

April 18, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Rob Langendoen from Langendoen Nurseries has asked me to provide an overview regarding how hoop-house (polyhouses) structures are treated in other municipalities and the Province with respect to regulatory issues. We are hoping that this information will clarify how hoop-house structures are utilized in agricultural and horticultural production. Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We would be pleased to take you on a tour of horticultural operations so that you can witness how the structure is used to over-winter plants.

Landscape Ontario perspective Re: Hoop-House Assessments

Profile of the Nursery/Landscape sector of Horticulture

Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association represents over 2000 firms operating in the Nursery/Landscape Industry. Our function is to promote and advance horticulture. Nursery and Floriculture represents the largest farm-gate crop receipts in Agriculture. Ontario's horticultural growers produce over 1 billion dollars of ornamental plants. The industry is a considerable employer (over 100,000 jobs) and contributes significant economic and environmental benefit to Ontario's communities.

The issue of Hoop House Assessment has come up in the past and doubtless will come up in the future as our members in different communities go through inspections and assessment.

Over the years we have reviewed this issue with:

Mr. John Devries, Town of Milton Planning Department, Bill Hopkins, Assessment Officer for the Township of Westminister, Ed Vanderwindt from the Town of Ancaster, Brenda Petro from Essex Region, Harry Klassen from the Township of Mersia, Paul Gill from Simcoe, Mr. Knox from Haldimand Township, Rick Jones of Murray Township and many other municipal officials.

The City of St. Catharines, Ministry of Revenue, Township of Flamborough and other communities in Ontario have also considered this issue. Central to the issue is usually a technical misunderstanding about the nature of Hoop-Houses and the differences between Greenhouses and Hoop-Houses.

The following overview explains the nature of Hoop-Houses also referred to as Poly-Houses:

- Hoop-Houses are temporary structures used to over-winter nursery stock.
- A plastic covering is used directly as protection against frost and wind.
- Some of the covering is removed in the early spring. For more tender varieties, the plastic is removed when the threat of frost is past
- If the temperatures are low in the spring, holes are cut in the plastic to allow access to the plants for shipping purposes.

- Hoop-Houses are not assessed property taxes as structures by municipal governments, whereas Greenhouses are.
- The plastic covering for Hoop-Houses are not assessed provincial sales tax, (see Retail Sales Tax Guide 807).
- Hoop-Houses are not considered permanent structures as they have a temporary use, usually contain no doors or windows and have no form of controlled heat and humidity. In fact, many of our members set up their Hoop-Houses in the fall and store them for the summer.
- Hoop-Houses are sealed up to prevent any loss of moisture.
- They are simply a form of temporary storage.
- The plastic covering for a Hoop-House has a short life and is usually discarded after one winter.
- The steel tubing is used simply to keep the plastic off the plants. It has no real structural purpose.
- Some growers are experimenting with other forms of winter storage utilizing pits covered over with plastic. This type of system would in no way be confused with an assessable structure yet the purpose is identical to a Hoop-House.

For your information, please refer to Decisions of the Assessment Review Court in a case involving one of our members. Also please refer to pg.2 of St. Catherines BY-LAW NO. 84-120. It distinguishes between Hoop-Houses and Green Houses. The Ministry of Revenue also defines the difference between a Hoop-House and a Greenhouse for tax exclusion purposes.

Please see <http://www.rev.gov.on.ca/en/guides/rst/807.html#hoophouses>

I hope this information is helpful. You should be aware that our members are not assessed in any other community in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony DiGiovanni". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Tony DiGiovanni,
Executive Director