

THE PURDUE LANDSCAPE REPORT

Green Industry Experiencing Reduced Plant Availability

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The indirect effects of the pandemic are continuing to plague the Green Industry. In addition to the on-going, severe labor deficiencies that are plaguing most companies, many plants are in short supply or completely unavailable. In my recent travels, several nurseries and landscapers have discussed some of the specific issues they have been facing regarding supply and availability.



Figure 1. Plant availability is significantly reduced, so consider alternative cultivars or species.

Currently many plants are in low quantities due to the increase in purchasing by landscapers and homeowners in 2020 and an extreme shortage in truck drivers around the country. Indiana is not alone in this issue, as the North Carolina Nursery and Landscape Association wrote an article and gave some tips on how to navigate the year (<https://ncnla.com/page/shortages>), Pro Landscaper South had a similar article (<https://south.prolandscaperusa.com/plants/plant-shortage-crisis/>), and the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association included the issue in their news feed (<https://www.mnla.biz/blogpost/1133918/Grower-Nursery-Greenhouse>).

The increase in plant buying in 2020 had many nurseries selling smaller material later in the season, thus leading to a reduction in plants of size this year. In addition, liner producers dipped into their 2021 crop last year, reducing the amount of available liners in this year.

Another issue facing all industries is the reduced truck fleet on the roads. Recently the President and CEO of American Trucking Association informed a Senate committee that the US supply chain is quickly approaching crisis levels. In addition to infrastructure problems, the trucking industry is 61,000 drivers short of the current demand. He predicts that 1.1 million new drivers over the next ten years will be needed at anticipated demand. To read more about the statements by the ATA: <https://www.trucking.org/news-insights/trucking-association-ceo-says-us-supply-chain-nearing-crisis>.

Some tips for purchasing plants this year:

- Anticipate increased prices due to limited supply.
- Be flexible with species and cultivar selection and consider alternatives.
- Communicate with clients early.

Below are some additional resources:

Nursery Management

<https://www.nurserymag.com/article/plant-shortages-increased-sales-margins/#:~:text=The%20availability%20of%20ornamental%20trees,in%20Florida>.

Garden Center Magazine

<https://www.gardencentermag.com/article/2021-the-year-of-flexibility/>

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