

## Home-Grown Greenhouses Help Communities Grow

Dear Editor,

Northwest Ohio is fertile land. With about 80 greenhouses in Northwest Ohio, our region is in the top 5 percent of America's greenhouse-producing regions. There are about a dozen locally-owned greenhouses in Wood County, about a half dozen in eastern Lucas County, and several each in Ottawa and Sandusky counties.

Despite the abundance and variety of "home-grown" greenhouses, there's still a lot of outside competition. Each year, plants from Indiana, Michigan and Ontario are shipped in and sold through national chain home and garden centers. They're also sold through the "greenhouses" that pop up in grocery store and other retail parking lots.

These national garden center and pop-up greenhouses may have the buying power, but we're not getting our money's worth. So, why should you seek out local greenhouses?

Because you can talk with local experts who best know the native plants and climate conditions to answer our questions.

Because you get fresh, mature, high-quality plants and flowers that are grown locally. Therefore, your plants and flowers have a much better chance for survival compared with plants and flowers grown elsewhere and shipped in.

Because it's important for our local economy to support local business owners who have a solid stake in the community's best interest.

To help Northwest Ohio greenhouses compete and grow, the Maumee Valley Growers association took root last summer. The MVG's purpose is to help the local greenhouses work together and share best practices to compete against national and pop-up greenhouses. The MVG also helps local greenhouses improve their plants and services for Northwest Ohio gardeners.

While we're doing our part to support you, please do your part: The next time your green thumb is itching to get growing, get going to your local greenhouse.

Sincerely,

Joe Perlaky  
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Program Manager – Maumee Valley Growers

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