

Greenhouse, sod and nursery industries, 2021

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In 2021, the main challenge for the greenhouse, nursery, field-cut flowers and sod industries producers came from the supply chain disruptions which [became more apparent in mid-summer](#). The British Columbia flooding and landslides resulted in road closures that caused significant delays in shipments towards the end of 2021.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted some governments, such as the [Quebec](#) (in French only) and [Ontario](#) governments, to support the greenhouse industry to ensure innovation and food safety.

Greenhouse area under glass is becoming increasingly important

Total sales from the greenhouse, nursery, field cut flowers and sod industries increased 7.5% to \$4.7 billion in 2021. Ontario accounted for the largest share of total sales (55.2%), followed by British Columbia (21.4%) and Quebec (13.2%).

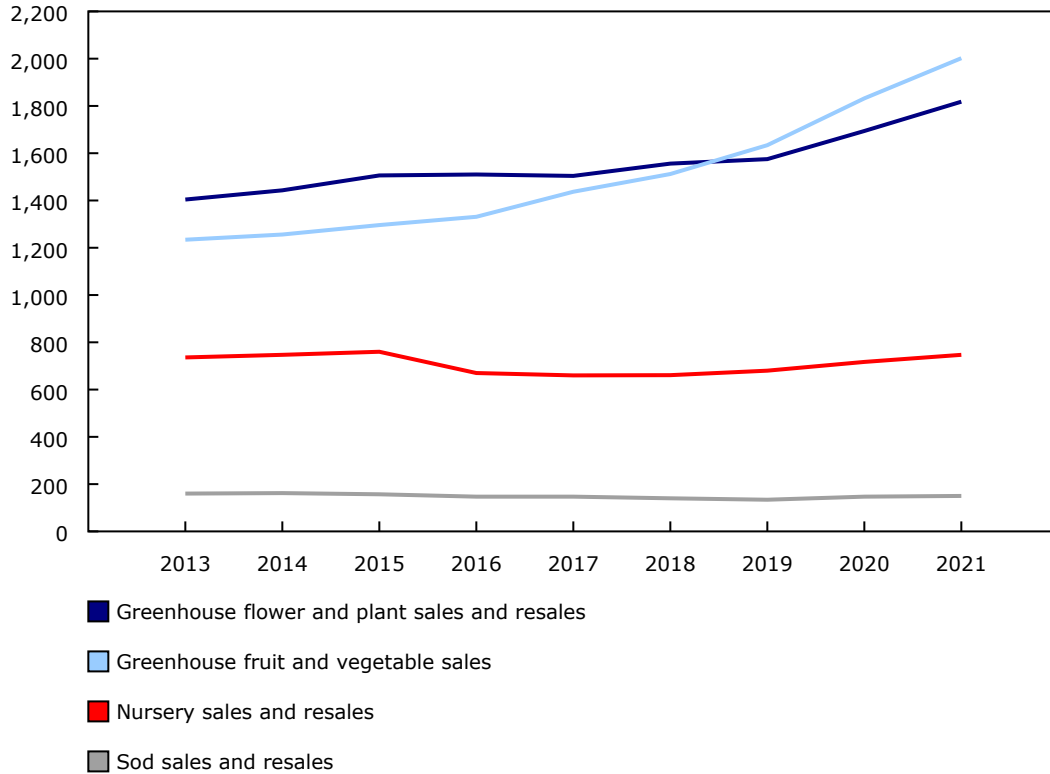
Greenhouse sales increased by 8.3% over the past year to reach \$3.8 billion in 2021, while sales of nursery products grew 4.3% to \$747.5 million. The sale of greenhouse products increased primarily because of an increase in greenhouse fruit and vegetable (+9.3%) and greenhouse flowers and plants (+7.3%). Greenhouse products accounted for 80.5% of total sales in that industry, while nursery product (15.7%), sod (3.2%) and field cut flowers (0.6%) accounted for the remainder.

Greenhouse area grew 6.3% to 30.2 million square metres in 2021 compared with 2020. Total area under poly film and under glass represented the large majority of the total greenhouse area, with each accounting for about half of it. Total area under glass increased 10.6% to 14.5 million square metres, steadily occupying a greater proportion of greenhouse areas compared with 10 years earlier (35.2% in 2011).



Chart 1
Sales of greenhouse, nursery and sod products

millions of dollars



Source(s): Tables [32-10-0023-01](#), [32-10-0032-01](#) and [32-10-0034-01](#).

Greenhouse fruit and vegetable sales rise for the ninth consecutive year

Sales in the greenhouse fruit and vegetable plant sector increased for the ninth consecutive year, rising 9.3% to \$2.0 billion in 2021.

This increase in sales is mainly attributable to a higher production of peppers (+16.1%) and tomatoes (+8.5%). The sales of cucumbers also increased by 12.0% (to \$604.4 million) despite a decline in production, largely because of a large increase in the price of that commodity (+18.7%).

Greenhouse operations supply more than domestic markets. In 2021, total exports of greenhouse tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers reached 489.1 million kg, which represented a 12.3% increase over 2020.

Sales of greenhouse strawberries, which have only recently been introduced in North American greenhouses, increased 19.1% to \$18.5 million in 2021 due to higher prices (+11.4%) and production (+6.9%). Saskatchewan was the fastest-growing province with an increase of 29.2% in production. However, Ontario is still the largest producer of greenhouse strawberries, with a total of 2.2 million kilograms produced in 2021.

Demand for flowers and plants is still high in Canada

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, demand has been high for hanging baskets, potted plants and garden products, as many Canadians rediscovered the pleasures of gardening and growing plants.

Canadians spent 7.3% more on greenhouse flowers and plants in 2021 compared with the previous year, totalling \$1.8 billion. Potted plants accounted for more than half (54.7%) of total sales with \$995.2 million, an increase of 10.1%. Sales of stems (+14.8%) and cuttings (11.4%) grew, mainly because of an overall growth in production.

Vegetable bedding plant sales rose 3.8% to \$178.5 million, while the quantity sold decreased by 2.8% to 785.6 million plants. Ornamental bedding plant sales decreased 1.4% to \$226.9 million, while the quantity sold decreased 0.7% to 409.4 million plants.

Nursery sales increase for the fifth consecutive year

Sales in nursery products increased 4.3% to \$747.5 million in 2021 compared with 2020. Overall, container-grown production decreased 1.0%, with container-grown vine production growing 28.8% and container-grown fruit tree production declining by 33.1%.

Field grown production increased 8.3%. Field grown fruit trees (+87.1%) and perennials and annuals (+36.1%) production was higher in 2021 compared with 2020, while evergreen and broadleaf shrubs (-52.2%) and vines (-50.1%) production have experienced large decreases.

Sod area and sales rise

The total sod area increased nationwide, up 3.7% to 21,168 hectares in 2021, following five years of declines. Sod area has been steadily on the rise since 2019, having increased 13.4%. In 2021, total sales in that industry rose 1.9% to \$149.7 million.

Similar to 2020, Eastern Canada saw the fastest increase in sod sales, led by Nova Scotia (+14.2%), Prince Edward Island (+10.2%) and Quebec (+8.6%).

Greenhouse employment increase in major producing provinces

Greenhouse operators employed 36,702 people in 2021, an increase of 6.7% compared with the previous year. Increases were reported for both seasonal (+4.7%) and permanent (+9.1%) employees. This increase was visible for all major producing provinces including Ontario (+7.7%), British Columbia (+8.5%) and Quebec (+8.4%). By the same token, payroll expenses (+11.2%) also increased to \$964.7 million.

Nursery operations reported 8,687 employees, a decrease of 4.4% in 2021, mainly as a result of a decrease in permanent employment (-16.1%) and a slight increase for seasonal employment (+1.6%), also resulting in a decrease of 1.2% in payroll expenses. British Columbia has experienced the largest decrease in number of employees compared with other provinces.

Expenses continue to rise in 2021

Greenhouse operating expenses increased 9.3% to \$3.2 billion in 2021, with payroll expenses (30.1%) being the largest in proportion. Nursery operating expenses decreased 0.4%, while sod expenses increased 4.3%.

Greenhouse expenses rose at the same pace as in 2020, which is 31.8% above the 10-year average. Total expenses both grew 8.8% in Ontario and British Columbia, and Quebec recorded a 17.1% increase.

This increase in expenditures is generalized to all types of expenses, including payroll expenses (+11.2%), other expenses related to crops (+10.3%), other operating (+8.8%), electricity (+8.2%) and fuel (+7.7%). Overall, expenses by square metres increased for all types of expense, as [supply shortages combined with general inflation have increased production costs](#).

Unlike greenhouses, nursery operating expenses decreased 0.4% to \$598.7 million following a record-high year in 2020. The decrease was mainly driven by a decline in electricity expense (-10.1%) to \$5.7 million, while marginal variations were recorded for other crop expenses (-0.2%), other operating expenses (+0.2%) and plant material expenses (+0.4%).

Note to readers

The Annual Greenhouse, Sod and Nursery Survey does not collect data on greenhouse cannabis production.

Find out more about [agriculture and food statistics](#). Data users can also visualize survey data results with the interactive [Crop production: Visualization tool](#)[Crop production](#).

For the latest information on the Census of Agriculture, visit the [Census of Agriculture portal](#).

Available tables: [32-10-0018-01](#), [32-10-0019-01](#), [32-10-0021-01](#) to [32-10-0023-01](#) , [32-10-0025-01](#), [32-10-0026-01](#), [32-10-0028-01](#), [32-10-0029-01](#), [32-10-0031-01](#) to [32-10-0034-01](#) , [32-10-0245-01](#), [32-10-0246-01](#), [32-10-0452-01](#), [32-10-0454-01](#) and [32-10-0456-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3416](#).

For more information or to inquire about concepts, methods and data quality, contact us at 514-283-8300 or toll-free at 1-800-263-1136 (infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or contact Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).