

An Assessment of Regional Urban Tree Stakeholders' Experiences

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Addressing Regional Tree Supply Challenges and Opportunities – *Research Team*

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Addressing Regional Tree Supply Challenges and Opportunities – *Steering Committee*

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Focus Groups - Methods

- Range of professionals from the region
- Explore connections in the production and procurement of trees
- Specifically asked for constraints and opportunities for creating a sustainable supply of urban trees
- 3 groups, 16 total
 - 4 growers
 - 3 municipal arborists/foresters
 - 2 landscape install/commercial reps
 - 5 gov't reps
 - 1 NGO employee
 - 1 landscape designer

Results – factors influencing production

Growers have a **complex decision-making process**.

Their decisions are driven by

- Market demand (clients, historic trends)
- Large-scale, consistent purchasers like developers
- Availability of liners

Results – factors influencing production

Demand and sales

Customer demand

Historic demand

LA trends

Avoid new,
untested trees

Availability (of liners)

Growing time


Tree success and reliability

Hardiness, soils

Pests and pathogens

Invasiveness

Successful cultivars



...we're really trying to look forward on what trees we think are going to be in demand...for us that mostly gets back to trying to choose really the good trees. Not the newest and the latest, but the trees that are kind of proven and we think are gonna be around for a while...

- *Grower*



Results – factors influencing purchasing

Those purchasing trees in large quantities choose trees based on a **large variety of factors**, but the major influences are:

- Availability (species, quality, size and stock type)
- Tree performance and suitability
- Maintenance requirements
- Climate change considerations

Results – factors influencing purchasing

Tree performance

Site suitability

Tree function

Tree size at planting

Climate change

Pests and pathogens

Availability

Quality

Native

**Maintenance
requirements**

Limit cultivars

Historic landscape

Local provenance

Diversity

Costs/Funding

Timing



Right tree, right place
- *City Urban Forester*

Why are you planting?
- *Arborist, Associate Director*



Results – challenges in urban tree supply

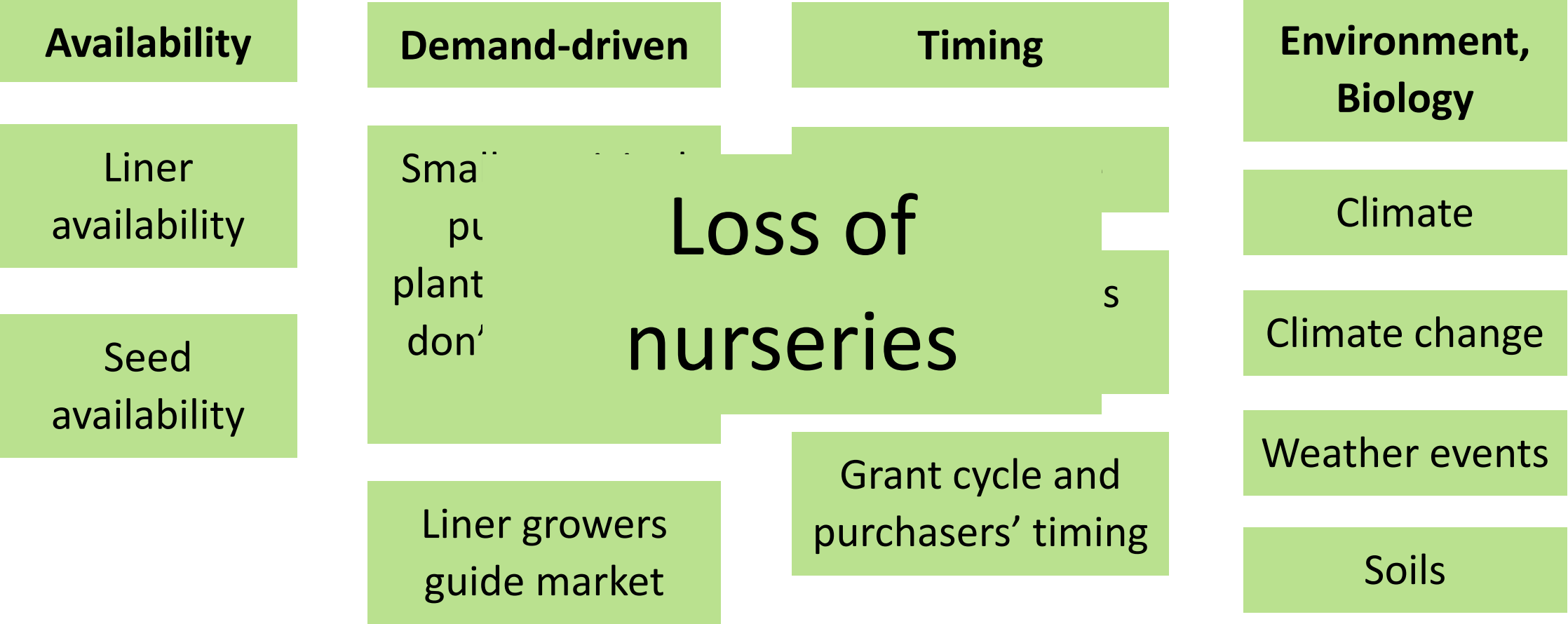
Growers' perspective

Primarily related to the themes of:

- Availability of liners
- Commercial demand
- Timing (growth time and purchaser timing)
- Environment (climate, soil, weather events, etc.)

Results – challenges in urban tree supply

Growers' perspective





[Referencing large-scale
propagation nurseries]
...those guys pretty
much own the chain
of all of that stuff...

- *Grower*



Results – challenges in urban tree supply

Consumers' perspective

Primarily related to the themes of:

- Availability (species, quality, stock size)
- Commercial demand
- Timing (growth time and purchaser timing)
- Environmental and urban site constraints
- Limited ability to shape the market
- Lack of knowledge of purchasing logistics

Results – challenges in urban tree supply

Consumers' perspective

Availability

Quality stock

Variety of
stock sizes

Native, not
cultivars

Competing with
other purchasers

Timing

Grant cycle and
purchasers' timing
vs. growers' timing

Funding, Program Capacity

Staffing

Policy and
lawmakers


Environment, Biology

Climate

Climate change

Pests and pathogens

Urban sites



I think that the challenge is having, the right tree at the right size and the right quantity at the right time when these projects come up.

- *Grower*



Results – Overcoming supply challenges

Primarily related to the themes of:

- Partnership and communication
- Contract growing
- Increased programmatic capacity
- Non-profit nurseries
- Increase nursery quality

Results – opportunities for expanding selection

Partnership

Contract growing

State assistance

Brokers and staging nurseries

Communication

Education

Visit the farm

Expert recommendations and technical assistance


Professional organizations and meetings

Funding and resources


Staffing and workforce development

Nonprofit nurseries

Policy and lawmakers



[A successful tree supply
relationship involves]
everybody coming to the
table, and discussing this,
and not bullying each other
around
-Grower



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[We have a successful tree supply] because I really believe in relationships. Relationships help you smooth all these little bumps out.

-Contractor

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Key Summary

- Growing choices are largely defined by what can be grown well and what sells.
- Producing trees and transporting trees is logistically challenging, with long production cycles, busy planting seasons, and outside market influences
- Relationships over time can help with these issues. Repeat bids and continuous communication can shape what is available over time/contracts.
- Education of contractors and the public can help overcome these challenges. There is a lack of awareness of the logistics needed to have successful plantings, where to find trees, what nurseries are out there, etc.



Next Steps

- Case studies with solutions pathways
- Summary report
- Webinar
- *Future in-person meet-ups?*



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Thank You!

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