Industry Response to Sustainability

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Why You?
Perspective and Experience

- ANLA: Grower → Distributor → Landscape & Retail → Maintenance
- ANLA Focus: Chlorophyll in the entire supply chain regardless of landscape plant type
- Sustainability: A strategic initiative since 2007
What is the industry’s response to environmental issues facing us?
“What’s all the fuss?”
“We ARE the Green Industry”

“We are the Original Environmentalists…”

“I don’t have time for all this. It’s spring.”
“We ARE the Green Industry”

- Google Search: 330,000, 000 sites in .41 seconds
- Corporate listings on Page One:
  - Cisco Systems
  - Proctor & Gamble
  - CSX
  - Deloitte
“We ARE the Green Industry”

- Wikipedia definition: “green industry”
  - Pacific Green Industry (Fiji)
  - Green paper on postal service (UK)
  - Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (Sweden)
  - Bowling Green, Kentucky

- Conclusion: No definition
“We ARE the Green Industry”

- Wikipedia: “Green collar worker”
  - design, policy & technology
  - conservation, consultants, engineers
  - solar, wind energy, lawyers, educators
  - wind power farms, weatherize buildings
  - NO mention of horticulture or landscape
    or lawn/garden industry
“Original Environmentalists”

- Google: 11,100,000 sites in .52 seconds
- Google definition: “…a person who is concerned with protecting and preserving the natural environment, for example by preventing pollution.”
- Wikipedia: “…broad philosophy and social movement”
- Postal service: “The Original Internet”
“Original Environmentalists”

- Members of Board of Directors of leading environmentalist organizations: NRDC, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy: 0

- Members of Congress with industry affiliation: 3 out of 535
“I don’t have time for all this. It’s spring.”

- Associations = Surrogates
- Staff doing government relations at federal level fulltime: four
- Political action committee $’s: less than $250k
- Daily investment in health reform: $1.25 million
- Challenge: “The business of business”
How about some good news?
The Good News

- We are in a better place than many
- Leaders in agricultural practices:
  - Water management
  - IPM
- Ostensibly in the “White Hat” group of industries
Going more sustainable…

- Continuing many things we’re doing now
- Discontinuing some things we’re doing now
- Doing some things we do now, but doing them differently
- Discovering new things that really work
Going more sustainable... makes good sense

- Flat or declining market
- The last frontier: Greening the urban setting
- WE HAVE NO CHOICE
Implications: Plant production

- Leaders in agriculture already
  - Water recycling
  - IPM
  - Role of landscape plants
- Controversial issues
  - B&B
  - Invasive plants
  - Plastic
  - Local-grown
  - Labor
Implications: Landscape

- Role of landscaping
  - Cooling and air scrubbing
  - Green roofs and buffers
  - Interior plantscaping
- Controversial issues
  - Water use
  - Yardwaste
Implications for Retailing

- Appeal to customer base
- Experience-based retailing
- Attractiveness of employment
- Controversial issues
  - Consumer use of pesticides
  - Plant palette/local-grown
  - Plastic recycling
Implications for Distribution

- “All of the above”
- Re-engineering opportunities
- Controversial issues
  - Those pots and flats
  - Some other product lines
  - Sourcing
  - Materials handling
Is there a payback?

- Possible outcomes:
  - Less impact on environment
  - Higher employee productivity and loyalty/retention
  - Improved image and a marketing advantage
  - Improved financials
  - Satisfaction that you made a difference
My turf groundcover:

- **Green industry response** to environmental issues
- **Importance of consumer and legislator perceptions** of our products & services
- **Industry efforts related to our environmental value proposition**
We are
“Ornamental”
Horticulture
Definition: “Ornament”

- 1. “something that lends grace and beauty”
- 2. “one whose virtues or graces add luster to a place or society”
- 3. “an embellishment note not belonging to the essential harmony or melody”
A Non-Essential

- Canada: No pesticide use on ornamental horticulture in the landscape
- Multiple U.S. Cities: Water restrictions for non-essential purposes, including fountains and landscapes
- Wood by-products for use as biomass fuel instead of container mix and “decorative” mulch
Not only non-essential...

- Non-Native
- Non-native = Invasive
- Ornamental horticulture ≠ agriculture
- Distinctions between urban agriculture and rural agriculture (i.e., rural development)
- Potential exemptions: ag tax status and assorted credits, like energy & environmental
Has no value...

- Can’t get insurance for it
- After thought in home building
- Not an appraisal component
- Invisible on municipal balance sheet
- Miniscule component of transportation infrastructure
- Oh, for the days of Walt and Lady Bird!
Conclusion:

There are fewer consumers to help us and more influencers to hurt us.
My turf groundcover:

- Green industry response to environmental issues
- Importance of consumer and legislator perceptions of our products & services
- Industry efforts related to our environmental value proposition
Industry efforts

- Sustainable Sites Initiative
- Use of plastics in pots and trays
- Monetizing the value of landscaping
  - Economically
  - Environmentally
- Biggest challenge: The business of doing business
Plastic Pot Initiatives

- Re-engineer: Poultry feather pots
- Re-cycle:
  - Curbside: Resin formulation
  - Industry programs/partnerships
- Re-use:
  - Standardization
  - Sanitization
Valuing the Landscape: Economically

- Landscaping: increases in value over time
- Challenge: Assessing monetary value of installed plant material
- Solution: Data base of plant price points
- Insurance initiative is underway, but far to go
Valuing the Landscape: Environmentally

- National green associations collaborating on research and information
- Defining the monetary value of “ecosystem services” of installed landscapes
- Best argument for access to water for the installed landscape!
The Business of Doing Business

- ANLA and SAF collaboration/OFA Support
- Industry Lighthouse Program
- New collaboration for ANLA Knowledge Center at: www.anla.org
- Get engaged yourself
Getting engaged

- Community activity includes influencing the community
- Car wash people
- Know your issues and your legislator
- Tour your business
- Work a campaign

Be an environmentalist!
Questions?
Comments?
Gripes?
Praises?
Beefs?
Joys?