



2009 survey

Identifying the needs and trends of the industry



Canadian Nursery Landscape Association
Association Canadienne des Pépiniéristes et des Paysagistes

**Landscape Canada
Surveys Canada's
Landscapers!**

The Landscape Canada Committee of the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association invited members of the landscape sector to share their expertise and input on the latest trends, knowledge of our sector and satisfaction with various association offerings.

With just over 1,800 CNLA members in the landscape sector, 209 responses were received — one of the best results in recent survey history. The simplified, on-line format made it quick and easy to respond. It is anticipated a greater response will be received in future surveys. The more responses received, the more accurate the information.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate. It clearly shows your dedication and commitment to the industry. The survey was anonymous, however respondents had the option to include their contact information to be entered into a draw for an iPod. Congratulations to Rick Hofstetter of Hofstetter Landscaping! Rick is a member of Landscape Ontario and received a new (CNLA engraved and green!) iPod.

The survey goal was to demonstrate the importance and contribution of the landscape sector to the Canadian economy; identify the needs and trends of the industry and help us, as an association, to better address priority issues and opportunities. Strategically, our landscape industry survey contains vital information from our members, which will serve as a basis for enhancing the industry.



Award-winning project by Year-Round Landscaping Inc.

Here are a few key highlights from the survey:

- **Skilled Labour:** 73% indicated difficulty in finding skilled labour (ie: 135 of the 209 respondents = 73%)
- **Labour (general):** recruiting and retaining skilled and unskilled labour: 51.3% ranks at the top of the list with 101 of the 209 respondents (51.3%) indicating it is always a challenge
- **Sustainable profit margin:** 44% indicated it was the second most prevalent business challenge next to labour.
- **Recruitment:** 53.8% indicated employee referrals as their best source, followed by local newspaper job postings and emailing job descriptions to educational institutions and associations
- **Benefits:** 60% provide bonuses (monetary or goods) based on performance
- **Uniforms:** 57.5% provide uniforms at no cost to the employee. CNLA's new member benefit program of a 15% discount with Mark's Work Warehouse (see website for more details) provides members with added incentive to take advantage of this program and enhance their public image. Your employees will thank you and so will your clients

The survey results will be posted on the CNLA website to help provide members with relevant industry data to use as a benchmark for their own company. CNLA receives media calls on a daily basis with requests for industry statistics. The survey provides supported data to answer media inquiries.

A survey of the current business year will be developed shortly and will be finalized early 2011, when we will invite you to participate again with 2010 statistics.

We are already adding some new questions based on member input. If you have information that you would like to have surveyed and incorporated into the 2010 survey, please email Liz Klose, Landscape Priorities Manager, at liz@canadanursery.com.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to excellence in the landscape sector.

Bruce Hunter
Landscape Industry Certified Technician,
Designer and Manager
Landscape Canada Committee Chair
Canadian Nursery Landscape Association

SURVEY INTERPRETATION

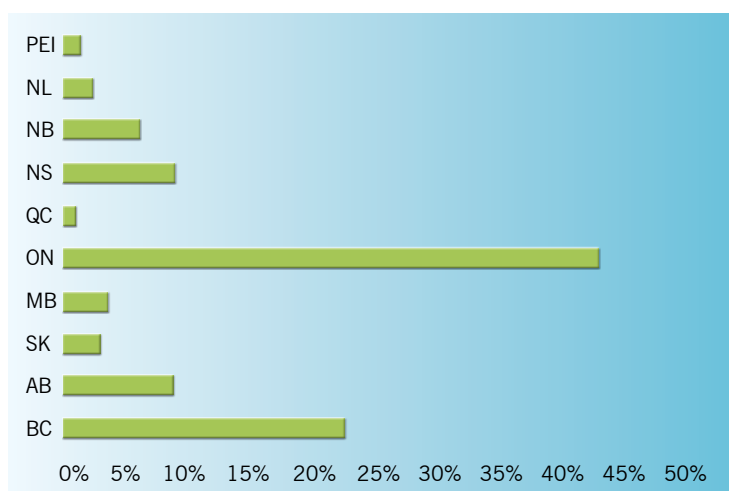
- The percentages reflect the number of responses out of a total number of responses for that question or category. Example: 100 responses out of a total 209 responses = 47.8% or 129 responses out of 136 who responded to the question = 94.9%
- The open-ended questions and “other (please specify)” options requested written feedback. They yielded a great response of comments! The input was tallied, rated and appears in order of importance, according to the number of responses: first, second, third (and fourth) respectively. Where a tie occurred, the responses are listed together. Only the top most common responses are listed, unless where otherwise included, depending on the nature of the question
- Additional interpretation is included for respective charts

99% of respondents are members of a landscape-related trade association

The most popular non-landscape trade related associations' members belong to are:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Construction Safety Association
- Home Builders Association
- Better Business Bureau

DATA COLLECTED IN THIS SURVEY WAS SUBMITTED BY BUSINESSES OPERATING IN THE FOLLOWING PROVINCES



RESPONDENTS' BUSINESS PROFILES

INTERPRETATION: 39.5% of members indicated that Landscape Design accounts for 1-5% of their business.

RESIDENTIAL PERCENTAGE OPTION

	1-5%	6-15%	16-24%	25-49%	50-75%
Landscape Design	39.5%	28.0%	10.5%	4.3%	17.5%
Landscape Construction/Installation	5.8%	17.6%	18.5%	27%	31.0%
Landscape Maintenance	24.3%	18.3%	16.5%	16.5%	24.3%
Landscape Irrigation	50.0%	26.0%	5.5%	11.1%	7.4%
Landscape Lighting	74.5%	10.6%	4.2%	8.5%	2.1%
Seasonal Services (seasonal decor/holiday lighting)	58.5%	29.2%	2.4%	4.8%	4.8%
Interior Plantscaping	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Garden Centre	17.6%	5.8%	35.3%	29.4%	11.7%
Nursery/Grower (wholesale or retail)	3.5%	20.0%	10.0%	20.0%	15.0%
Sales and Promotion	33.3%	33.3%	13.3%	13.3%	6.0%
Snow Removal	44.4%	32.0%	11.1%	6.9%	5.5%

MUTLI-RESIDENTIAL PERCENTAGE OPTION

	1-5%	6-15%	16-24%	25-49%	50-75%
Landscape Design	42.4%	30.3%	15.2%	6.1%	6.1%
Landscape Construction/Installation	31.4%	35.3%	21.6%	7.8%	3.9%
Landscape Maintenance	42.0%	20.0%	12.0%	16.0%	10.0%
Landscape Irrigation	68.4%	10.5%	5.3%	10.0%	5.3%
Landscape Lighting	80.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Seasonal Services (seasonal decor/holiday lighting)	80.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Interior Plantscaping	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Garden Centre	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Nursery/Grower (wholesale or retail)	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sales and Promotion	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Snow Removal	22.5%	38.7%	6.4%	16.1%	16.1%



Award-winning project by Pacifica Landscape Works

RESPONDENTS' BUSINESS PROFILES (continued)

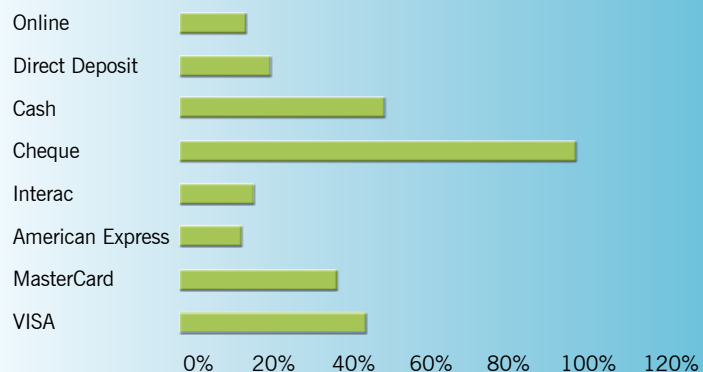
COMMERCIAL OR INSTITUTIONAL PERCENTAGE OPTION

	1-5%	6-15%	16-24%	25-49%	50-75%
Landscape Design	60.3%	17.2%	10.3%	5.2%	6.9%
Landscape Construction/Installation	21.8%	31.0%	18.5%	13.7%	13.7%
Landscape Maintenance	31.0%	21.8%	16.1%	18.3%	12.6%
Landscape Irrigation	33.3%	4.2%	12.5%	33.3%	16.7%
Landscape Lighting	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%	28.6%	0.0%
Seasonal Services (seasonal decor/holiday lighting)	64.3%	7.1%	7.1%	14.3%	7.1%
Interior Plantscaping	57.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Garden Centre	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Nursery/Grower (wholesale or retail)	33.3%	11.0%	0.0%	22.0%	33.0%
Sales and Promotion	18.2%	27.3%	18.2%	9.1%	27.3%
Snow Removal	16.3%	18.0%	14.0%	20.0%	31.0%

GOVERNMENT PERCENTAGE OPTION

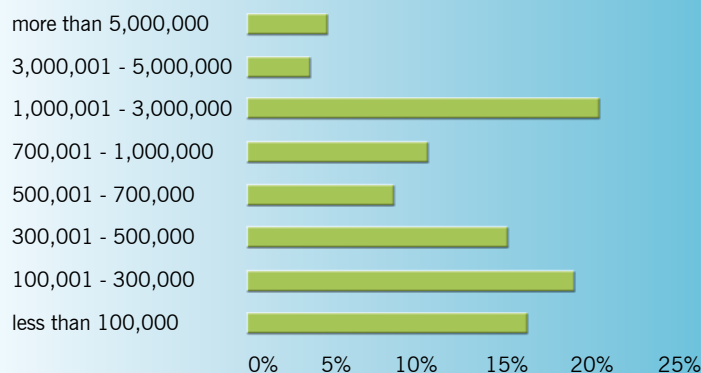
	1-5%	6-15%	16-24%	25-49%	50-75%
Landscape Design	35.7%	35.7%	7.1%	21.4%	0.0%
Landscape Construction/Installation	29.0%	35.0%	16.0%	12.9%	6.4%
Landscape Maintenance	37.9%	31.0%	10.3%	6.9%	13.8%
Landscape Irrigation	41.7%	33.3%	8.3%	16.7%	0.0%
Landscape Lighting	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Seasonal Services (seasonal decor/holiday lighting)	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Interior Plantscaping	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Garden Centre	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Nursery/Grower (wholesale or retail)	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sales and Promotion	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Snow Removal	35%	10.0%	20.0%	25.0%	10.0%

CHEQUES REMAIN THE MOST POPULAR METHOD OF PAYMENT FOR SALES AND SERVICES (BASED ON THE PERCENTAGE OF SALES ALLOCATED TO THE FOLLOWING PAYMENT METHODS OFFERED TO CLIENTS)



Award-winning project by Blasig Landscape Design and Construction

TOTAL ANNUAL GROSS SALES (20% OF MEMBERS WHO RESPONDED ARE IN THE 1,000,001-3,000,000 TOTAL ANNUAL GROSS SALES BRACKET)



37.1% of respondents are interested in a financing program for customers as a payment option

The following were determined as being the most successful business promotional initiatives:

- Referrals/networking/word of mouth (*all equally deemed the most important!*)
- Website/internet
- Advertising/decals on trucks

BUSINESS CHALLENGES OVER THE COURSE OF THE 2009 BUSINESS YEAR

INTERPRETATION: 51.3% (101 out of 197) of members indicated that labour – recruiting and retaining skilled and unskilled labour – was always a challenge.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE OPTIONS			
	Always a challenge	Sometimes a concern	Rarely an issue
Labour - recruiting and retaining skilled and unskilled labour	51.3%	38.1%	10.7%
Cash Flow - bridging the gap in the off-season, securing financing	32.7%	43.1%	24.3%
Priority Management - hands-on versus supervisory management; determining important of multiple tasks	25.8%	50.5%	23.7%
Strategic Planning - working on the business versus working in the business	34.3%	48.8%	16.9%
Quality - monitoring and ensuring quality of work performed	13.6%	42.7%	43.7%
Inventory Control - securing materials and supplies when required	3.5%	33.2%	63.3%
Sustainable Profit Margin - there is a common concern in the industry with regard to owners earning a fair wage for their efforts and landscape companies earning a sustainable profit margin	44.0%	41.5%	14.5%

Other challenges identified were:

- Keeping up with government regulations and reporting
- Income loss to pesticide ban, with more anticipated with HST
- Salt shortages beyond our control for snow and ice removal operators
- High degree of competition because there are very little barriers to entry; undercutting of some prices had created a market which will not allow for a exchange for professional and quality work

The following were determined as the top industry trends over the past 5 years:

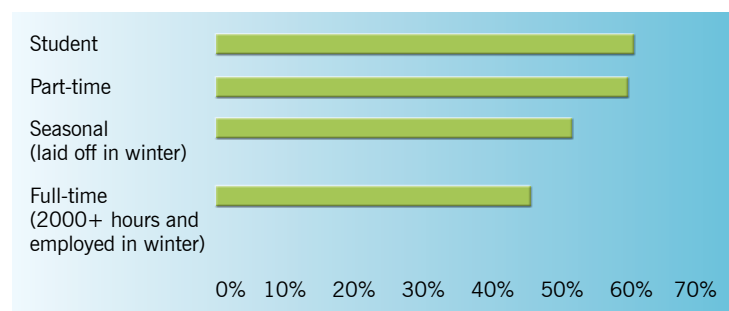
(The responses to this question had the greatest diversity)

- More people want outdoor living spaces!! With more emphasis on outdoor living, people are becoming more aware of the value of plants ie clients are becoming more sophisticated and knowledgeable
- Growth in the industry in both commercial and residential
- Cocooning/staycation/emphasis on outdoors: More people are staying home (either working from home or vacationing at home) and are therefore spending more of their income on their home and landscape
- Eco-conscious materials/green roofs more popular
More awareness on environmental stewardship and the increase in green roof installations
- Smaller margins and the lack of skilled workers

It was determined that the areas for potential growth in the industry in the next 5-10 years will be in:

- Environmental and sustainable conscious landscapes and materials
- Increased interest and growth in the landscape being the extension of the home ie: the outdoor living spaces
- Edible gardens (vegetable gardens) and more seasonal containers and outdoor decor

INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED

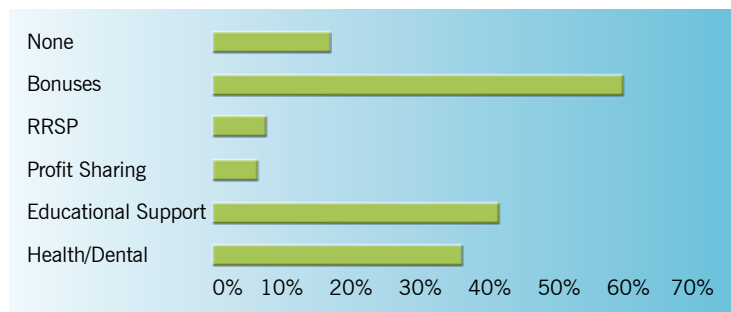


INTERPRETATION: The number of employees in each category was tallied according to groups, from 1-5 employees up to 21-30 employees. The survey indicated that the majority of members who responded had 1-5 employees.



Award-winning project by 3 Seasons Landscaping

EMPLOYEE RETENTION INCENTIVES



INTERPRETATION: As a means of employee retention, 60% of the members stated that they provide bonuses (monetary or goods) based on performance, followed by educational support.

73.5% of respondents indicated they have difficulty finding skilled labour. Some of the barriers were determined as:

- Training and attractiveness of the industry
- Supply of skilled labour
- Seasonal work
- Skills/wages

10% of respondents are presently bringing in foreign/low skilled labour

46.3% of the members surveyed are currently registering job openings on the Service Canada website at www.jobbank.gc.ca Other locations for posting jobs were identified as:

- Provincial and local job work websites /search engines
- Provincial trades association publications
- Kijiji (free classified ads on line)
- Local colleges and university job boards
- Own website

RECRUITING TECHNIQUES

OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS LOOKING TO FILL AVAILABLE POSITION

	Most Successful	Moderately Successful	Not worth it
Local newspaper	14.5%	47.6%	37.9%
Regional newspaper	1.2%	33.3%	65.5%
Community bulletins	3.0%	28.4%	68.7%
Industry publications	4.3%	42.0%	53.6%
Industry associations websites	12.3%	41.5%	46.2%
Postings on your website	14.5%	54.8%	30.6%
Email job postings to educational institutions, associations etc.	10.7%	50.0%	39.3%
Employee referrals	52.8%	41.6%	5.6%
Employment agency	13.7%	39.7%	46.6%
Job finder websites	28.6%	35.1%	36.4%

INTERPRETATION: The success of recruiting techniques showed that employee referrals were the most successful; whereas, regional and community publications were deemed not worth the expense.

Other recruitment techniques included:

- Craigslist (centralized online network for jobs and other classifieds) and Kijiji
- Networking and word of mouth
- Following up on resumes and applications mailed in

42.4% of respondents rate the public image of the industry as 'good'

Some of techniques or methods mentioned by the respondents to promote a positive public image of your firm include:

- Professionalism – ethical business practices, trained and knowledgeable staff, customer service
- Certification
- Get involved in the community events
- CNLA to continue to promote public awareness of certification, landscape awards program and professionalism of the industry



Award-winning project by Willow Creek Landscaping

57.8% of members who responded provide uniforms at no cost to their employees

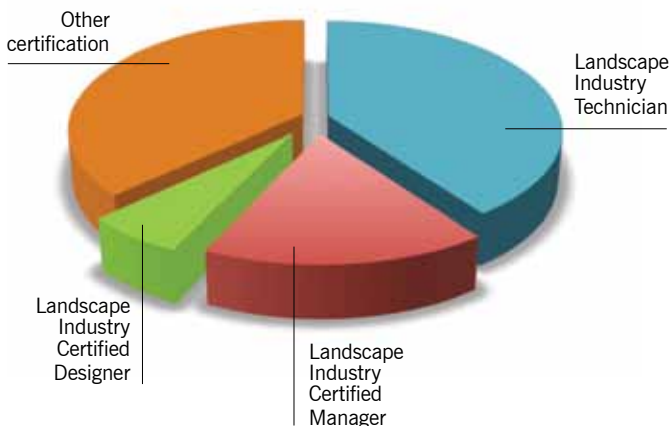
CNLA LANDSCAPE ONSITES

25% said they are presently using CNLA "Landscape OnSites" as a training tool for their employees. To access downloadable files on job instruction highlights for various tasks or to order Landscape OnSites manuals for 'tail-gate' training sessions for employees, visit this link: www.canadanursery.com/Page.asp?PageID=122&ContentID

While it is not on the immediate agenda for editing, we invited input from users on what changes they would find beneficial. The following information provided will be considered for future editions:

- Video versions accessible on line
- More detailed information on tasks, especially lawn maintenance and employee supervision/motivation techniques
- More emphasis on safety/link with Landscapesafety.com resource already a very beneficial instruction guide
- French translation
- Make it easier to find on the website; promote it more (suggestions we can act on NOW!)

CERTIFICATION



Of the 53.6% of respondents who employ certified staff, the distribution of certification is as follows:

- 60.6% Landscape Industry Certified Technician;
- 25% Landscape Industry Certified Manager;
- 9.6% Landscape Industry Certified Designer;
- 54.8% Other certification, which included:
 - Post-Secondary Education – apprenticeship, diploma
 - IPM Certification
 - Certified Irrigation Technician
 - ISA Certified Arborist
 - ICPI Certified Installer

Some of the benefits of having certified employees on staff:

- Training – a more knowledgeable employee is more committed, and generates quality work and greater customer satisfaction and more business
- Professionalism – direct reflection on business
- Self-esteem for the employee – more confident in work

66.2% said they specifically reward staff that are certified or in the process of being certified. Here's what some owners and managers presently doing to reward certified employees:

- Pay for educational courses and the travel to course to prepare candidates; pay for travel to test sites and reimburse exam fees upon successful certification
- Increase in pay once certified
- Pay for tuition for apprenticeship programs

Volunteer and charity work done by members to enhance community green spaces:

- Donating materials and labour to develop a community garden; clean up of a local park
- Tree and plant donations for plantings at local schools, community centres and churches
- Involved in Arbor Day and Earth Day; Habitat for Humanity initiatives (media coverage)

The primary environmental landscape concerns of your clients:

- Pesticide use
- Water restrictions
- Lack of controls for pests in lieu of cosmetic pesticide bans
- Requesting alternative products: organic, permeable pavement

With the emphasis on reducing our footprint and diligence in “reduce, reuse and recycle”, for the benefit of the environment, we have included more member responses in the following survey questions to feature the efforts of members and to inspire you with new ideas.

72.5% recycle construction and/or installation waste.

Where does it go?

- Anything that can be diverted from landfill the better;
- Separate metal, asphalt, wood, concrete, soil, sod, green waste, card board, paper, packaging materials and send to sort into black or gray (paper/cardboard), blue (glass, metal, plastic) or green bins destined to appropriate recycling facilities
- Take to pots to pot recycling programs, reuse them ourselves, or taken back to the nursery for their reuse;
- Hardscape materials from renovations are used in other projects
- All of our brick cuts are recycled and we buy it back after crushing as our base materials
- Recycle useable wood for building structures, bird houses, kindling wood
- Recycle soil and excavation material (soil screened for future projects)
- Donate used materials that still have purpose to local Habitat for Humanity or Habitat Reuse Stores

71.6% compost garden waste. Here’s what some members are doing:

- Take debris to municipal yard waste composting site
- Company yard has composting site; compost then used in landscapes; chip brush for future mulch use
- Grass clipping mulched on each site (mulching mower) and garden debris (no weeds) composted on each property for home owner use

55.9% of respondents offer “organic” products and services. The responses were very diverse, but here’s a brief summary of some examples. A common theme was mechanical, cultural biological controls – a healthy plant in the right location is a pest resistant plant!

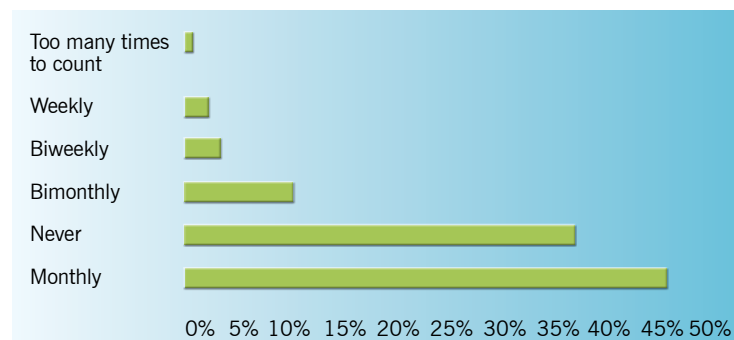
- Compost and compost tea
- For weed control between pavers and flagstone: horticultural vinegar, Aquacide (super heated water weed control) or a “hydro-steamer”
- Kelp fertilizer and foliar
- Sarritor, corn gluten, nematodes, ladybugs, Tanglefoot, BTK, dormant oil (early in season), beet juice extract to improve soil biology, Turf Revolution products and services

THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF RESPONSES INDICATE “YES” TO SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE TECHNIQUES

SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE TECHNIQUES		
	Yes	No
Design in harmony with site nature, environment, resources and culture	82.6%	17.4%
Stay current with landscape horticulture industry product innovations	95.7%	4.3%
Invest in training and industry knowledge	94.3%	5.7%
Work to a landscape specification	88.8%	11.2%
Employ environmentally-sound groundwater management, rain gardens, bio-swaes and green roofs	55.2%	44.8%
Assess and utilize existing site soils and resources	85.8%	14.2%
Reduce construction footprint	90.6%	9.4%
Protect existing natural features and site vegetation	94.9%	5.1%
Choose a site-specific plant specification	86.6%	13.4%
Reduce, reuse and recycle construction waste	85.3%	14.7%
Design and employ a site-specific maintenance plan	74.2%	25.8%

77.1% indicated that they worked to a landscape specification on landscape installations

ACCESSING MEMBER RESOURCES THROUGH WEBSITE



46.6% of respondents utilize the CNLA website and its resources on a monthly basis. Members requested information on the HortProtect Insurance program and will be sent information on the program.

Members indicated they would be interested in being interviewed and featured in the CNLA *Newsbrief* for their community service work. A questionnaire is in development and will be sent to all interested parties. We will provide highlights of all who respond in future publications. Thank you dedicated volunteers! 🌱