



9 April 2020

Global Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic on Garden Centres

There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic is impacting the ornamental horticultural industry in the middle of its busiest growing and selling period. Government's strategies to stop the spread of COVID-19 have been changing the way garden centres operate around the world.

AIPH – International Association of Horticultural Producers – sent out a short survey to a selection of its members to give them a platform to share their specific situations. We asked if the garden centres were open and if so, how were they operating. If not, what were the alternatives for growers to sell their products?



Australia



Greenlife
Industry Australia

GREEN LIFE INDUSTRY AUSTRALIA

www.greenlifeindustry.com.au/

Australian garden centres are open and able to operate and trade.

The instruction for most people in Australia is to stay, work and study at home where possible, but there are exceptions for 'essential services'. Given more people are at home, we are highlighting and promoting the importance of green life at home – gardening, in the house, on balconies, in courtyards, in home offices – and ensuring they can obtain plants from garden centres. The most important message is the physical and mental health and well-being that plants provide.

The conditions applied to garden centres opening are based on the guidelines provided by the Government, with an extreme focus on health and hygiene of staff and customers and practicing social/physical distancing.



There have been compulsory closures on some garden centres due to inadequate hygiene and social distancing measures.

Belgium



AVBS – THE BELGIAN NURSERYMEN AND GROWERS FEDERATION

www.avbs.be

Generally, garden centres are closed. Only garden centres that sell food, pet food and flowers or plants are open. They are not allowed to sell other products. Garden Centres with no significant food items or pet food are NOT allowed to open.

Those who can open are only allowed to sell the essential products: food, pet food and flowers or plants. They need to control the number of people entering and everyone must follow hygiene measures.



Brazil



VEILING HOLAMBRA

www.veiling.com.br

Three weeks ago, all garden centres had to close because they are not considered a necessary retail trade. Now only a few have reopened, which is less than 10 per cent of them. Some of them only do delivery.

The garden centres that are open must avoid large groups of people gathering and keep on top of hygiene rules.

Denmark



DANSK GARTNERI

www.danskgartneri.dk

Yes, they are open in Denmark and have been open all the time during the coronavirus crisis.

If you have closed rooms, the general rule is 4m² per customer and to keep a minimum distance of 1.5 metres apart.



The customers must have access to handwashing facilities. It has been working. The contamination ratio is now one in nine people are being hospitalised. This number has been decreasing for the past five days.

We are beginning a very slow normalisation after Easter. However, bars and restaurants remain closed until 13 May, and this summer all festivals are cancelled.

Finland



KAUPPAPUUTARHALIITTO

www.kauppapuutarhaliitto.fi

Yes, they are allowed to be open, but our season is mainly in May to June, so many of the garden centres are not yet busy or open after winter.

There have been no discussions about closing garden centres. They are largely located outside of cities and a major part of the sales activity is outdoors.

There are no restrictions whatsoever, but people are paying attention and avoiding crowds and social distancing two metres apart.

France



VAL'HOR

www.valhor.fr/www.valhor.fr

Garden centres selling food and pet food are allowed to remain open. Food products are considered essential products. Thus, garden centres that have a pet store department have the right to sell seeds and vegetable plants which are also deemed to be essential products by the public authorities.

The professional association of garden centres (FNMJ) has published a guide to guarantee the protection of customers and employees: sanitisation procedures and a reduction of open days and hours.

Germany



Z V G ZENTRALVERBAND GARTENBAU

www.zentralverbandgartenbau.de



AIPH

The garden centres are mostly open in Germany. However, due to federal states legislation, not all. For example, in Bavaria they are closed; but in NRW they are open.

They are considered necessary for customers, especially with fruits and vegetables.

Hygiene rules and prevention, distance rules are in place to protect customers and personal; these are followed by the guidelines given in each federal state.

Greece



HEPEXIA - HELLENIC PLANT MATERIAL EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION

www.eseefy.gr

NO. Customers can only shop online.

Ireland

BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD **BORD BIA**

www.bordbia.ie

Not currently, but they are permitted to sell remotely and have products/plants delivered. While this is welcome, it doesn't alleviate the pressure the growers are under. Our DIY chains, many of whom have a substantial garden centre offer are also closed, which has impacted greatly on the industry here. It is ironic really as there has never been as high a demand for plants and gardening supplies from the consumers. In Ireland our garden centres had been originally permitted to stay open and were only closed when the stricter restrictions came into effect on 27 March. All had reported booming trade in plants and gardening supplies.

Italy



ANVE - NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NURSERYMEN EXPORTERS

www.anve.it

National legislation does allow garden centres to open. Nevertheless, several local administrations don't do it to contain the movement of people. There are conditions of human distancing, controls on numbers entering, use of safety devices (masks, gloves, soaps).

In reality, not many garden centres are opened. People can go out for a few times a day and for necessity, but mainly they go to the supermarket and there they can also find plants.

We think after Easter, if infections go down, there will be more relaxation of the current directives.



Japan



JAPAN LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

www.jalc.or.jp

YES: not only garden centres but also home centres and supermarkets are open.

The government says stay at home as much as possible, and only go out for daily necessities. Avoid concentration of people and make sure there is enough space from each other. Customers must make sure to keep away from high-risk contact or close contact with people. There are bottles of alcohol spray at the front of shops.



The Netherlands



VBN VERENIGING VAN BLOEMENVEILINGEN - THE DUTCH FLOWER AUCTIONS ASSOCIATION

www.vbn.nl

Garden centres are open. It is the responsibility of the owners to close.

There must be a minimum distance (1.5 metres) between people, and if necessary, control of numbers entering.



Poland



POLISH NURSERYMEN ASSOCIATION

www.zszp.pl

Garden Centres are open in Poland but...there are no customers or very few customers due to restrictions on movement of people in the country. The restriction on movement applies to: moving, travelling, being in public places. Children and adolescents under 18 years of age cannot leave the house unattended. Leaving the house is kept to an absolute minimum.



You can move around when dealing with matters necessary (essential) for everyday life (which includes, for example, necessary purchases, buying medicines, visiting a doctor, caring for loved ones). Visiting garden centres is not recognised as necessary/essential for everyday life thus it may be punishable by a fine when checked by the police. The distance from other pedestrians should be at least 2 metres.

Each store (both small and large-scale) can enter a maximum of as many people as the number of all cash registers or payment points multiplied by three. This means that if there are five cash registers in the store, there may be 15 customers.

The UK



HTA – HORTICULTURAL TRADE ASSOCIATION

www.hta.org.uk

No. Some are continuing with existing online ordering, or improvising click and collect arrangements, but this is severely limited by public health guidelines on not making non-essential journeys.

The USA



AMERICANHORT

www.americanhort.org

In nearly all the states, garden centres are being allowed to operate. Some are choosing not to, out of concern that they may not be able to adjust their operations sufficiently to protect their front-line workers. But most are operating, and prioritising online or telephone ordering, and curbside pickup or delivery. Those open to customers are limiting numbers, urging social distancing, and in some cases, taking appointments. (It is hard to imagine doing nearly the normal business volume this way, but “short breath is better than no breath at all.”)

A handful of states have totally or nearly totally shut down independent garden centres, including Michigan and Pennsylvania. In some states, like New York, there are limited exceptions for retailers that sell food-producing plants. Worth noting that all over the country, vegetable plants and seeds and fruit trees and such are flying out the doors of places that are open. Also, important to note that even in the few states that are most restrictive, mass retailers are generally open and their garden centres are generally stocked and operating. While this is causing a backlash among independent retailers whose operations are constrained, mass retailers now move 60 per cent of the live goods that are sold direct to consumers, so they are vital for the growers.

