

Factsheet: Horticulture

Holland is the world's leading supplier of flowers, plants and trees

The Dutch horticulture sector is a global trendsetter and the undisputed international market leader in flowers, plants, bulbs and reproductive material and the number three exporter in nutritional horticulture products. It forms the heart of an international network for floriculture, bulbs, and decorative trees as well as fruit and vegetables. The country's important logistical hubs - such as the Port of Rotterdam and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol - its proximity to Europe's 500 million consumers, plus the development of high-quality production methods have enabled the Dutch horticulture cluster to become this strong. The Dutch have created efficient supply chains that are able to deliver flowers in New York that have been cut the very same day in the Netherlands. And, true to the Dutch entrepreneurial character, nurseries have been set up in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Costa Rica, France and Portugal.

Dutch horticulture is concentrated in six clusters, called Greenports, where businesses and research institutes work closely together on production, R&D, logistics, infrastructure, and exports. Horticulture makes a significant contribution to the country's prosperity, through the considerable volumes and sheer quality of production, as well as via technological innovations. The Dutch approach to innovation and R&D is rather unique: companies, research institutes and governments work together on innovation projects and programmes in the so-called Golden triangle. Prime examples of innovations include intelligent greenhouses that can float on water, moving platforms, robots, innovative lighting, water- and waste-recycling, and greenhouses that generate more energy than they consume and thus contribute to a reduction in CO₂. The current generation of greenhouses already generates approximately 10 per cent of Holland's power needs by using combined heat and power (CHP).

Key aspects and strengths

- The Netherlands has a world-leading position in greenhouse horticulture. Dutch inventiveness under glass is well known. Nowhere else in the world are plants cultivated on such a large scale - Dutch greenhouses cover an area of more than 60 km², constituting a city of glass - and with such a relatively low impact on the environment. The focus is on concepts and technologies that facilitate energy-efficiency and adaptability to climate change.
- The Netherlands is a leader in green genomics, which aims to achieve better yields, sustainable and safe production, resistance to diseases, or taste/design changes. Plant Research International and the Technological Top Institute Green Genomics lead the field.
- When it comes to trees and shrubs, no other country can match the variety produced in the Netherlands, where the industry enjoys a strong domestic market.
- The Netherlands is a leader in the development of propagation material, tissue culture, and the production and trade of seeds and young plants.

Facts & Figures

- In 2011, total horticultural production amounted to €8.6 billion. Exports (including re-exports) amounted to €16.2 billion. Horticulture accounts for 39 per cent of Dutch agricultural production. The share of horticulture in the total Dutch exports in 2010 was 4% (share of agricultural exports 34%)
- The Netherlands has an exceptionally large share of the world trade in horticultural products, at 24%. In trade in floricultural products worldwide, the Netherlands is dominant with a share of 50%. In bulbs, the share is even 80%.
- The Dutch produce 4.32 billion tulip bulbs each year, some 53% of which (2.3 billion) are grown into cut flowers. Of these, 1.3 billion (or 57%) are sold in the Netherlands as cut flowers and the remainder is exported: 630 million bulbs in Europe and 370 million outside of Europe.
- For the fourth year in a row, the Netherlands is the world's

biggest exporter (in value) of fresh vegetables. The Netherlands exported 4.6 billion kilos of vegetables in 2010, with a market value of € 4.2 billion. A little-known fact is that the Netherlands is the world's top producer of onions.

- The Dutch are the world's largest exporter of seeds: the exports of seeds amounted to € 1.5 billion, growing 5% each year.
- Of the approximately 1,800 new plant varieties that enter the European market each year, 65 per cent originate in the Netherlands. In addition, Dutch breeders account for more than 40% of all applications for community plant variety rights.
- The world's largest auction company for cut flowers and plants is Dutch. It has 4,100 employees and sales of about €4 billion in 2010. Each day it sells 34.5 million flowers and 2.3 million plants and conducts 120,000 transactions using 46 clocks.

Source: Dutch Horticulture Board, Flora Holland, Greenports Nederland, LEI, Plantum, Bloembollencentrum, HBAG

Websites

www.greenportholland.com - Joint website of Dutch horticultural associations (Dutch language)

www.tuinbouw.nl - Dutch Horticulture Board (Dutch language)

www.flowercouncil.org - Flower Council Holland

www.prod.bulbsonline.org - International Flower Bulb Centre

www.plantum.nl - Association for breeding, tissue culture, production/trade of seeds and young plants

www.avag.nl - Trade organisation for greenhouse construction and fitting (Dutch language)

www.anthos.org - Trade organisation for nursery stock and flower bulbs

www.lei.wur.nl/UK/ - Part of Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR)

www.glastuinbouw.wur.nl/UK/ - WUR's research institute in international greenhouse horticulture.