



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **AIPH Spring Meeting debates global ornamental plant trade and environmental challenges**

Representatives from organisations representing growers of ornamental horticultural crops met in London, UK on 2<sup>nd</sup> April to share information and ideas that will strengthen the position of the sector in the future. During the Spring Meeting of the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) most countries reported difficult trading conditions throughout 2013 but there is optimism for improvement for 2014. Poor weather throughout Europe last year hit producers but better weather and an improvement in the economic conditions for many countries is responsible for a better outlook.

Productivity improvements are a focus of attention in Asian countries with the need to make efficiencies and improve systems to drive up profit margins. Price pressure seems to be less of an issue for the landscape supply industry in Japan where there is a shortage of many plants as the country replants after the earthquake and prepares for the Olympics.

Within the AIPH Environment and Plant Health Committee members discussed the varying attitudes, by different countries, to the environmental arguments around the use of peat in growing media. Dr Chris Hartfield from the UK's National Farmers' Union presented the work done by industry to work with policy makers in the UK and the current position where the industry is defining and working towards sustainable growing media whether it is peat-based or not. Delegates from The Netherlands introduced the Responsibly Produced Peat initiative which facilitates the ongoing use of peat but only from sources with minimal environmental impact. In Australia, where peat is not used in growing media, the industry has to deal with other issues such as concerns over the potential presence of *Legionella longbeachii* in growing media. It was clear that currently only the UK is pressing for the use of peat for horticulture to be eliminated.

The meeting followed the AIPH International Green City Conference which had taken place the previous day. The Green City Committee heard presentations from many members on initiatives to promote green planting in urban areas. The meeting also received a presentation summarising the importance of plant breeders rights and the importance of the work of the AIPH Novelty Protection Committee in arguing the position of growers as international agreements are formulated and as individual countries implement them.

The Marketing Committee received updates on progress in the organisation of International Horticultural Exhibitions in Qingdao, China (2014), Antalya, Turkey (2016), Tangshan, China (2016), Ottawa, Canada (2017) and Taichung, Chinese Taipei (2018/19). The Committee also heard about a

potential application for an exhibition in Geochang-gun, Korea in 2018. AIPH Marketing Committee Chair, Mr Shinya Wada commented “Such exhibitions provide a high profile way of highlighting the importance of plants and the landscape to authorities and the public and are increasingly being used as a tool to promote the Green City agenda”.

Concluding the meeting AIPH President, Mr Vic Krahn re-emphasised the value in sharing information between growers across the world and in working together to achieve our common goals. Commenting after the meeting he said “There really is no other forum like this for the growers of the world to come together and learn from each other. All members have learned something new this week in London and have new ideas and initiatives to try out in their own countries.”

The next meeting for AIPH members is the Annual Congress which will take place in Qingdao, China from 8-11 September 2014.

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## **Notes for Editors:**

### **International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH)**

AIPH is a co-ordinating body representing horticultural producers' organizations all over the world. It was set up in Switzerland in 1948 to stimulate the international marketing of flowers, plants and landscaping services. Currently membership consists of 26 organisations from 19 countries. For further details visit [www.aiph.org](http://www.aiph.org).

The AIPH Spring Meeting took place at the Gouman Tower Hotel in London on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014. Grower organisations from the following countries were represented: Canada, The Netherlands, Germany, UK, Belgium, Hungary, Denmark, Turkey, Indonesia, Japan, China, Chinese Taipei, Australia and Korea.