Horticultural Businesses and Agricultural Land
Horticulture – A Branch of Agriculture

- Branch of Agriculture concerned with production, sale, installation and maintenance of plant material and produce from plant material.

- Word simply means the “the culture of gardens”.
Landscape Horticulture – A Branch of Horticulture

• Includes occupations that create and maintain gardens and green space.
• Landscape contractors, landscape maintenance companies, lawn care companies, greenhouse operations, nursery growers and garden centres.
Landscape Horticulture – A Branch of Horticulture

- Activities are related to agriculture
- Based on the knowledge of plants and gardens.
Landscape Horticulture – A Branch of Horticulture

• Typical operations have great deal of overlap.
• Many growers will also be landscape contractors and offer maintenance services.
• Many landscapers will grow plant material.
• Specialization may happen in larger markets but normally horticultural businesses are a mix of the various services described.
• Can be called “urban agriculture”
Legislative Rationale

• Landscape Horticulture comes under Agriculture Canada and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

• OMAFRA provides extension personnel for turf, nursery and landscape
Legislative Rationale

- Classified by Workers Services Insurance Board (WSIB) under Agricultural Rate Codes

- Statistics Canada tracks sector statistics under agriculture and primary industries
Legislative Rationale

- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) includes landscape horticulture within the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Sector Council (CAHRC)

- Included in the Labour Issues Coordinating Committee (LICC) chaired by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Legislative Rationale

• Landscape/Horticulture is included in the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council (OACC)
• Landscape/Horticulture is included in the Agricultural Adaptation Council
• Included under special agricultural rules with the Ministry of Revenue
Legislative Rationale

• Included in the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) along with Apple Growers, Fruit and Vegetable Growers etc.

• Treated the same as Agriculture by the Ontario Ministry of Labour- (Special Rules for Landscape Gardeners)
Education Rationale

- All agricultural schools offer horticultural programs.
- EG. University of Guelph, confers a B.S.A. (Bach. Of Science in Agriculture) to its' 4 yr. Horticultural Degree graduates.
Education Rationale

- Typical curriculum’s consists of applied agricultural based subjects such as soils, botany, irrigation, ornamental crops, pest control, pruning etc.
Similarities to Agriculture

• Deals with the management of plant life
• Diverse operations subject to biological processes, weather, seasonality and perishable products
• Dominated by small family run businesses
• Very little division of labour – same people perform many different tasks
Other Similarities to Agriculture

• Nature sets the clock – certain biological processes (seeding, germination, cultivation, mowing, pest control, fertility management, planting, transplanting, harvesting etc) can only be performed at certain times.
Other Similarities to Agriculture

- Seasonal Workplace
- Specific tasks can only be performed as specific times of the year (transplanting, seeding, planting etc.)
- Involves the nurturing of living, perishable plant material. It is an agricultural pursuit.
Other Similarities to Agriculture

- Equipment and processes are very similar (tractors, fertilizer spreaders, cultivators, irrigation equipments, seeders, skid steer loaders, dump trucks, hand tools etc.)
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Requires large land base for equipment and garden supplies such as topsoil, compost and mulches. Industrial property rents are too prohibitive for the land required.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Businesses generally operate 8 months of the year. Difficult to sustain year round rental commitment on 8-month cash flow.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Plant material is grown and/or delivered to home site and then distributed to various customers.
- Essential to be close to plant material to ensure proper watering and maintenance.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Easier to provide this type of care if material is on agricultural land close to the residence.
Landscape Horticulture Land Use

- Agriculture land provides opportunity to expand and diversify into related sectors such as nursery and greenhouse growing.
Landscape Horticulture Land Use

- Many landscape operations store tender plant material in greenhouses during the winter. An industrial base would not allow for this type of storage.
Landscape Horticulture Land Use

• Many landscape operations bring back grass clippings, dead annuals, leaves and other organic materials and use this as compost in their farm fields. An industrial base would not be appropriate.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Ability to diversify is essential in a seasonal operation.
- This flexibility and integration helps to create prosperity and viability.
- Could not happen except on agricultural land.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Consider impact of proposed land use policies.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Restrictions can curtail and limit the growth of one of the few segments in agriculture that is experiencing growth.
- Restrictions will limit ability of the public to utilize plant material to create the green infrastructure that is so necessary for continued quality of life.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Separate issues of best stewardship practices and property standards from planning and zoning process.

• All agriculture no matter what commodity must take responsibility to limit the negative impact of their operations.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Problems of noise, pollution, soil and water degradation, dust, smells and poor property maintenance can exist with any property regardless of zoning.

• Stewardship and property standards apply to all properties
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Better to deal with these issues separately outside of planning and zoning legislation
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Restrictive and segmentation approach to land use policies risks limiting the flexibility of traditional farmers to expand into plant production and landscape horticulture activities.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Most horticultural production operations evolved from traditional farming.

• For example:
  – Connon Nurseries evolved from Pig production.
  – Sheridan Nurseries started as market gardeners and Landscape Designers.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

– Putzer Nurseries and Braun Nurseries started as landscape contractors.

– Aldershot Landscaping started as market gardeners.

– Mori Nurseries began as tender fruit producers.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Landscape Horticulture does not fit on industrial, commercial and institutional zoned land
- Where does Landscape Horticulture fit?
- Agriculture land is the best fit
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

- Landscape Horticultural operations are green-space professionals that can help society improve their environment by providing economic, aesthetic, environmental, recreational, therapeutic, lifestyle and even spiritual benefits.
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Do not let property standards issues limit the growth of this “urban agricultural” profession
Landscape Horticulture and Land Use

• Landscape Horticulture operations are the experts at remediation of land

• They are able to screen unsightly views with berms and plants, mitigate the effect of pollution, provide noise buffers and beautify property.
Landscape Horticulture belongs on Agricultural Land
Summary

Why is it difficult for a horticultural business to locate on urban land?
Why it is difficult to locate on urban land.

- No outdoor storage for bulk materials
- Not conducive for watering plant material
- Living near the workplace allows for plant maintenance
- Seasonality necessitates diversity of operations into other horticultural areas
- Year round rents does not fit seasonality of the business
Why do we consider ourselves part of agriculture
• Legislative rationale
• Educational rationale
• Historical rationale
• Profile rationale
• Similarities of “Urban Agriculture” to traditional agriculture
Mitigating impacts of Horticultural Businesses

• Require all properties to submit a Property Standards and Dust Plan

Appearance

• Require a 3 metre setback

• Setback will be screened with a combination of wooden fence, berm, evergreens and green space so that operations will be hidden

• Develop guidelines regarding percentage of the property devoted to non-growing activities
Outdoor Storage Standards

• All material will be stored in a orderly manner
• Salt piles will only be allowed in a covered location
• Provincial Guidelines regarding fuel will be strictly adhered to
• Bulk materials will be contained
• Bins will be used for garbage and recycling
• Excess job site materials will be neatly stacked
Hours of Operation

- Hours of operations will be from 6am to 7pm. (with exceptions for snow)
- Municipal guidelines and bylaws will govern noise.
- Owners will ensure that equipment is well maintained
Soil Mixing and Dust

- Any mixing of topsoil will be done to reduce the amount of dust and noise coming from the operation.
- Wind speed and direction will be taken into account when mixing soils.
- Calcium will be used as a dust inhibitor where possible.
What about snow ploughing operations?

Many farmers are involved in snow clearing. The reality is that Canadian winters requires off-farm income during the slow periods.
Where do Horticultural Businesses fit?

- Presently no zoning exists that allows the full spectrum of horticultural operations