ is very pleased with the results obtained and it's been a great success of participation.

Hello from South Africa

by Gerdie Olivier



South Africa remains on Level 1 restrictions from the end of last year and a sort of “normal” routine has returned as restaurants, recreational facilities and all businesses are allowed to trade.

The biggest impact on our current level, is on events and functions. Large events are regulated with indoor events capped at 250 people in a venue that is at 50% capacity and outdoor events can be hosted for a maximum of 500 people at a venue that is at 50% capacity or lower. Health protocols need to be adhered to and include social distancing (1.5m between people) and the wearing of cloth face masks is compulsory.

This has had a huge impact on our association’s events. We had to cancel most of our physical events including our popular Trade Fair that offered the perfect platform for networking and sales between supplier and retail members. We changed the format of our Autumn Fair to an online event in the form of a static document on our website with links to “exhibitors” websites or Facebook pages where some of them posted exclusive specials etc. Although proven to be quite popular, this can never replace an actual event with personal interaction between members.

We will, once again, host meetings, training workshops and other events in an online format until regulations are relaxed. Our annual Convention, that includes our Annual General meeting and Awards Ceremony, will be hosted as a Facebook Live function in June 2021 and we hope to make this a spectacular event.

Although international travel is allowed, it is subject to certain health and safety protocols and some countries’ borders are closed for SA citizens wanting to travel abroad. With the roll-out of vaccinations, we could start to see a positive change in this regard. The vaccination process is very slow and at this stage is only available to frontline health care workers, so is unfortunately only in its first stage of implementation.

Summer has given way to Autumn and our Gauteng region has been fortunate with warm days and welcome rain showers to extend our gardening season with a few weeks.

At the end of January, one of our neighbouring countries, Mozambique was hit by a heavy cyclone and the effects were felt through the bigger part of South Africa causing heavy rains, wind and unpleasant weather in most regions. This has had a negative impact on sales for a few weeks, but in general, our members have reported an exceptional season.

Sales have in some instances, increased by over 30% which is a welcome relief to garden centres and suppliers who have suffered through a few tough years. Grow your Own (vegetables, herbs, fruit trees etc.) was the biggest trend seen during this period and has grown exponentially. Some stock shortages were reported, but clever retailers used this as the ideal opportunity to market other slower selling product lines.

As we move closer to Winter, sales will slow down considerably, giving retailers the opportunity to do maintenance tasks that they can't get to during season.

Our Life is a Garden marketing team has been doing an amazing job in marketing gardening to consumers. One of the biggest success stories is our Seasonal Gardening Group on Facebook that has over 20 000 consumer subscribers, dedicated to all things gardening. This has created a gardening community where consumers can ask advice, chat to their peers or experts and grow gardening as a pastime.

This Life is a Garden campaign was initiated in 2008 and has been through rebranding twice during the past thirteen years after the first logo was established. The previous update was done in 2014 and it was recently decided to update the look of our logo to a fresh and contemporary design. Along with this rebranding, it

was also decided to rebrand GCA (Garden Centre Association) to link in with the new look. We are currently in the process of a soft launch to consumers.



We look forward to another great season as consumers continue to focus on their home environment and making it a place of peace and solace.

Our industry has been fortunate to have been able to trade for the past 11 months. Our thoughts are with everyone who hasn't been as fortunate and have experienced interruptions in their normal operations due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

We wish everyone an amazing Spring or Autumn season!

Swiss garden centers have made a positive start to 2021

by Othmar Zisweiler



Swiss garden centers can be satisfied with the first three months of the year. They have benefited (as of today) from the pandemic-related changes in society. Especially since the garden centers were not affected by the lockdown this year.

In January and February, there was a great need from consumers to beautify their home offices with attractive green plants. Thanks partly to the very nice weather in

February and March, the season started very early and various plants were already in short supply.

Pastel shades were very popular. Also in focus this year are raised beds, herbs, berries and fruit trees. Native plants are also a popular theme. Newspapers and magazines often report on this and see the garden as an opportunity to stop the loss of biodiversity. Here it is extremely important that the garden centers take up and thematize corresponding topics in their sales.

In June, the Swiss population will vote on two initiatives that directly affect nurseries and garden centers. The issue is whether chemical pesticides may continue to be used in Switzerland or not. In addition, the import of plants and food, which were treated with chemical pesticides, would be forbidden by the acceptance of the initiatives. Whether these initiatives will be accepted or rejected is not at all clear. Issues such as the obvious decline in biodiversity, decrease in the number of insects and residues of pesticides in drinking water, benefit the initiators of these initiatives, which are so dangerous for nurseries and garden centers.



We would love to share short videos from members around the world. Showcase your garden centre, latest trends, best sellers or your amazing team!

Contact Gerdie for more information if you are interested in this opportunity.

Remember to follow us on Facebook - [International Garden Centre Association \(IGCA\) | Facebook](#) to stay updated on current news and events!



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