2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties

The 2009 Census of Horticulture counted 21,585 operations in the United States with sales of $10,000 or more in horticultural specialty crops, a decrease of 2,173 operations since the 1998 Census of Horticulture. Sales of horticultural crops only increased by 10 percent over this period, compared to a 60 percent increase for all crop commodities[1].

Categories where sales increased more than average include food crops grown under cover, bedding plants, nursery stock and propagative materials. Categories with a lower than average change in sales include sod, potted flowering plants, cut Christmas trees, dried bulbs, cut flowers and cut cultivated greens.

	2009 Value of Sales	1998 Value of Sales	% Change
All Horticultural Crops	$11.7 billion	$10.6 billion	+10.3
Nursery Stock	$3.9 billion	$3.1 billion	+24.3
Annual Bedding/Garden Plants	$2.3 billion	$1.7 billion	+33.3
Sod, Sprigs or Plugs	$877 million	$835 million	+5.0
Potted Flowering Plants	$871 million	$868 million	+0.4
Herbaceous Perennial Plants	$844 million	$627 million	+34.5
Propagative Materials	$602 million	$493 million	+22.0
Food Crops Grown Under Protection	$553 million	$223 million	+148.5
Foliage Plants	$510 million	$595 million	-14.3
Cut Flowers	$403 million	$513 million	-21.3
Transplants for Commercial Vegetable Production	$331 million	$156 million	+111.6
Cut Christmas Trees	$250 million	$256 million	-2.5

[1]U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. *Farm Income and Balance Sheets, 1929-2010.*

U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

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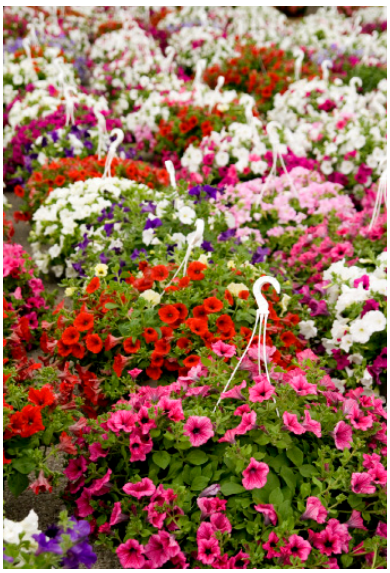


Top 5 Annual Bedding Plants:

1. **Petunias**
2. **Geraniums**
3. **Pansies**
4. **Impatiens**
5. **Begonias**

Expenses

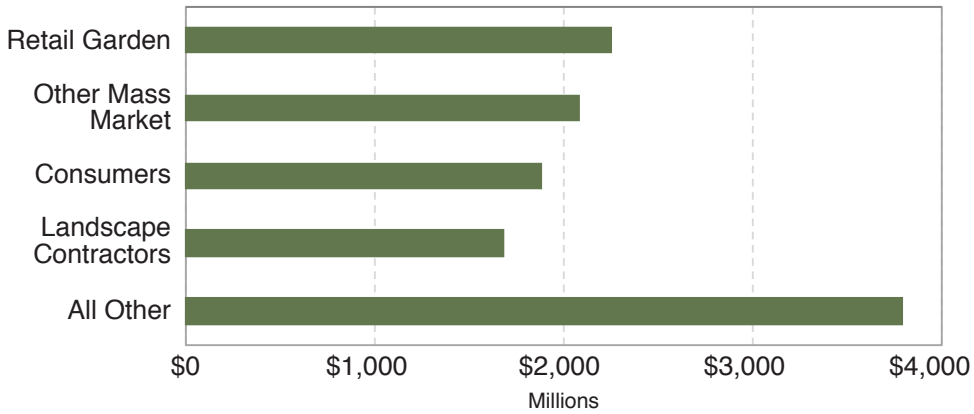
The single largest expense for horticultural specialty operations is hired labor, which includes salaries paid to hired workers, as well as benefits for workers. Horticultural operations employed 280,201 hired workers in 2009. Hired labor expenses were more than twice the amount of the next largest expense, which was for seeds, plants, vines and trees. Other significant production expenses included the expense for containers, which includes pots and flats, and for gasoline, fuels and oils.

Top 5 Horticulture Production Expenses	Total Cost (Billions)	% of Total Expenses
Total Hired Labor Expense	$3.61	38.1
Seeds, Plants, Vines, Trees, Etc.	$1.48	15.6
All Other Production Expenses	$0.62	6.6
Total Containers Expense	$0.49	5.2
Gasoline, Fuels and Oils Purchased	$0.46	4.9

Marketing Channels

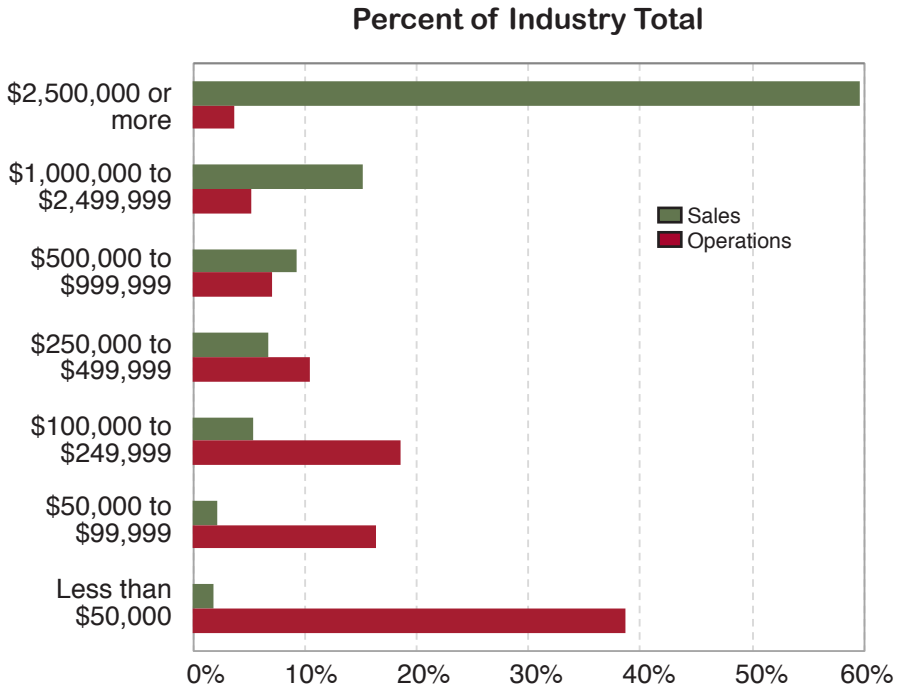
Retail garden centers and nurseries (excluding mass marketers) were the largest purchasers of horticultural specialty crops in 2009, with purchases of $2.3 billion. Other mass marketers, including discount chain stores and hardware/home improvement stores, were the second largest customers of horticultural products, with purchases of $2.1 billion in 2009.

Value of Sales by Marketing Channel



Sales by Size of Operation

The majority of all sales of horticultural products, including wholesale and retail sales, are from the largest operations, those with $2,500,000 or more in annual sales. While comprising only 4 percent of the total number of U.S. operations selling horticultural products, they produce over 60 percent of all horticultural products sold.



Wholesale and Retail Sales

Wholesale sales accounted for 85 percent of all horticultural sales in 2009. The top two wholesale crops were nursery stock followed by annual bedding and garden plants. Horticultural specialty operations also sold $1.8 billion at the retail level, or 15 percent of the total value of horticultural production. The top crop for sales at the retail level was annual bedding and garden plants, followed by nursery stock. Smaller operations sold more at the retail level. Operations with sales of less than $250,000 accounted for 30 percent of all retail sales.

Top 5 Nursery Stock Categories:

1. **Broadleaf Evergreens**
2. **Coniferous Evergreens**
3. **Deciduous Shrubs**
4. **Fruit and Nut Plants**
5. **Deciduous Flowering Trees**

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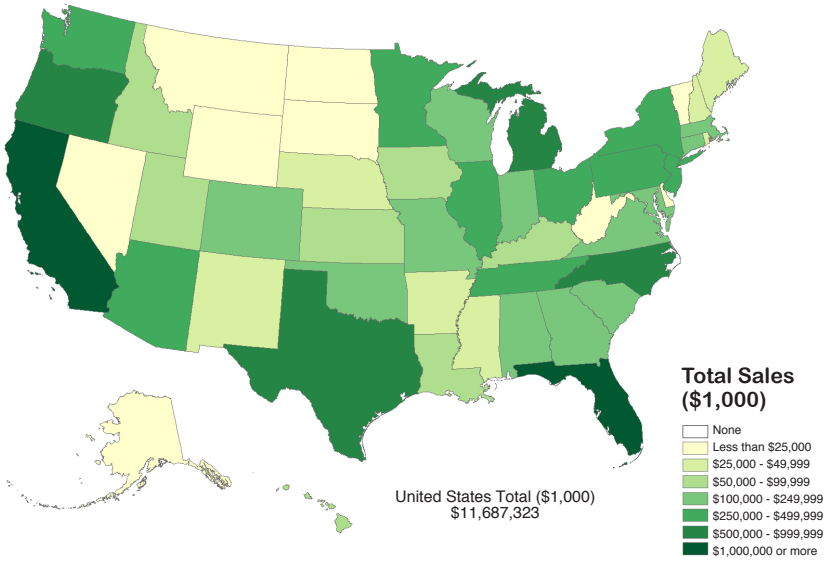
Geography of Horticulture Production - Top States

California was the largest producer of horticultural crops in terms of sales, with over $2.3 billion in sales in 2009. This was almost twice as much as the next largest state, Florida, which had sales of $1.3 billion. The Census of Horticulture provides information about sales both at the wholesale and retail levels.

Top 5 States by Wholesale Sales	Sales	Top 5 States by Retail Sales	Sales
California	$2.0 billion	**California**	$235 million
Florida	$1.2 billion	**Michigan**	$108 million
Oregon	$791 million	**Minnesota**	$97 million
Texas	$533 million	**Pennsylvania**	$88 million
Michigan	$459 million	**Texas**	$87 million

Horticultural Specialty Crops
2009 Total Sales



For More Information

Access the complete results of the 2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties online. Results include detailed national and state-level data for specific sectors of the horticulture industry and individual species of horticultural crops as well as information on the amount and type of containers sold of each species and sales value at both the wholesale and retail level.

www.nass.usda.gov

www.agcensus.usda.gov

Agricultural Statistics Hotline
(800) 727-9540

2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties