



A Message from CNLA President Dustyn Nelson Regarding COVID-19

The novel coronavirus is causing disruption not only to our industry, but globally. An industry entrenched in tradition is having to find new ways to close deals without a handshake. I am working on personally reaching out to you, our members, to stay current on how you are handling things during this unique time in your business. I invite you to contact me at any time at (860) 459-1960.

I encourage you all to look at this uncertain time as an opportunity for growth. Here are a few suggestions on how you can stay ahead of the curve:

1. **Remain Calm.** Your attitude resonates through your employees and your customers. If you stay collective, we can stay productive.
2. **Stay Outdoors.** Find a way to offer outdoor cash registers to help customers feel more comfortable shopping with you.
3. **Disable Signatures.** To limit touch points talk to your credit card processing company to see if you can disable the need for signatures.
4. **Sell Jobs Online.** Utilize online meeting features, like Gotomeeting, to sell landscape jobs, still allowing customers to see your design without having to email them a copy of it.
5. **Delivery & To Go.** Implement a curb side pickup or delivery option. Take payment online or over the phone to limit the need for contact.
6. **Virtual Shopping.** Post a video or photos of what you currently have in your store and allow for purchase to be made over the phone or online.
7. **Facetime Shopping.** Give clients the ability to still work one on one with a sales person by offering shopping through video chat. Android users can use Skype or Duo.
8. **Upsell Edibles.** As the grocery supply chain is stressed help increase food security by allowing people to grow their own food.
9. **Stay Healthy.** I am sure you have already adapted the best practices outlined by the CDC. Below are resources that are especially valuable at this time:
 - o [OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
 - o [CDC: Steps to Prevent Illness](#)
 - o [CDC: Resources for Businesses and Employers](#)
 - o [Response to the Coronavirus from The Harvest Group](#)
10. **Communicate.** Be sure to stay in communication with your customers by sending out an email similar to this, sharing what your business is doing to keep them and your employees healthy.
11. **Be Accommodating.** Even if you are not worried about the coronavirus, your customers might be. Go above and beyond for your customers during this unique time.
12. **Shop Local.** Be sure to support other local businesses around you to help ease any burdens.

CNLA's lobbyist Linda Kowalski is working full-time for us to ensure that the case is

made to state officials for keeping nursery and landscape businesses open in the event the state requires a wider closure of businesses beyond those which have already been announced. This would be to keep the supply chain open. In addition, she is getting information to us in real-time about issues such as the availability of SBA loans and the latest procedures for applying for unemployment compensation.

Linda and I are in communication with state officials; we both have talked with Commissioner Hurlburt to update him on our members' situation. You can read Linda's latest [legislative report here](#).

AmericanHort has also shared that, effective March 18th, the U.S. Consulate in Mexico will cease all visa processing. AmericanHort knows many businesses are awaiting the arrival of workers via seasonal worker visa programs and they are in touch with government partners and business coalitions working to ensure these programs are not unnecessarily disrupted. They are also monitoring relief legislation taking shape in Congress and weighing in on points of concern for our industry, especially with respect to business "safety net" programs administered by agencies like the Small Business Administration and the Department of Agriculture.

The health of our families, employees, customers, vendors and partners remains paramount. While COVID-19 is not likely to be lethal for most of the population, we must recognize the danger that it poses for vulnerable individuals and the part we all play in protecting those around us. We urge every nursery and landscape business to implement logical, common-sense practices to reduce transmission, thereby keeping more people safe and making the public health response the most effective it can be.

We value what you contribute to our green industry and greatly appreciate your support. We are all in this together.