

# Determining the Importance of the Horticulture Industry

**W**HAT MAKES an industry important? Is a million dollars in horticultural sales enough? Is 10 million dollars? How about a billion dollars? Often the value of an industry is based on money, and you will see in this unit that the horticulture industry has great economic value. However, as you read this unit, keep in mind that horticulture has other values as well.



## Objective:



Explain the importance of the horticulture industry.

## Key Terms:



floral production  
floriculture  
landscape horticulture  
olericulture  
pomology

## The Importance of Horticulture

Horticulture boasts great popularity in the United States and throughout the world. It has also been common throughout history for people to raise fruits and vegetables in small gardens to supplement their diets. A “green revolution” took place in the 1960s and 1970s, and the interest in horticulture grew. Today, horticulture is popular and important in all societies, both rich and poor.

The popularity of horticulture is due to a number of factors. The horticulture industry provides economic value to local communities and to the country. A healthy industry creates job

opportunities. Horticultural practices provide high-quality food for people. Also, horticulture offers an increase in aesthetic pleasure that supports psychological well-being.

Education and training required for people wanting to be involved in the horticulture industry have led to increased enrollment in horticultural and agronomic programs at land-grant universities and two-year colleges. A student who plans to study horticulture can earn an associate's, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree. Earning a degree offers a better chance at finding a high-paying job in the horticulture industry.



**FIGURE 1.** Horticulture offers an increase in aesthetic pleasure that supports psychological well-being.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE

The ornamental horticulture industry is made up of two important segments. One is **floriculture**, the culture of flowers, and the other is **landscape horticulture**, the production and use of plants to beautify the environment. Both have significant value.

### Floriculture

Floriculture is an international, multibillion-dollar industry. Floriculture includes the production, distribution, and processing of flowering and foliage plants. **Floral production** is the growing of flowering or foliage crops to maturity. Once mature, floral crops are harvested and sold. Mature plants can be sold as cut flowers or foliage, potted flowering plants, foliage plants, or bedding plants.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service reports that in 2004, floriculture crops were worth \$5.2 billion on the wholesale market. California, Florida, Michigan, Texas, and New York led the nation in wholesale floriculture produc-



**FIGURE 2.** Floriculture includes the production, distribution, and processing of flowering and foliage plants.

tion. California accounted for \$1,018,247,000 in wholesale sales, while Florida was credited with \$825,672,000 in sales.

Of the \$5.2 billion wholesale value of floriculture crops, 37.8 percent was a result of bedding plant production. Potted flowering plants accounted for 16.7 percent; herbaceous perennials, 14.1 percent; foliage plants, 13.1 percent; cut flowers, 8.6 percent; propagative materials, 7.9 percent; and cut cultivated greens, 1.9 percent.

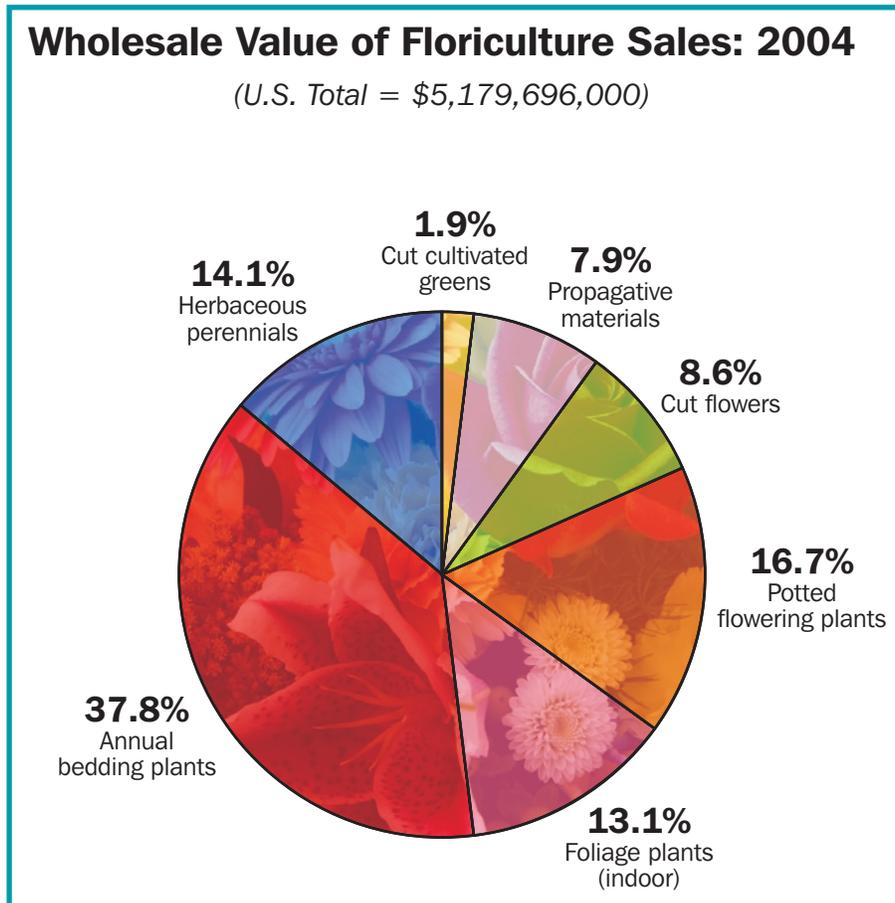


FIGURE 3. (Courtesy, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA)

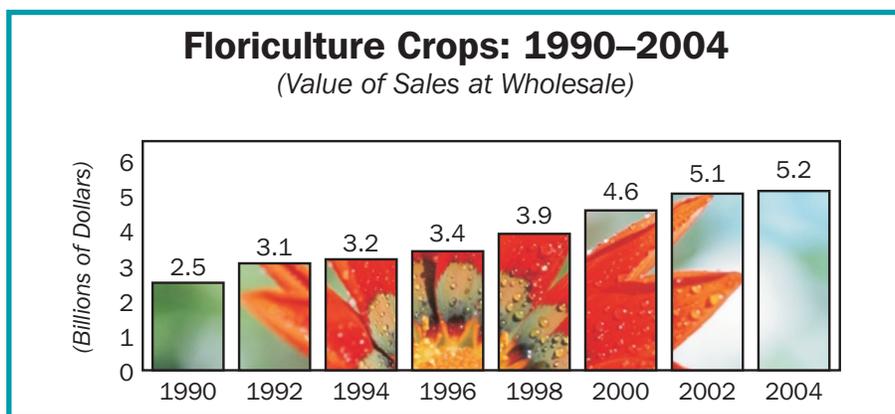


FIGURE 4. (Courtesy, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA)

## Landscape Horticulture

Landscape horticulture is a billion-dollar industry in the United States. The Gallup Organization conducted a survey on behalf of the National Gardening Association in 1999. It was found that in that year, homeowners in the United States spent \$50.9 billion to install, improve, and maintain their landscapes and gardens. These figures suggest that millions of people value a beautiful outdoor environment. The homeowners polled ranked the benefits of a well-maintained lawn and landscape as follows:



FIGURE 5. People value a beautiful outdoor environment.

- ◆ Beauty and relaxation for family, employees, or visitors (54.0 percent)
- ◆ Reflects positively on its owner (53.2 percent)
- ◆ Comfortable place to entertain, work at, or visit (47.4 percent)
- ◆ Increased real estate market value (44.1 percent)
- ◆ Helps beautify the neighborhood (43.3 percent)
- ◆ Provides a safe, high-quality play area for children (36.7 percent)
- ◆ Provides an exercise area for pets (21.3 percent)
- ◆ Helps purify the air (19.9 percent)
- ◆ Helps cool the air (17.8 percent)
- ◆ Provides a natural water filter to protect water quality and the environment (13.5 percent)

In 2000, nursery production was measured by the USDA to be at \$3.3 billion nationally. Deciduous shrubs accounted for 23 percent of total sales; broadleaf evergreens, 18 percent; coniferous evergreens, 12 percent; deciduous trees, 12 percent; propagative material, 11 percent; fruit and nut plants, 9 percent; deciduous flowering trees, 7 percent; vegetable transplants, 4 percent; and Christmas trees, 4 percent.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF OLERICULTURE

**Olericulture** is the area of horticulture that involves the production of vegetable food crops. Vegetables are not only important to our daily nutrition, but they are also important to the U.S. agricultural economy.



## FURTHER EXPLORATION...

### ONLINE CONNECTION: Agricultural Statistics

Visit government sites that report agricultural statistics. One example is the National Agricultural Statistics Service, <http://www.nass.usda.gov>. State governments often have similar departments. Gather statistics from these sites and determine the most important horticultural crops in your state and their total economic value. Report your findings to your class.

In 2004, vegetables made up more than \$10 billion of U.S. farm receipts. Vegetables, both fresh and processed, are a commodity. California is the leader in both fresh and processed vegetables in the United States. Other states leading in the fresh vegetable market are Florida, Arizona, Georgia, and Texas.

Vegetables are grown on 1 percent of the total cropland in the United States. This amount has been relatively stable for the past 25 years. However, the production of vegetables has increased. The increase in production on virtually the same amount of land is the result of increased technology and more efficient production practices.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POMOLOGY

**Pomology** is the area of horticulture that involves the production of fruit and nut crops. Fruits and nuts, like vegetables, are also important to our daily nutrition and the U.S. economy.

In 2004, the value of U.S. noncitrus fruit amounted to \$9.01 billion. Citrus production in 2005 totaled \$2.39 billion. The value for U.S. nut production in 2004 was \$3.25 billion. Fruit growing is a popular but labor-intensive industry. Hundreds of thousands of people are employed in fruit and nut production jobs.

The United States is one of the world's top producers of fruits and nuts. Ten percent of the world's apples, pears, plums, and prunes, 20 percent of the world's peaches, and 25 percent of the world's citrus fruit are produced in the United States.

### Summary:



Horticulture is popular and important in all societies, both rich and poor. The popularity of horticulture is due to its economic value, job opportunities created, high-quality food produced, and aesthetic pleasures.

Wholesale sales in 2004 for floriculture, which includes the production, distribution, and processing of flowering and foliage plants, totaled \$5.2 billion dollars. California, Florida, Michigan, Texas, and New York led the nation in wholesale floriculture production.

A 1999 survey conducted by the Gallup Organization found that homeowners in the United States spent 50.9 billion dollars to install, improve, and maintain their

landscapes and gardens. In 2000, the USDA measured nursery production at \$3.3 billion nationally.

In 2004, vegetables made up more than \$10 billion of U.S. farm receipts. The United States is one of the world's top producers of fruits and nuts. In 2004, the value of U.S. noncitrus fruit amounted to \$9.01 billion. Citrus production in 2005 totaled \$2.39 billion. The value for U.S. nut production in 2004 was \$3.25 billion.

## Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Why is horticulture popular?
2. What percentage of total floriculture sales is credited to each of the major crops?
3. What were landscape benefits cited by homeowners in a Gallup poll?
4. What is the estimated economic value of vegetable crops?
5. Why is the United States considered one of the world's top producers of fruits and nuts?

## Expanding Your Knowledge:



Visit a supermarket and record all the fruits and vegetables available for purchase. Note which items are in season and which must be grown elsewhere. If the produce manager has time, ask him or her where the produce is grown and how the supermarket can stock such a wide range of produce.

## Web Links:



### Charts and Maps—Floriculture

[http://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts and Maps/Floriculture Crops/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts_and_Maps/Floriculture_Crops/index.asp)

### Commercial Floriculture Survey & Census of Horticulture Specialties

[http://www.nass.usda.gov/Education & Outreach/brochures and ads/  
brochure-floriculture.pdf](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Education_&_Outreach/brochures_and_ads/brochure-floriculture.pdf)

### Economic Value and Benefits of Responsible Landscape Management

[http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:z2I7RaZoO4kJ:www.turfgrassod.org/  
waterright/chap4.pdf+gallup+poll+floriculture&hl=en&gl=us&ct=  
clnk&cd=1](http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:z2I7RaZoO4kJ:www.turfgrassod.org/waterright/chap4.pdf+gallup+poll+floriculture&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=1)

### Nursery Crops—2000 Summary

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/nassr/other/nursery/nurser01.txt>

### Charts and Maps

[http://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts and Maps/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts_and_Maps/index.asp)

(Click on “Citrus Fruits” and “Noncitrus Fruits.”)