

Hoop Houses are not Greenhouses!

PGGG, March 2021

-John Langendoen, Willowbrook Nurseries, Fenwick-



Simple hoop house for dormant plants



Complicated greenhouse growing marijuana

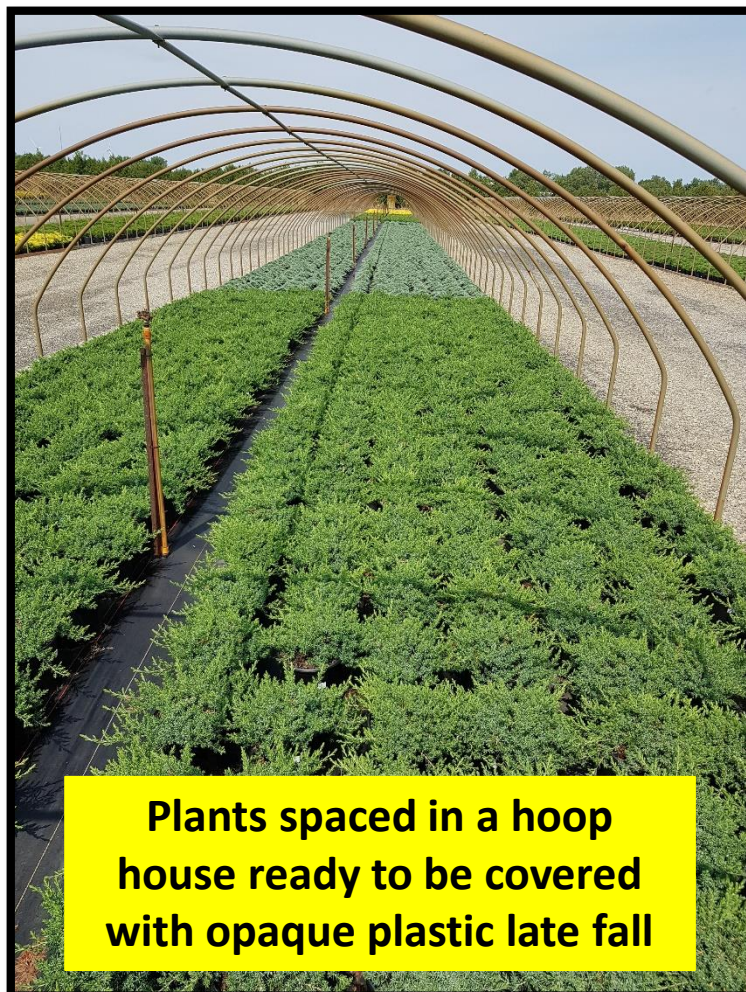
Pelham Greenhouse Growers Group (PGGG)

- Formed September 2019, representing 11 Pelham greenhouse & nursery operations
- Mandate is to facilitate communication between growers & Town of Pelham
- Co-Chairs
 - John Langendoen, *Willowbrook Nurseries, Fenwick*
 - Louis Damm, *Floral Dimensions, Fenwick & Damm Corporation*
- Consultant
 - Hugh Fraser, OTB Farm Solutions, St. Catharines



PGGG is a huge economic & job driver

- 1.6 m sq.ft permanent greenhouse area
- 1.1 m sq.ft temporary hoop house area
- \$42.5 m annual sales
- 135 FTE; 64 live & pay taxes in Pelham
- 205 part-time & offshore workers
- \$10.5 m payroll



Plants spaced in a hoop house ready to be covered with opaque plastic late fall

The 'Ask'

1. No other municipality in Ontario, except Pelham, asks for building permits for hoop houses....**we ask Council for the same treatment as our competitors**
2. Building permits cost a lot of money, slow down expansion & trigger property taxes, which in turn eliminates exemptions from retail sales tax for HH building materials



Boxwood spaced out both inside & outside the hoop house so it can grow in summer

Hoop houses have unsuspectedly been caught in the local cannabis web

- In spring 2019, greenhouses became no longer exempt from Site Plan Control like all other agricultural uses, likely because of cannabis
- In fall 2019 an on-line Town report links greenhouses and hoop houses:
 - *‘Existing Official Plan policies (B2.1.3.12 & B2.2.8) require a ZBL amendment for greenhouses and **hoophouses**...lot coverage of the greenhouse or **hoophouse**...require that any greenhouse or **hoophouse** will be subject to Site Plan Control’*
- **Hoop houses simply aren’t greenhouses & should not be linked in any documents**

Here are reasons HH aren't GH!

1. GH are permanent; **HH are temporary**
2. GH clear cladding encourages plant growth; **HH opaque cladding discourages growth**
3. GH used year-round; **HH used only over winter**
4. GH worked in daily; **HH worked in sporadically**
5. GH can grow marijuana; **HH can't grow weed!**
6. GH have many services; **HH simple, or none**
7. GH elaborate ventilation; **HH just open doors!**



**Boxwood discouraged
from growing in hoop
house (snow pushing
on sides Feb. 19, 2021)**



**Potted ornamentals
encouraged to grow
in a greenhouse**

Here are (more) reasons HH aren't GH!

8. GH built by contractors; **HH built by growers**
9. GH have permanent floors; **HH on soil/stone**
10. GH have foundations; **HH just pipes in ground**
11. GH have piers below frost; **HH pipes 2 ft deep**
12. GH are heated; **HH almost as cold as outside**
13. GH are engineered; **HH are not engineered**
14. GH use structural steel; **HH non-structural steel**

**Hoop houses
assembled by growers
with simple tools**



**Greenhouses built by
specialized contractors**

Here are (more) reasons HH aren't GH!

- 15. GH often 1 million sq.ft; **HH rarely 10,000 sq.ft**
- 16. GH can get up to 32 ft high; **HH get to 8 ft high**
- 17. GH are gutter connected; **HH aren't connected**
- 18. GH exempt from RST; **HH also exempt from RST**
(but only if they aren't assessed property tax)
- 19. GH property tax everywhere; **HH only Pelham**
- 20. GH need BP everywhere; **HH only in Pelham**
- 21. GH cost at least \$50/sf; **HH about \$1.25/sf**



**Greenhouses are
connected**



**Hoop houses are
not connected**

Thank you for listening

- Some believe hoop houses are a slippery slope to growing cannabis inside, but cannabis needs good growing conditions like in a greenhouse, not the conditions in a hoop house that is:
 - Temporary
 - Covered with opaque plastic that plants won't grow in
 - Unheated
 - Ventilated manually
- Hoop houses should not require building permits just like they do not in every other municipality

