

The Inside Secrets of the Rooted Cutting Business

**-by Michael J. McGroarty of
<http://freeplants.com>**

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This manual is being sold as information only. There is no guarantee of success, either written or implied.

Much more study and research is needed before any person should venture into a business.

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Entering into any business venture involves risks. If you are not comfortable with taking risks, then the business world is not for you. Any person considering a business opportunity should seek the advice of a competent tax accountant, and an attorney before proceeding.

I would also like to point out that if you are conducting any type of business from your home, your homeowners insurance may not cover somebody who slips and falls, or gets bitten by your dog if they came to your home to conduct any type of business transaction. If you have people coming to your home or business you'll need special coverage.

Getting Started in the Rooted Cutting Business

Starting a Backyard Nursery that specializes in rooted cuttings is a fairly simple process. You'll need raised beds where you can plant liners, which is short for lining out stock. If you have really good soil at your house that drains well, then you really don't even have to raise the bed where you will grow your stock plants.

If your soil is not very good, and does not drain well, then it's a really good idea to build a raised bed that is at least 8" high, but no higher than 12". You can create these raised beds by using treated lumber as you'll see that I've done in my video on selling plants.

Or you can just put the soil in the bed without anything on the sides to retain the soil. I am also using this method at my house and it has its advantages. I can crawl into the bed from any direction without banging my shins on those boards. And I can easily make the bed wider or longer any time I choose without much effort.

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Yes, I said “crawl into the bed”. I have a really weak back, so when I’m working down low I’m usually on my hands and knees.

Raised beds that are not surrounded by lumber actually look like attractive landscape plantings. Unlike the industrial sort of look that you get when you retain the beds with wood.

Think about this: Let’s say the treated lumber to build a raised bed is going to cost you \$200. What if you build the raised bed without the lumber, and take that \$200 and buy 400 rooted cuttings and later sell them for \$4.97 each? Where is your money better spent?

Use your money as wisely as possible with a goal of acquiring as many stock plants as possible and your business will grow quickly.

You can use good topsoil in your raised bed, or you can use well rotted compost, or a combination of both. There is more information about what I used in my raised beds in my video on how to sell plants.

Right now you should be doing two things. Start a composting bin, or compost pile. When you’re in the Backyard Nursery business composting is like having your own pile of gold! Start stockpiling material that you can let rot to use in your potting mix if you plan on potting plants, or you can use this material in future raised beds.

You really can’t have too much material composting as long as you have it in low piles that can breathe and capture rain water to keep the piles moist.

On the message board people are always asking if they can use this or that in their potting mix. I use mostly rotted hardwood bark mulch and some leaf compost. Plus whatever comes out of my compost pile.

As I mentioned earlier, if you have really good soil at your house you don’t have to make raised beds, but you should always be actively creating and stockpiling good compost or potting soil. As you progress you never know when you’ll want to do a little potting, or when you may need some really rich soil for a raised bed.

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Many growers use fine pine bark. Some use it fresh, and some let it rot before using it. Using fresh bark is tricky I'm sure, and I like the idea of letting it rot first. Other growers use things like rice hulls and peanut hulls, depending on what is available in their area.

The thing to remember is that what you are doing when you compost is recreating the process that nature uses as topsoil is created naturally. So when is your compost safe to use? When it looks the most like topsoil. If it still looks like bark, let it rot another year.

The nice thing about the rooted cutting business is that you never have to pot any plants at all if you don't want to. I like that aspect because potted plants need daily care during the summer months, while plants that are growing in raised beds need a lot less care. They still have to be watered when it's hot and dry, but as soon as the weather cools off they usually need very little water.

As I write this I have rooted cuttings that I planted in raised beds this spring. I watered them once a day after planting because it was quite warm by the time I got them planted. But after a few weeks I only watered them about twice a week. It is now November and I haven't watered them since late August. I won't do a thing to protect them for the winter, they'll be just fine as they are. Next growing season they won't need any water except rainfall unless we have several weeks of drought.

Plants are super easy to take care of in raised beds. Yet most of my customers feel they need pot up their small plants. Potting is fine if you have a plan to sell them in pots right away, but this report is about the rooted cutting business, so I see absolutely no need to pot anything.

If I had those plants in pots I'd still be watering them daily, and I'd have to build a mini hoop house to protect them over the winter. Not having to do all of those things are the many advantages of the rooted cutting business.

Keep in mind, the plants that go in the raised beds are not the rooted cuttings you will sell as rooted cuttings. You'll root your cuttings in a bed of sand, or a combination of peat and Perlite. Perlite is a neutral material that you add to peat moss so the peat drains and does not stay soggy.

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If you use a peat Perlite mixture I like a mixture that is 50/50 peat and Perlite for rooting cuttings.

You'll see my propagation frames in the videos. That's where I root my cuttings, and if I'm going to sell them as rooted cuttings I sell them right out of those propagation frames.

Simple as can be. Stick the cutting in the sand, and you don't have to touch it again until the day it is sold.

The plants that you will plant in raised beds are stock plants that you will buy as rooted cuttings. You buy rooted cuttings, plant them in raised beds about 10" apart, then as they put on new growth you can take cuttings from the plants in the raised beds and propagate more of the same.

Let's say that you plant some rooted cuttings in a raised bed in April. In most cases by June you can start taking cuttings from those plants. Several weeks later you can probably get more cuttings from them. That's the amazing part of this business.

So what eventually happens to the plants in the raised beds?

Well, as they grow they will eventually have to be removed from the raised bed or they will just grow together in a large group and the plants in the center will be choked out completely, and the plants on the edges will be terribly one sided. But you could still take cuttings from them. But that's crazy.

Rather than let that happen, after a year or two you can take the plants out of the raised bed and sell them as liners to other nurseries. Or you could sell them to garden centers bare root, and they would pot them up and sell them. Or you could pot them up yourself and sell them as container plants.

Or you could sell them on the internet. More about that later.

Sound like a lot of work? It's really not, and when I have a bed of liners that have to be dug out I just hire a young guy or two to do it for me. Keep in mind, these liners will sell for a lot more money as liners that have been bed grown for a year or two than they would as rooted cuttings, so it's easy to justify the extra work. And since the soil in your raised bed is nice and loose, digging out the plants is not that hard at all.

Besides, it's good honest work that you'll enjoy doing. There is

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nothing quite like harvesting a crop that you grew yourself. Especially when you already have that crop sold before you have to dig the plants out of the bed.

The nursery business has a lot of unique terms and I've probably already confused you, so let's start at the bottom.

A rooted cutting is just as it sounds. It's a cutting that has been rooted. It doesn't have any branches, just a cutting with a nice root system. Typically rooted cuttings range in price from 35 cents each to \$1.25 each depending on how many you are buying or selling and what variety of plant you are dealing with.

What many members of The Backyard Growers Message Board are realizing is that they can often buy cuttings for a low price because we have so many members out there scouting around for good deals. When they sell cuttings they are able to sell them for a higher price because they are selling to people that want a smaller quantity and know they'll have to pay a little more.

We've had members of The Backyard Growers Message Board actually find great deals on cuttings, buy more than they need, and sell the remaining cuttings to other members who are eager to get them at a fair price. I've never asked, but I'm guessing they have been able to recoup their entire investment from the cuttings they sold, meaning the cuttings they kept for themselves didn't cost them anything in the end. More about buying and selling later.

A liner, short for lining out stock, is a rooted cutting that has been either bed grown, or container grown for one season before being sold. A liner is larger than a rooted cutting, has some branches, and has an even stronger root system than a rooted cutting.

Typically liners are sold to either go into a "trade" two gallon container, or to be lined out in the field to be grown on as field grown nursery stock. Growers like to buy liners because they are very durable, and they can grow them on and turn them over quickly.

Oftentimes growers find themselves in a position where they have to buy thousands and thousands of liners because the demand for certain plants is more than they can keep up with.

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The most important thing you need to learn about this business is what is going to sell and what is not going to sell. And that answer depends on what market you intend to grow the plants for.

If you are growing plants that you intend to sell yourself to retail customers then almost anything that is colorful and flowers will sell. As will the standard evergreens like Boxwood, Holly, Junipers, Arborvitae and Taxus just to name a few. And of course flowering, ornamental, and shade trees will also sell to retail customers.

But if your plans are to grow rooted cuttings or liners for the wholesale market, you have to really research the market and see what the market is willing to buy. That can be a little tricky, because oftentimes growers really won't tell you what they need, but if they find out you have 1,000 of this or that they buy them on the spot.

If you want to grow for the wholesale market, and that's really where the long term success is, you have to do a little experimenting, and grow a few items that "should" appeal to the wholesale market.

If you have problems finding wholesale buyers you can sell the plants you grow to retail customers or landscape contractors.

This is where the value of the Backyard Growers Message Board is worth tens times what it costs to join. People are buying and selling plants every day on the Message Board, and they are reporting back to the board with what they learned when speaking with wholesale growers across the country.

Plus you can always come to the board and ask me what I think about this plant or that plant for the wholesale market. I don't claim to know it all, but I can point you in the right direction to get the answer you need if I can't help you.

When you grow for the wholesale market you have to carve out your own niche, based on what you learn as you go along. If I had to create a list of plants that I think will always have appeal to the wholesale market as rooted cuttings or liners I would start with the following:

White Dogwood seedlings
Chinese Dogwood seedlings

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Japanese Red Maple seedlings
Emerald Green Arborvitae
Techney Arborvitae
Dwarf Alberta Spruce
PJM Rhododendron
Any number of standard Rhododendron varieties
Blue Boy and Blue Girl Holly

Those are just a handful of starters. Things that I'd grow 1,000 of and see how they go.

On a regular basis I point out to the members of the Backyard Growers Group that as a group, they are guilty of not thinking big enough, and after their first year of selling plants many of them come back to me and say; "Mike, you were right. I should have been thinking bigger, I could have sold a lot more plants this year if only I had them to sell. I should have grown more."

So when I mention growing certain types of rooted cuttings for the wholesale market, I can assure you, most of the people that read this report will be thinking in the thousands. When in fact you should be thinking in the tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands.

Now I don't want you to run out and buy 10,000 stock plants and try and root 50,000 cuttings. Things can and will go wrong. The more experience you have, the less likely the chance of failure. You can't buy experience, nor can you get it from reading a book or a report.

The only way to gain the critical experience necessary to succeed in this business is to start small, only risk what you can afford to lose, and learn as you go.

But, all the while you are doing that, I want you to picture in your mind five or ten hoop house-type greenhouses, filled with rooted cuttings, each house holding tens of thousands of cuttings.

Now, during your learning and experimentation process, I want you to experiment with growing some of the more difficult things to root (they will always be in demand), and find easier ways to root them.

For years and years the only way to root evergreen cuttings, like Taxus, Rhododendron, Evergreen Azalea and Dwarf Alberta

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Spruce was to root these during the winter, in a greenhouse, over bottom heat. But today, many growers are rooting these plants outside, during the summer, under mist.

I think it warrants adding bottom heat to these mist beds during the summer months as a test just to see how much difference it makes. And I'm sure there are growers doing this. If you can successfully root thousands of these evergreen cuttings without the use of a greenhouse you can cut your cost by thousands of dollars.

Now here's your homework assignment. Meet every grower in your local area that you can. Learn as much as you can about how they propagate what, and why they do it that way. Find out if and when they use bottom heat, and what contraptions they are using to create the bottom heat. You'll be amazed at what you learn.

Next, attend every trade show you can. Even if you have to hop an airplane to get there, make the effort and the investment. Do the same thing at the show. Quiz the growers, find out what they do and why.

Then share what you learn with the other members of the Backyard Growers Group. It will make for some very interesting discussions and will help everybody become a better, more successful grower.

But I also see tremendous potential for a lot of other plants, many of which I've never heard of or seen. I'll explain.

Today the trend among many of the wholesale growers of rooted cuttings and liners is to constantly release new varieties of plants with catchy new names. Most of these new introductions are patented and the name is trademarked. Which means that you need a license from the patent or trademark holder in order to legally propagate and sell these plants, and you must pay them a royalty for each plant that you grow and sell.

It's a great deal for those that "control" these plants because they get paid good money from now until the end of time. Their goal is to have an army of growers around the country or the world growing their plants by the millions and sending them royalties. It's a nice position to be in.

Of course these growers have worked hard for years to develop

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these plants, and they spend who knows how many thousands of dollars to make these plants popular. It takes deep pockets to be in that end of the business.

But as far as I'm concerned, this opens up an opportunity for you and I.

There are thousands of plants on the market that were out there long before growers started protecting their plants with patents and trademarks. Our job is to track down these unprotected, yet extremely beautiful plants and to start reproducing them and making sure that others can buy rooted cuttings of these unprotected plants.

Rooted cuttings of many of these plants are still available, but I think that if we specialize in making rooted cuttings of unprotected plants available, we as a group, or as individuals can establish ourselves as the "go to people" for plants that can be freely propagated.

As more and more "protected" plants are introduced, the demand for unprotected plants will increase.

It sure is something to think about.

I'm hoping that members of the Backyard Growers Group will look for and start growing these unprotected plants.

How do you find them?

There are two ways that I know of.

One way to find them is trade shows. There are dozens of nursery trade shows that take place all over the U.S. and Canada each year. There is a list of these trade shows in the wholesale source directory that came with my system.

At these shows you will find the large growers who sell their protected rooted cuttings, but these growers also sell a lot of rooted cuttings that are not protected. Buy the unprotected plants that you like and start propagating them.

Then there are the small growers who don't sell any protected plants. Everything they sell can be freely propagated. Talk with these growers, you'll learn a lot from them. Buy unprotected plants from them and start propagating them.

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Then there are the small growers who are scattered all over the country that have been growing beautiful plants for years and years. These small growers have a very low profile. They have a handful of wholesale customers that they quietly sell to, earning a full time living doing what they love. They never really advertise, and they do not set up booths at trade shows.

As a group, it is our job to ferret out these small growers in our area, pick their brains, and see what unprotected plants we can get from them to start propagating. Also, in speaking with these growers you will learn a tremendous amount about the wholesale market. It's an education you can not buy.

People in the Backyard Growers Group often report what they learn from the small wholesale growers in their area.

There are more unprotected plants out there than you can imagine. But nobody is really making a conscious effort to make people aware of where to find them.

Alright. Now it is time for me to lecture you.

I'm going to climb up on my soapbox, and I am dead serious about what I have to say. Yet it frustrates me to no end when people completely ignore what I'm about to say and think they know better than I do.

You absolutely, positively, must know the correct botanical name for the plants that you intend to grow and sell.

You **Can Not** take cuttings from the plants in your landscape and sell those as rooted cuttings or liners.

You really can't sell them at all!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

You don't know what they are!

The expert in your town **Does Not** know what they are!

He or she might have a pretty good idea, but rather than admit that they can't say for sure they just ramble off a plant name that is pretty close and look like the expert that they are supposed to be.

There are so many plants that look like one another I can not tell

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them apart and I've worked with plants all of my life!

I get this all the time. "Mike, my son works for a landscaper and he's says we can get all the cuttings we want from the plants that they trim. And the landscaper knows what the plants are so we'll be fine."

No, no, no! You will not be fine!

Do you know why the landscaper says he knows what the plants are? Because he doesn't know that there are 10 other varieties that look almost identical to the plant he is looking at. He just doesn't know!

Now I am not going to be so ignorant to group all landscapers in one big pile and slam them like that. But you have to trust me on this. Even a landscaper with a horticultural degree is still guessing much of the time.

An honest expert will tell you that.

You have to get your stock plants from a trusted source. The best trusted source you can find are professional propagators who sell rooted cuttings to other wholesale growers. They know how many lawyers will be involved if those 10,000 plants he sold turn out to be something different than what he thought they were.

You can not buy your stock plants at the big box store. They might be labeled wrong. It happens all the time. You can not buy them on Ebay. That doesn't mean that you can't sell plants on Ebay, but it does mean that since you absolutely, positively, must know for sure what you are buying, you need to find a trusted source.

When members of the Backyard Growers Group are buying rooted cuttings from another member I tell them to ask the seller to verify the source. They don't have to reveal the source to you, but they do have to at least assure you that they bought them from a trusted source, planted them in a raised bed, tagged them on the day they bought them, and they know for sure the source they bought them from is credible.

You absolutely, positively, must know what you are propagating!!!

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This is serious stuff. Get started on the right foot. Please don't take cuttings from the plants in your landscape or from your neighbor's plants, or from Aunt Mary who is a plant expert.

If you only knew how many times the Aunt Marys around the country are well meaningly wrong.

OK. I'm stepping off my soap box now. But if you break this one hard fast rule that I have, I just might jump off a bridge. That's how much it frustrates me!

Now, you know about rooted cuttings, liners, raised beds, and carving out your niche in the wholesale market. But how do you get started carving out that niche. Good question!

For starters, I am suggesting you join the Backyard Growers Group as soon as possible. Why? Because we discuss what you should be doing on a daily basis, and people in the group are buying from and selling to other members of the group all the time. It's one way for you to actually get a feel for what others are doing, what works for them, and what doesn't.

I'm not trying to sell you. It's your call. But I sure wish I had this kind of input available to me when I was starting out, and even today as I stumble along on the internet. Plus it's exposure, and it gives you a place where you can advertise the plants you have for sale to a group of eager buyers. That alone is worth the price of the membership.

But the real reason that I want you in the group is because I think it gives you the best possible chance of succeeding. That's the truth. I want you to succeed, and I know you can not do that without a constant flow of new information and inspiration that you get from the others that are doing what you are doing.

Yes, I profit from your one time membership fee, and rightfully I should. I put a lot of time into offering my input and guidance to the group and individual members.

Not to mention the thousands and thousands of dollars I spend attracting people to my website. I wish it were all profit!

Once you have a few thousand rooted cuttings to sell you can offer them to members of the backyard growers group, and you

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can also offer them to growers in your area. As I explain in my Backyard Nursery Ebook, a simple postcard mailed to local growers might be all it takes to sell your rooted cuttings. Especially if you are very selective about what you grow.

Any time you encounter a problem selling any of the plants you grow, post to the message board and I will gladly help you market your plants.

The more difficult a plant is to root, the better chance you have of selling it. Forsythia roots easily, but there is not much of a wholesale market for rooted cuttings. Yes, they can be sold, but I wouldn't consider Forsythia a strong candidate for the rooted cutting business.

But there are some specialty Forsythias that you might consider tracking down and growing.

Now I am going to share with you a marketing strategy that I think has tremendous potential. Most people shrug this off at first, but you really have to look at it in order to understand the potential it has, and how to really capitalize on this particular market.

The market that I'm talking about is Ebay, and the internet in general. Hear me out.

The internet is here to stay. After all, that's how you and I met. And I don't have to tell you how fast time flies by. You and I use the internet on a fairly regular basis, and it was only a few years ago that we were both intimidated by this new technology. But we adapted, and today we embrace it.

As I write this my first grandchild is 13 months old and walking all over the house. His father told me that he loves to go into the computer room and push any button he can find. My son said; "He prints the test page on the printer three times a day, I don't even know how to print the test page." And my son is a computer wiz.

But here's my point; these kids that are graduating from high school today look to the computer and the internet for a solution to every problem or need they have.

Don't ignore this. It's how they will conduct almost all of their business. They won't hesitate to hand out their credit card num-

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bers online like many adults do today. They know how the data is encrypted, and they realize how much safer it is than handing your card to the waiter in a restaurant.

What I am saying is this.

You should be selling your plants on the internet. Whether you cater to the wholesale market or the retail market, you need a website. Today it only costs about \$8.00 a month or less to host a site, and designing and uploading a site to the internet is easier than ever.

Don't hire someone to design your site for you. You really need to learn how to do this yourself so you can update the site yourself. I use and love Microsoft FrontPage and have a DVD on how to use this software. If you're interested in this DVD just let me know.

Putting up a website is easy. Getting traffic to your website is another story, but in just a few paragraphs I am going to explain how you can not only get traffic to your nursery website, but how you can attract only proven plant buyers. People that have already purchased plants online.

Wow! Very few webmasters, including me, have the ability to attract that kind of targeted visitor.

This is how you do it: Ebay.

I am going to come clean right out of the gate here and tell you that I have never sold a thing on Ebay. I've bought a few things, but only a few. And I don't know all the rules and the ins and outs of Ebay. But I am going to tell you this. Ebay is a gold mine for those that know how to use it. It's worth learning, and it's pretty simple. I just haven't had the time to devote to it.

Ebay is not some fly-by-night operation. They are a huge corporation that started with a pretty simple idea. Recently I listened to an audio interview with an Ebay power seller, and I was completely shocked at what I learned. I had no idea!

Here's the story. This guy opens a billiards store out in the middle of some place. He's doing okay, selling a predictable number of pool tables each month.

His mother is an Ebay seller, selling things like Beanie Babies.

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She says to him; “Why don’t you put one of your pool tables on Ebay?” He’s like; “Mom, it’s a pool table, they weigh a thousand pounds!”

But his mom is persistent and keeps pestering him to just try it. So finally he agrees to advertise a pool table on Ebay, with one condition. After he puts his pool table on Ebay, his mom has to leave him alone about it and not bring it up again.

As you can guess, not only did the pool table sell, but it sold for three or four hundred dollars more than he was getting for the same pool table in his billiards store. And the seller agreed to pay the cost of hiring a moving company to deliver the pool table hundreds of miles to his house.

Naturally the guy keeps advertising pool tables on Ebay, and at one point **he was selling close to six hundred pool tables a month on Ebay!!!**

Ebay is incredible.

Now don’t hold me to the exact figures that I state here because it’s been a couple of months since I listened to this interview, but to the best of my recollection those numbers are correct.

Here’s another number I picked up from that interview.

Ebay has something like 7,000 employees.

I also understand that they have a group health insurance plan available to their biggest sellers. You have to pay for the insurance, but you get all the benefits of belonging to a group.

As I recall, Ebay has something like 700,000,000 registered users. Give or take a few zeros, I really don’t know for sure, but I can assure you it’s a mind boggling number.

Now, this is how this all comes together for you in your backyard.

Following the advice in this report, you have stock plants in raised beds from which you take cuttings to root. After a year or two you have to pull the plants out of the raised beds and sell them as liners before they get too large.

You can sell them wholesale for whatever the going rate is, de-

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pending on what you are growing. Or you can sell them on the internet for four or five times that amount to retail customers.

Keep in mind, I still believe that selling to the wholesale market is the way to go in the long run, but you first have to have the volume of plants to sell, and you must know what the demand is.

Meanwhile, selling a few plants at a time on the internet may appeal to you. This is how you build your internet business.

You create your plant website. It's easy, you can do it. Or you have a child or a grandchild that can do it for you. You put a form on your website and ask your customers to join your mailing list so you can contact them when you have really good plant deals that they would like to know about. Plus you should offer to send them tips on caring for their plants.

You have to get permission from people in order to contact them via Email. And the only way to do that and not get in trouble for spamming them is to ask them to opt in to your mailing list. When they opt in, the IP address of their computer is logged, and that IP address is what proves to your list server that they opted themselves onto your list and you did not add them.

You will get spam complaints. The larger your list, the more spam complaints you will get, the most coming from AOL because they invite people to report spammers. The only problem is, lots of people report you as a spammer when in fact they opted themselves onto your list. Why they do that I'm not sure, but they do.

Please do use a good quality list server. **Do Not Use** the Email program from your home computer. You will get into trouble.

Like I was saying, when you use a good quality list server they know at a glance when a spam complaint is legitimate and when it's not. As long as you are doing what you should be doing, then they will go to bat for you and protect your mailing list.

Your Emails have to be CanSpam compliant, your list server will help you to make sure they are. Two big things that make your Emails compliant are an automatic unsubscribe link in each Email that people can click on to be removed, and you must put your address at the end of each Email.

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A good list server will do this for you automatically.

This is the list server that I currently use:

<http://tinyurl.com/jr1y>

They are the absolute best and competitively priced. Trust me on this, I've had my mailing lists hosted with all kinds of different companies and options, and several times I ended up losing subscriber lists with tens of thousands of subscribers because I chose the wrong list server.

And for you techies, yes, I even had the list hosted on my own server that cost me thousands of subscribers and a million headaches. Never again.

I'm not going to go into the details of it here. But when you do business online, your mailing list is the most valuable asset you have. Protect it by hosting it with the best.

One last word about a mailing list. Without a mailing list your website is doomed.

I'm serious. You need a means of contacting your best customers. You have to establish a relationship with them. Once you do, they will stay with you forever, buying more and more plants, and recommending others to your website.

It's a great way to sell plants 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and never have anybody interrupt your day. You wake up to find you sold \$200 worth of plants while you were sleeping. It just doesn't get any more fun than that.

OK. So far you have a simple website, with an opt in form to get people on your mailing list. You might even offer them a free report, or your printed price list. A little something to get them to give you their Email address.

Now you need to advertise a few of your plants on Ebay. Once your plant sells at auction you need to a means of getting paid. There are several options, but in my opinion PayPal is the best. And I believe PayPal is now owned by Ebay.

Recently we discussed using PayPal on the Backyard Growers Message Board because people in that group are always buying and selling plants to and from each other. Many of our members now use PayPal to accept payments, and many members

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use PayPal to pay for their purchases.

But during the discussion it was obvious that at least one person stated that they would never use PayPal and they had some reason for their decision.

This comes right back to the reluctance of people to use credit cards on the internet. I can assure you, 99.9% of my customers happily order my products online with a credit card. A few prefer to pay by check or money order. But most are very comfortable using their credit card online.

When you use PayPal to accept your auction payments that gives you the option of letting people either pay with money they have in their PayPal account, or they can use their credit card.

Don't cheat yourself and deny them that option. It will cost you lots of sales. As a matter of fact, when you put your item up for auction, just letting people know that you accept PayPal will increase the number of bidders considerably.

Ebay buyers love and use PayPal all the time.

When you register to sell with Ebay they will help you to establish a PayPal account.

OK. You put your plant up for auction, the plant sells, your customer pays you, and you ship them the plant, along with a letter that explains how to care for and install the plant. You also include a note with the URL of your website and give them a powerful reason to go to your website and join your mailing list.

But during the process of this auction transaction you also have the option of asking people to visit your website and join your mailing list as you exchange Email messages with them about your purchase.

This is important. You have a person that just spent money on the internet to buy a plant or plants. You absolutely have to do everything you can to get them to opt in to your mail list. And I'll tell you why.

A plant buyer is a plant buyer, is a plant buyer. People who buy one plant will buy plenty more. And because they so often get ripped off buying plants that are not healthy, you want to make

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sure they know how to contact you again because you are going to make certain the plant they buy from you does well.

The best way for them to contact you again is for you to be in regular contact with them. You need to establish a relationship with each person that buys a plant from you. Because when you do, they will tell the world about you.

The following is a rough translation of a quote from the great Walt Disney on success:

“Just do what you do best. People will come, and they will bring others.”

As an Ebay seller you should also establish an Ebay store once you are allowed to. Because when people are viewing your online auctions they are given the option of visiting your Ebay store. And at your Ebay store people can buy now, without having to wait for the auction to end.

But what should you advertise in your Ebay store? My advice is to offer something that almost every plant lover would love to have, and to offer it at a super low price so almost nobody can pass it up. Offer several of these must-have items.

Consider offering five plants for 99 cents each. Then charge enough shipping to cover your costs.

Why?

Because you want that Ebay shopper to become your customer so you can get them on your mailing list. Once on your list they are likely to buy lots more from you.

Once you have a mailing list you can start to buy plants and resell them to the people on your mailing list as well as selling the plants that you are growing yourself.

Now . . . I'm not exactly sure what all the rules that Ebay has about inviting people to your website and to join your mailing list. I know they won't allow you to mention these things in your auction listings. But I do know that the people that I've bought from on Ebay contact me on a regular basis telling me about other products they have.

So I know it can be done. We just have to figure out exactly

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what they allow and what they don't and work within their rules.

Whatever you do, don't say; "They don't allow that", and drop the idea. This is too powerful to give up on it that easily. I do know that they guy that sold the pool tables was able to get people that just visited his auctions on to his mailing list. But I'm not quite sure how he did it.

But I will say this, and pay close attention.

One of the people that I bought from on Ebay asked me if I wanted to receive Email about similar items that he had for sale and I agreed. He's the guy that mails to me every once in a while.

I've purchased other things on Ebay, things that my wife was looking for and she doesn't have an Ebay account so she asks me to see if I can find this or that. Those sellers have never contacted me.

Wanna know why?

Because they just don't get it. They are working way too hard at their Ebay business. They list an item, sell it, ship it, and do it again over and over.

You and I are smarter than that. We are going to use Ebay to build our business. Take advantage of those 700,000,000 registered users they have.

Ebay has a handy little feature where people can rate the buyers and sellers that they've dealt with on Ebay. This is huge because potential buyers read those comments.

While I was poking around on Ebay before writing this report I looked at some of those reviews, and I noticed that some of the bidders that I looked at had over 200 reviews that had been posted by people that had sold items to those bidders.

What does that tell you?

People don't buy one item on Ebay, they buy all the time! So if you can get a few of these people on your nursery mailing list you can be assured that they will buy from you over and over.

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This could be a great home-based business where you never have people coming to your house, but you can sell thousands of dollars worth of plants.

Remember the guy with the pool tables? People will pay your price as long as you give them quality. It's very conceivable that you can attract better, more loyal customers from hundreds of miles away than you can right in your own home town.

However, there is a glitch, and this is something that you have to research and work out.

Shipping plants to other states can be tricky. If you've noticed, many of the mail order sellers publish a whole list of states that they can not ship to. That's because of department of agriculture regulations.

But . . . and this is important. It hasn't stopped them from building **multi million dollar businesses** shipping to the states that they are allowed to ship to.

And this glitch comes with an upside.

If you happen to live in one of those states that seems to be on the "can not ship to list" in all of the mail order catalogs, this could be a huge opportunity for you because as an in state grower you very well might be allowed to ship to customers within your own state.

You'll have to research this yourself and discuss it with other members of the Backyard Growers Group that are in the same state as you.

But, but, but, but **Do not accept the first "No" answer you are given.** If some official in your county tells you that you can not do this or that, ask to see the **published regulation** that says you can not. Often times people are given bad information from government employees for a variety of reasons. Some of those reasons have to do with jealousy, envy, and just plain patheticness!

Call county offices in different counties in your state. Speak to several different people at your state department of agriculture. There are guidelines about shipping across state lines that you have to follow.

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Make sure you see anything that you are told in writing. If it's not in writing, then chances are it's just someone's opinion.

Don't accept that.

That concludes this report on selling rooted cuttings and liners. I hope this information gives you an idea of what options are open to you. Until you really get a chance to visit a nursery that specializes in the business of selling rooted cuttings and liners I don't think you'll ever be able to fully comprehend how huge the market is.

You and I only need a very small part of this total market to make a living in this business. I've done business with some of these larger growers. I can assure you, there are plenty of growers out there just like me that would much rather deal with a small independent grower.

Not always, but sometimes when you deal with these large growers you can sense the attitude that they really don't want to be bothered with our small orders.

And therefore, we should not be bothering them. We should make certain that small buyers can buy from a small grower who appreciates every dollar spent. Let them keep their attitude and their plants. We can fill the need ourselves.

Get your share of this market. It is just waiting for you to step in and fill the need.

Wishing you incredible success,
-Mike McGroarty