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# Brief profile of Canadian plant purchasers

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## Background

The following report provides a brief profile of Canadian gardeners. The information is based on data collected across various Vineland studies conducted between 2015-2018 including consumer research on:

- Canadian Hardy Roses (Funded by Agricultural Adaptation Council and CNLA)
- Flowers for Asian Canadians (Funded by the OMAFRA-UofG partnership and Longo's Brothers Fruit Markets Inc.)
- Edible Ornamentals (Funded by Agricultural Adaptation Council and CNLA)
- Edible flowers (Funded by OMARA-U of G Partnership and Freeman Herbs Inc.)

Sample sizes are provided in brackets (N=) for reference.

## How are Canadians gardening?

- Approximately 75% of Canadians keep a garden (N=904).
- Among gardeners, over 70% have a landscape garden and 55% keep plants on a patio or balcony.

**Table 1.** Garden type kept by Canadian gardeners (N=678).

Garden type	Percentage
Landscape	44.7%
Patio+Landscape	19.3%
Patio	12.7%
Balcony	12.2%
Other combinations of above options	11.1%
	100.0%

- 54% of gardeners have mostly or only perennials, 32% have mostly or only annuals and 14% have an approximately even split (N=575).
  - A higher proportion of Asian-Canadians keep predominantly annuals (43% mostly or only annuals) (N=110)
- Around two-thirds of gardeners dedicate a portion of their garden to edible plants (N=493)
- Independent garden centres and hardware stores are the most common purchase locations for plants.

**Table 2.** Where Canadians shop for plants (N=569).

Where do you obtain the majority of your plants?	Percentage
Hardware store	31.8%
Independent garden centre	31.5%
Grocery store	15.6%
Mass merchandiser (e.g. Walmart, Costco)	11.8%
Other (family/friends, farmer's market, online)	9.3%
	100.0%

- More Asian-Canadians shop for plants at a hardware store (40%) than a garden centre (19%). (N=110)

### Attitudes, experiences and gardening knowledge

- **They're not just gardening because they have to.** 64% of gardeners say they garden because it's enjoyable. The number jumps to 81% if you include those who indicate gardening is an obligation or chore but also consider it an enjoyable one. N=210
- **Gardeners need help selecting better performing roses.** In a number of Vineland studies, gardeners were asked, "Think back to the last time you purchased a garden plant and then as the growing season went on, you became disappointed with your plant choice. What was the plant?". The plants that are cited by far the most often and most consistently across studies are roses (did not bloom well or died). Other plants that were mentioned frequently in some studies include tomatoes and strawberries (died or did not produce a lot of fruit).
- **Most gardeners have limited plant care knowledge.** When gardeners were asked 8 basic questions about their own garden or garden plant care in general, only 28% were able to answer 4 or more questions correctly. 44% answered 2-3 correctly and 28% answered 0-1 correctly (N=510). To view the gardening knowledge questionnaire, see page 4 of manuscript, "Exploring Approaches for classifying ornamental garden plant purchasers".
  - **It's important to support customers with plant after-care to motivate future purchases.** The more knowledgeable gardeners were about plant care, the higher their plant expenditures. Therefore it's important to support customers with plant after-care as being unsuccessful with plant care is likely to lead to discouragement and inhibit further plant purchases.
  - **Younger consumers may particularly need support.** Younger consumers tended to have lower objective plant care knowledge.
  - **Gardening expertise is not gender-specific.** Males and females had no significant differences in knowledge or time spent gardening.

### Indoor plant purchasing

- Approximately 70% of Canadians purchase potted plants and/or cut flowers (N=945).
  - Among Asian-Canadians, this number varies from 80-95% depending on the ethnic group (N=711).
- Most potted plant purchases are purchased by consumers for their own home. When asked about purchasing potted plants for the home or as a gift, 88% of purchasers said they purchased a plant in the past 12 months for their own home and 59% purchased one as a gift for someone. (N=243)
  - Birthdays were the most common potted plant gift purchasing occasion, followed by mother's day.

## Asian-Canadians' indoor plant needs

- South Asian (e.g. India, Pakistan), Chinese and Filipino Canadians are the largest visible minority groups in Canada.
- Over 80% of surveyed Asian-Canadians expressed that there were plants from their home country they wished were more easily available in Canada (N=711).
- The most sought after plants were lotus, jasmine sambac, plumeria, camellia and African marigold.
- Diwali and Chinese New Year are the most important plant purchasing holidays.



Plumeria



Jasmine Sambac



Lotus



African Marigold

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