



Tim Hodson, Editorial Director
(847) 391-1019 • thodson@sgcmail.com

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Recognizing Progress for a Sustainable Future

Since the move to sustainability or sustainable practices is a journey, not a jaunt, *GPN*, along with our sister publication, *Lawn & Garden Retailer*, will recognize those growers and grower/retailers who have made the greatest progress toward sustainability with the Sustainability Progress Awards, to be presented during OFA's Short Course in July.

Who's making progress toward sustainability? Many of you have been using sustainable methods in your growing operations to some degree — possibly for years — you just may not have called it "sustainable." You may be collecting, processing and reusing rainwater in your greenhouses. You may be using beneficials to control insects in the greenhouse, or perhaps you've instituted a recycling program. Not only are these types of practices eco-friendly, but they also can make a noticeable contribution to your bottom line. What they represent is progress toward a sustainable future.

The Sustainability Progress Awards will recognize those growers and grower/retailers who have truly made progress in advancing their business operations and helping contribute to a better tomorrow. These awards are not limited to those commercial growers or grower/retailers well on their way. Rather, *GPN* and *Lawn & Garden Retailer's* Sustainability Progress Awards will celebrate progress — from operations that began efforts this year to those who have taken another key step toward sustainable practices.

And, the award winner(s) will provide some real-life examples and best practices for you to consider and adopt or adapt to your operation's needs. Let us know what you are doing on the journey to sustainability. Everyone's efforts are important and noteworthy. In the coming months, we will be looking for those companies that have developed or implemented innovative production techniques or eco-friendly business practices that really demonstrate progress in this area.

It's More Than Just Talk

Sustainability is more than a buzz word. There has been an awful lot of talk in the industry in recent months about sustainability. And rightly so. It is an incredibly important issue critical to the future health of this industry and the world we live in. Now more than ever, everyone in our industry should be investigating, investing in and implementing practical sustainable proce-

dures that enhance their businesses and help preserve our environment.

While there has been a lot of discussion about sustainability, there really is no agreement on an actual definition. In fact, sustainability means different things to different people. Since it is such a hot topic, and everyone is talking about it, we wanted to be sure readers know how we define the term. Here at *GPN*, the definition we use for sustainability is:

sus-tain'a-bil'i-ty — meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs while enhancing the health of ecosystems. Every action must be able to be repeated over and over, without impairing the ability of future generations to provide for themselves.

While the definition may seem daunting to some, it really shouldn't be. After all, we are the original green industry, aren't we? It is a lifestyle and business philosophy that just makes sense.

There is a lot of misinformation reaching consumers about our industry. In fact, I've heard stories from growers about some customers who think "greenhouse gas emissions" means a leaky greenhouse is spitting out bad things and creating a hole in Mother Earth's ozone layer. These types of misperceptions need to be cleared up. It is the responsibility of everyone in this industry to help educate consumers about how much good your products and processes actually contribute to the environment! (I repeat, we are the original green industry!)

The Sustainability Progress Awards will allow us to focus on and highlight the achievements of forward-thinking companies so that everyone in the industry can learn and benefit from these success stories.

For more details on nominating companies, or entering your own company in the competition for the Sustainability Progress Awards, watch our electronic newsletters, *GPN Weekly* and the *Retail Report* from *Lawn & Garden Retailer* and the magazines. If you are not receiving either of these newsletters, you can subscribe to them by going to www.gpnmag.com and www.lgrmag.com. 