



July 8, 2015

Milton Planning Board  
William Clark, Planning Director  
525 Canton Avenue  
Milton, MA 02186

Dear Mr. Clark,

Thayer Nursery has been a long standing member of the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association, Inc. (MNLA). MNLA, established in 1910 is dedicated to the success of our members and to the promotion of environmental awareness and the highest standards of the Massachusetts nursery and landscape industry.

MNLA was asked to share with you the typical activities of a successful family owned business in the green industry. Without a doubt, the town of Milton is very fortunate to have such a well established nursery/garden center/landscape company within your town lines and it is my pleasure and honor to assist them with this request.

The entire retail industry is in a transition mode as the world experiences the ever-expanding reign of mass merchandisers. The family owned/independent nursery/garden & landscape business now must compete with Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Lowe's, among others, for the home gardeners demand for plants and related accessories. Many of these plants are not grown in Massachusetts but brought in ready for sale from southern states as well as the west coast and Canada with little regard to Massachusetts soils and conditions.

The products sold and services provided from local nursery to local nursery will vary but the core to be successful will always include a wide selection of locally grown quality plant material plus all the amendments like soil, compost, mulch in all its forms either bagged or in bulk form for pick-up or delivery from the nursery site.

Today's nurseries must incorporate display and grow out gardens into their site plan to provide inspiration as well as park like settings for the consumer to see plants in various stages of growth. This has become a critical tool for the nursery grower to ensure proper plant material for every job size.

Consumers want to be able to complete their projects with one stop and nurseries need to be able to offer tools to complete and/or enhance the project including, pottery, trellises, fire pits, lawn and patio furniture, tools, giftware, bird supplies like houses and food.




Diversity is the key in today's local market and this includes agri-tourism activities like corn mazes, farmers markets, educational talks & hands on sessions, as well as seasonal events like scarecrow making contests, Easter egg hunts, and holiday wreathes and memorial box building.

Because of the seasonal nature of the green industry, a typical "*successful*" Massachusetts nursery owner needs to not only be educated, diversified and cutting edge they need to have their products and services accessible to the consumer every day, especially weekends. Hours of operation need to meet the needs of the consumer, who expect stores to be open first thing in the morning and into the evening. Nursery retailers depend on every customer, every day to be successful

I do hope that his information is beneficial. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 413-369-4731 for more information.

Sincerely,

  
Rena M. Sumner  
Executive Director

#### **"About Us"**

The Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association, Inc. (MNLA) is a statewide association dedicated to advancing the interests of "green industry" professionals. MNLA is a nonprofit organization whose members are businesses and individuals committed to promoting awareness of environmental horticulture and upholding the highest standards of the nursery and landscape industry. MNLA is the largest green industry business development vehicle in Massachusetts, providing its members with educational opportunities, industry news, legislative representation, and business development resources. For more information visit: [www.mnla.com](http://www.mnla.com).