

MBNLA Annual Report – Grower's Rep

Submitted by Jared Aubin (Aubin Nurseries Ltd.)

November 1, 2023

Growers had a good season overall in 2023, even with a bad drought this summer. It was very hot and there were very long stretches with no rain at all. For example, Winnipeg's 40mm of rain in August were well below the average for the city. Despite this, growers were able to keep most of the trees in the field alive with steady irrigation. The heat helped the trees sustain some good growth. There is still a shortage of trees in containers and in the field, and the demand for them has not subsided.

Many costs have stabilized in the last year or two, but minimum wage going up to \$15 an hour is having a huge impact for growers. It has become difficult to find enough steady staff in Canada, and many of the important and physically demanding labour jobs are being sourced to the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) programs. Another cost that has gone for growers up is bare-root trees. They are a vital piece of our industry though, and still very well needed. Growers are doing their best year to year adjusting how many trees and shrubs to grow without being too long, or too short.

Winnipeg is still expanding every year, with many new residential and commercial projects being developed all the time. This leads to good business opportunities for garden centres, landscapers, and the growers. Manitoba is the 3rd fastest growing economy in Canada, which is impressive considering our size. Everyone in Manitoba is doing their part in our industry to help it continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

Jared Aubin