

# How to speak with retail nurseries

about promoting non-invasive plants in partnership with PlantRight

## 1 Make a positive first impression, your #1 goal

You have total control over how the Nursery/Landscape Professional will remember you. How you conduct yourself, and the level of respect you show the nursery staff, is up to you.

It's more important to be known for being polite, sincere, and a good listener, than to be known for your expertise on plants, botany, ecology, etc... When introducing the PlantRight program to garden centers, your role is as an ambassador, not as a professor or authority figure (least of all the plant police). This is true even if you are a professor of botany – and we know that would not be far from the truth for many of you.

### How to do it:

- **Introduce yourself**, “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_” if you are a customer all the better, let them know.
- **Ask for a manager or owner and set expectations**, “I was hoping to speak with a manager/owner for a few minutes about an opportunity to join a statewide initiative, called “PlantRight” that promotes non-invasive plants for California...It’s one more way for stores like yours to demonstrate your expertise and commitment to providing better plant choices, and it’s free. Maybe you’ve already heard about PlantRight?” {pause...wait for reply}
- **Wait for the right time**. If you see that the nursery staff is busy with customers, be patient. (Remember, the staff are there to sell plants and help customers.) Typically a manager will be available in a few minutes.

## 2 Make your points quickly and clearly

Then be a good listener and see what you can learn.

### Have your talking points ready:

- “I was hoping to speak with you about “PlantRight” ...Maybe you’ve already heard or read about them in the San Jose Mercury News or Los Angeles Times, etc?” {pause}
- “PlantRight provides free online training about California’s worst invasive garden plants, and provides dozens of regionally appropriate, non-invasive alternatives to consider instead. PlantRight also provides recognition for all garden centers that pledge to sell exclusively non-invasive plants.” {pause}
- “I’m sure you, and your customers care about promoting non-invasive plants, so I thought you might like to learn more about becoming a PlantRight retail partner and be recognized for your environmental stewardship on this front.”

### Follow the ‘ask, don’t tell’ approach:

- “Especially in drought times, keeping track of which plants are locally invasive and what alternatives to suggest can be really challenging.”
- “How do you think your staff might respond to this list of invasive garden plants and suggested alternatives?”
- “What do you think about the idea of becoming a PlantRight retail nursery partner? May I leave a handout (Partner with PlantRight flyer and 2015 plant list) for you and your team?”

- “If you have time in your staff meetings, and access to a computer, you all might enjoy PlantRight’s video introduction to the Horticultural Invasive Plant issue and opportunity in California. It was designed for nursery and landscape professionals. Would you like me to write down the URL?” <http://youtu.be/G97zWzk3hMQ>

## 3 Thank them for their time and consideration

...regardless of how receptive they may be.

If they are already not selling any invasive plants, let them know how much you and PlantRight appreciate their leadership in promoting non-invasive plants for California – it’s good for the environment and our economy.

- Ask if you have the manager’s permission to have PlantRight follow up.

## 4 PlantRight is interested in hearing from you

Let us know how your garden center conversations go, and if you learned anything about how we/PlantRight can do a better job of engaging, recruiting and recognizing PlantRight nursery partners. Contact us: [PlantRight@SusCon.org](mailto:PlantRight@SusCon.org)

**We thank YOU so very much for your time and interest in helping promote non-invasive plants for California!**



# How to respond to typical concerns

that a retail nursery manager might have about partnering with PlantRight

**“We really can’t afford to miss out on a sale.”**

I understand — you won’t have to miss out on a sale. PlantRight offers dozens of similar and beautiful alternatives that provide an opportunity for stores to share their local expertise about the best plants for our region. In fact, market research (Inspire/Bain & Co. Sept 2013) indicates that the majority of people unknowingly purchase invasive plants. Had they known, they would not have purchased them. For customers looking for environmentally friendly plants, your commitment not to sell invasives might be one more way for your store to build even more customer loyalty.

**“Why bother? We already don’t sell any invasives.”**

That’s great. Several of PlantRight’s first retail partners were in the same situation. This makes it even easier for you to demonstrate to customers and staff, “We care!” and be recognized for your environmental stewardship.

**“No list is going to dictate how I run my business.”**

In our experience a small % of owners may take offense at the implication that you (or we) are trying to tell them how to run their business. If you happen to experience this just be a good listener, thank them for their time, and know that your time will be better spent at the next nursery.

**“We’re too busy.”**

We understand. PlantRight designed this online training with the especially-busy small business owner in mind. Most nursery professionals complete the online registration and training in 20-minutes or less. If and when you have a moment to spare, I hope you’ll check out the PlantRight.org website to learn more. Is there a certain time of year that this would be more realistic, based on your schedule?

