



## Sourcing Plants

Posted by [Todd Parlo](#)

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[Todd Parlo](#)

[Sourcing Plants](#)

March 05, 2016 10:45PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 301

A former thread, now defunct, brought up that one source, Nourse plant company, was using questionable practices. Having just received their flyer (our family purchased startup plants from them in the past) I was a little bummed about what I read. They apparently have routinely used Thoinex (endosulphan) for mites. They comment they are using it until they are no longer allowed to (due to the fact that there was a global decision made at the Stockholm Convention in April 2011 to phase out endosulfan by 2017. Endosulfan is on the United Nation's list of persistent organic pollutants.) Apparently it is mildly toxic to bees, moderately toxic to birds and fish, and has caused abnormalities in test mammals). The point is that since the UN made its declaration in 2011, many growers obviously continue using such materials until legally prevented from doing so.

Secondly, Nourse's literature in coaching practices to growers suggests using the following for dealing with mites, clippers and weevils : endosulphan, diazanon, lorsban, platinum, and provado. Lorsban is suspected of causing fertility damage to human fetuses, general nervous system damage, very toxic to aquatic animals (information source- Dow chemical), Platinum (the insecticide not the element) is a neonicotinoid (Thiamethoxam) banned in the UN, due to toxicity issues in humans and wildlife including aquatic species and bees. Provado is highly toxic to bees, aquatic species and generally toxic to upland bird species, and thyroid toxicity to test mammals (Cornell fact sheet). Diazanon...is it even necessary to discuss this one? Having become illegal for residential use in 2004 in the US, I didn't even realize it was still allowed in agriculture. It is not clear whether these are all used by Nourse, but they do suggest people use them, presumably including homeowners (in the case of some chemicals, this would be illegal in the US).

Some members may not give a lick about the practices of a supplier. But for those who do (the missing post was from another grower regarding neonicotinoids I think). In the interest of full disclosure, conventional nursery suppliers are in competition with my certified organic nursery business. That said, our family and others strive to not just grow in an ethical way, but also to support others doing the same thing. Since current organic standard allow for certified organic growers to, in reality, buy whatever they please for perennial stock, they usually buy simply what is cheapest. (Standards specifically demand that non-organic material can only be purchased if it is unavailable, regardless of price. This is wantonly ignored). This creates a low incentive for nurseries to propagate organic stock. Bona Fide Organics has a website that lists the very few organic nurseries in the country. It is embarrassing how many organic orchards are out there, and that there are only 2 mail order nurseries selling certified organic apple trees, for instance. More annoying are bait and switch tactics like groworganic.com that sells conventional, not organic apple trees (yes I confirmed this on the phone with them).

I am sure those at Nourse are good people, and that they are doing what they feel is best, especially as regards selling disease or insect free plants. Also, one company should not necessarily be singled out when nearly all nurseries have similar practices. It is important however that those who have strict guidelines at their own farm are cognizant of what they are supporting through purchase.

It takes a good bit of time to sleuth on this topic, so I hope members will share what they find out about companies they are purchasing from, be it materials or plantstock. This often involves talking directly with reps.

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Zone 3 in Vermont

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[John Snowdon](#)

[Re: Sourcing Plants](#)

March 26, 2016 03:19AM

Registered: 8 years ago

Posts: 11

I started the thread back in March or April, 2014 after placing a large order (for me) of raspberry, blueberry and strawberry plants from Nourse. It was the order with which I started the berry portion of our hobby farm. I actually chose Nourse based on their inclusion in the book. After placing the order I read somewhere else about nurseries not publicizing their use of neonics and called them to check. To Nourse's credit, their customer service rep checked with their farm manager and immediately responded that they do use neonics on all of their berry plants. As a beekeeper, that did not sit well with me and I knocked off every blossom on every plant the first year (I tried finding plants elsewhere but everyone was sold out). This will now be my third spring and I will let them be as they have been treated organically since they were put in the ground and the neonics should have dissipated at this point. Please note that I am not certified tho' my 10 acres have been treated in accordance with organic practices for the last 12 years.

I agree with Todd that one company should not be singled out as many are doing it. I found the customer service and buying experience with Nourse to be excellent. If I did not mind the use of neonics, I would happily continue buying from them. Trouble is, I do and it was a lot of work knocking off the blossoms for so long, tho' it was good for the overall plant!

I do not have the original post any longer but I do have a couple of responses from other members if anyone wants me to post them.  
Cheers.

Honey Meadow Farm, LLC  
Southwestern New Hampshire, Zone 5A  
Elevation: 960'

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