

Collaboration Opportunities And Models For Horticultural Growers In South West Wales – Update (May 2014)

In the months following the publishing of the final summary report in November 2013, the members of the group have continued to develop closer business relationships and identify other areas where collaborative working can lead to tangible benefits.

Progress since last autumn's report includes:

- ✓ The group establishing and developing strong alliances with both the Ceredigion Growers Association and the Carmarthenshire Growers Association. It is now working with growers from both organisations both collectively and individually. In addition, a new member has joined – an edible grower interested in diversifying into ornamental plants
- ✓ A group study tour to award-winning The Old Railway Line Garden Centre in Three Cocks, Powys, which enabled members to gain an insight into current retail trends and the most effective ways to merchandise and label plants, as well as learning about ways in which other growers have worked collaboratively in areas such as joint-purchasing and shared deliveries. Following this visit, one group member who was already supplying the garden centre has secured increased sales
- ✓ A group study tour to Wyevale Nurseries in Herefordshire that saw members learn about four distinct elements of production: Container-grown shrubs and herbaceous plants; field-grown seedlings and transplants; container-grown trees; and field-grown trees
- ✓ A group study tour of daffodil production at Springfields Fresh Produce in Manorbier, Pembrokeshire, which resulted in a number of new business synergies being created between members

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- ✓ An in-depth discussion with Neil Alcock from the hugely successful Seiont Nurseries in Caernarfon, which initially focused on the practicalities of joint-purchasing – a number of group members are now buying compost and input materials together to share costs, while other possibilities such as sharing deliveries are also being investigated
- ✓ The conversation with Neil Alcock also expanded into a wider debate about current market opportunities and trends in the Welsh ornamental sector – not only was this a valuable chance for the members to benefit from the expertise of one of the most successful and renowned plant growers in Wales, but since the meeting, several of the group are actually taking on new plants from Seiont Nurseries for growing on
- ✓ Ideas and themes for group meetings are now generated by the members themselves, who are also taking the lead in hosting and facilitating too. For example, the next scheduled get-together will focus on social media and marketing, and will be led a grower from the group who has significant knowledge in this area
- ✓ From what was initially a very diverse range of horticulture businesses, a core group has formed which is really driving forward involvement and progress from other members. While the main advantage of the group at present is still the networking aspect, there is now a considerable ‘buy in’ from members to support each other in a wider sense.

