



MFGC UPDATE

For members of the Michigan Floriculture Growers Council

June 2015

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Calendar of Events

Member Meeting
June 22, 2015 8:45 am
Sportel Greenhouse
Kalamazoo

MSU Grower Day
July 11-14, 2015
MSU

Annual Meeting
Tuesday, Dec 8, 2015
Devos Place
Grand Rapids

2015 Board of Directors

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Hello Member,

There has been much discussion centered around greenhouse plastics and recycling - the need, the economics, the practicality, the convenience (or lack thereof).

There is even talk of approaching it through a co-operative effort that would help define standards, create storage, conduct education and outreach and help with coordinating pick-ups.

In the meantime, there is a piece in this newsletter about East Jordan Plastics. They currently collect and actually offer payment for greenhouse plastics as their products are made with recycled materials.

I also included some links: 1. to an article on Neonics, those pesticides with nicotine that have a reputation of killing bees and other pollinators, and 2. a presentation on the subject by our own Dr. Smitley. I hope to keep you aware of the discussions.

In case you haven't heard, Michigan was recently ranked seventh in the nation for new business site selection. We included a short article by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation so read on to know more.

And finally, today USDA announced rural electrification funds for the thumb area of Michigan improve 93 miles of line.

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and happy after surviving our second polar vortex winter. Thank goodness for all the glorious flowers in Michigan, the colors are vibrant and the plants look healthy. We are so fortunate to have all this rain for customer's transplants. It's bound to be a good summer!

Cheers!

Bill Turner
President
MFGC

More about Neonics from MSU's Dr. Smitley

A presentation delivered by Dr. David Smitley from Michigan State University (Department of Entomology) on "Growing Flowering Plants that are Safe for Pollinators in the Yard and Garden" presented at the 19th Annual Ornamental Workshop on Diseases and Insects. The presentation focuses primarily on neonicotinoids, which have received a lot of media and public attention recently. (Sharing with permission from Dr. Smitley).

Click [here](#) to view the presentation

MAEAP Certified Members

Kalamazoo Specialty Plants, LLC
Kalamazoo

Great Lakes Greenhouses
Kalamazoo

GreenDorr Greenhouse
Dorr

Joe Theisen Farm
St. Clair

Westrate Greenhouses, Inc
Kalamazoo

MSU Hidden
Lake Gardens



What's Going on With Neonics?

by Jennifer Zurko, Grower Talks Magazine

The contentious debate on whether neonicotinoid pesticides are harmful to pollinators—specifically honey bees—continues to rage on in greenhouses, trade show floors, local municipalities and state legislatures. And it looks like it's not going to slow down any time soon.

"It's certainly not been quiet," said Joe Bischoff, Regulatory & Legislative Affairs Director for AmericanHort. "There has been legislation introduced in a number of states. The local battle continues and we can expect to see more coming, especially as some states are just entering their legislative session."

To read more visit: [Grower Talks Magazine](#)

March 27 Member Meeting Held at WoJo's Tour of greenhouses help jump-start the season

The Michigan Floriculture Grower's Council met Friday, March 27 at WoJo's Greenhouses in Ortonville, Michigan. The meeting started at 9:00 a.m. with coffee and donuts and the group then toured the greenhouses. WoJo's tour gave attendees a seasonal lift while they enjoyed rows and rows of vibrant colors. The meeting culminated with a discussion



surrounding legislation that may affect our growers. The next meeting will be Monday June 22 and Sportel Greenhouse in Kalamazoo. If any members would like to host a meeting and tour in the future, please feel free to contact MFGC. It can be set for several months in the future if that helps.

Did you know you can recycle your flats and containers?

With over 65 years experience in the horticulture industry, East Jordan Plastics is a company that is equally committed to their clients as they are to the environment. As one of the largest manufacturers of horticultural containers in North America, they are willing to accept used containers for recycling.

Below you will find answers to the most frequent questions received by East Jordan Plastics. If your question is not answered below, please [contact them](#) for more information.

1. Where does East Jordan Plastics pick up plastic material?

East Jordan Plastics can pick up loads of plastic across the United States and in some areas of Canada.

2. Does East Jordan Plastics accept deliveries of plastic material for recycling?

Absolutely. Deliveries can be accommodated Monday-Friday, 7:00 am - 3:00 pm EST. Please call 269-637-3700 in advance to notify our shipping and receiving department.

3. What is the minimum quantity required for pick-up?

The minimum quantity for pickups is handled on a case-by-case basis. For LTL quantities, additional stops will have to be coordinated in order to fill the trailer. No minimum quantity is required for growers that can deliver recyclable plastic growing containers to our facilities.

4. Do I have to be a grower or customer of EJP to have them pick up my recyclable growing containers?

Anyone interested in recycling their horticultural containers can recycle them with EJP. However, purchasing your growing containers from EJP truly closes the horticultural container recycling loop.

5. Can multiple growers consolidate their material at a central location in order to build a load?

Yes, in fact it's encouraged. When multiple growers are consolidating their plastic material at a central location for pick-up, it is important that each grower mark each individual skid with their greenhouse information. This ensures that everyone gets credited properly.

6. As a consumer, where can I recycle my used horticultural growing containers?

Right now, consumers can take their used growing containers to The Home Depot and Meijer Garden Centers in the mid-western United States. Collection carts are located at these stores throughout the spring and summer months. Our ultimate goal is to establish plastic recycling collection points with as many garden centers as possible throughout the United States and Canada.

7. Do I need to sort the containers by color?

Growing containers do not need to be sorted by color, just by plastic type.

8. Can multiple material types be picked up at the same time?

Yes, however each individual pallet or bale of plastic to be recycled must be comprised of the same material type.

9. How long does it take to schedule a pick-up once East Jordan Plastics has been notified?

For truckload quantities of plastic material, we can usually pick up within two weeks of being notified. When possible, we try to coordinate pick-ups of plastic to be recycled with the delivery of our finished growing container products or when a truck is in the area.

10. Can East Jordan Plastics pick up less than truckload quantities of plastic to be recycled?

Yes. We can pick up less than truckload quantities of plastic material. However, we need to coordinate pick-ups with other growers so that the returning trucks can be as full as possible. A full truckload of material is 26 skids stacked to 90"-100" in height.

11. How much does East Jordan Plastics pay for recyclable material?

Payment is dependent upon material type, quality of sorting, quantity of material, location, and current resin markets. For pricing in your area, call: 269-637-3700.

12. How do I get paid by East Jordan Plastics for my recyclable horticultural containers?

Payment can either be made by a credit to your account or by check. Many customers who purchase growing containers from EJP prefer to have their accounts credited. Checks are issued to customers who do not buy growing containers from EJP.

13. Does EJP have different pricing for delivered material vs. material that is picked up by EJP?

Yes. We have delivered pricing and FOB (your location) pricing.

14. Does East Jordan Plastics accept greenhouse film or empty soil bags for recycling?

We currently cannot accept greenhouse film for recycling. East Jordan Plastics is not an end-user of this type of plastic.

15. Does East Jordan Plastics accept empty plastic fertilizer bottles or other empty chemical bottles?

We do not accept fertilizer bottles or other chemical bottles for recycling. Our plastics recycling line is not designed to remove the contaminants that are associated with these plastic containers.

16. Do you accept plant containers that are made from "bio-resins" or that are biodegradable?

No. These materials cannot be recycled and used to make new growing containers from polystyrene, polypropylene, and high-density polyethylene.

17. Does EJP recycle tags and bench cards?

Yes. EJP will recycle polystyrene (PS #6), polypropylene (PP #5), and high-density polyethylene (HDPE #2) tags and bench cards. Obsolete unused tags and bench cards can be left in their original packaging. Unpackaged or used tags and bench cards need to be sorted by material type. Tags and bench card recyclables can be picked up with horticultural container recyclables. Signage with metal rings cannot be accepted.

Want to Participate?

Please [contact EJP](#) to find out how you can participate in Project 100% and recycle your plastic growing containers!

Is your greenhouse irrigation water alkalinity ailing your crop?

If the pH of your media is out-of-whack, consider checking your irrigation water alkalinity

by Kristin L. Getter
getterk@msu.edu

Many growers monitor their crop's substrate pH and electrical conductivity (EC) periodically in order to avoid nutritional and crop quality issues. For more information on how and why to monitor pH and EC, see the Michigan State University Extension article titled 'pH and EC issues still a problem in some greenhouses'. If substrate pH is routinely a problem, it is possible that the irrigation water alkalinity may be the cause. In this article, we review why it is important to monitor your greenhouse irrigation water alkalinity.



Water alkalinity is a measure of water's capacity to neutralize acids. Dissolved bicarbonates, such as calcium bicarbonate, sodium bicarbonate, and magnesium bicarbonate, as well as carbonates like calcium carbonate are the major chemicals contributing to alkalinity in irrigation water. Alkalinity is related to pH because alkalinity establishes the buffering capacity of water or how resistant it is to a change in pH. The greater the alkalinity, the more buffered the water is, thus the more acid is required to change the pH. In this way, irrigation water alkalinity effects media pH more than the irrigation water pH itself. Units of alkalinity are expressed as either meq/L (milliequivalents per liter) or ppm (parts per million). Irrigation water sources acceptable for use in a greenhouse will usually have an alkalinity of 40 to 65 parts per million. Anything above 150 ppm will likely need treated.

To read more visit: [E-Gro Alert](#)

Site Selection magazine ranks Michigan #7 in top competitive states

Michigan's #7 ranking outpaced all of its neighbors in today's release of Site Selection magazine's top competitive states and is highest among all states outside of the southeast U.S. The selection puts Michigan ahead of regional competitors Indiana, Ohio, Illinois and Wisconsin and 39 other states in the U.S.

"Today's good news signals to the world that Michigan again stands among the nation's best places for new business investment," said Steve Arwood, Michigan Economic Development CEO. "Site location executives and consultants play a vital role in major corporate expansion decisions. This is fresh news that adds to the many advantages that make Michigan attractive.

"This recognition of Michigan's reinvention shows the value of all that we have achieved through business climate improvements and national leadership in fiscal responsibility, business tax restructuring and reductions of 2,000 outdated regulations, Arwood said.

Michigan's economic rebound since 2009 placed the state 2nd only to North Dakota according to Bloomberg Business. The state has gained 400,000 new private sector jobs since 2010, improved its credit ratings and lowered the costs of unemployment and workers' compensation.

The six states that ranked higher in the Site Selection Competitiveness study were: North Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky.

~ courtesy of the [MEDC](#)

USDA Announces Funding for Smart Grid and 1,000 miles of line on 80th Anniversary of Rural Electrification

Release No. 0136.15, Anne Mayberry (202) 690-1756

WASHINGTON, May 11, 2015 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is providing more than \$100 million in loans to build or improve 1,000 miles of electric transmission and distribution lines for rural electric cooperative utilities in four states.

"We commend rural electric cooperative utilities nationwide as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration," Vilsack said.

"Investments we make to provide rural communities with electricity are critical to our nation's economy. Our commitment to rural electricity has powered our growing agricultural exports, a burgeoning bio-economy and the quality of life for rural Americans."

The four loans include \$9 million for smart grid improvements. In Indiana, Johnson County Rural Electric Membership Corporation will use a \$14 million loan to build or improve 345 miles of line and make other system improvements, including \$4.8 million for smart grid projects.

Thumb Electric Cooperative of Michigan will use a \$25 million loan to build or improve 93 miles of line and make other system improvements, including a \$2.7 million smart grid investment.

In North Dakota, Slope Electric Cooperative, Inc. has been selected to receive a \$12.5 million loan to build or improve 66 miles of line and make other system improvements, including \$432,000 for smart grid technologies.

South Carolina's Santee Electric Cooperative, Inc. is receiving \$54.8 million to build or improve 605 miles of line for residential and business customers. The loan also includes \$3 million for storm damage restoration.

USDA's Rural Utilities Service, which funds utility infrastructure in rural areas, is the successor to the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), which was created by then-President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on May 11, 1935. Congress approved statutory authority for the REA on May 20, 1936.

The agency became part of USDA in 1939. USDA is providing \$106.3 million in electric system infrastructure loans in today's announcement. The Rural Utilities Service awarded \$2.4 billion in electric loans in 2014 to help 4.6 million rural residents receive improved electric service. Since 2009, USDA has invested almost \$31 billion in rural electric systems, including more than \$1 billion in renewable energy projects.

to read more visit: [USDA](#)

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Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Loans & Grants

This USDA program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase or install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements.

Agricultural producers with at least 50% of gross income coming from agricultural operations, and small businesses in eligible rural areas may apply.

NOTE: Agricultural producers and small businesses must have no outstanding delinquent federal taxes, debt, judgment or debarment

For more information go to: [USDA Rural Energy Improvement Loans and Grants](#)

