



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VOLUSIA COUNTY FIRMS TO PROMOTE HORTICULTURAL WARES
DURING SALES MISSION TO AMSTERDAM OCT. 11 – 18**

Correction: *Native Southeastern Trees Inc. is the correct name of one of the participating companies and not Native Southwestern Trees Inc. as was released previously.*

The Volusia County Department of Economic Development is leading a delegation of 30 growers, businesses and industry experts from Volusia County on a sales mission to Amsterdam Oct. 11 - 18.

Mission activities include one-on-one sales meetings with potential importers, site tours and briefings with key Dutch traders and experts, and representing Volusia-grown horticulture at the Horti Fair 2009.

“Horti Fair is one of the most important international trade shows in Europe, and also the most visited horticultural event in the Netherlands,” said Phil Ehlinger, interim director of the Volusia County Department of Economic Development. According to Ehlinger, delegates will measure the success of the mission in several ways, including in-hand and expected sales contracts, vetted trade leads, market exposure and follow-up visits from buyers.

Horti-Fair will feature 700 exhibitors from 50 countries promoting innovation, technology and the transfer of knowledge within the industry. Of all the regions of the world in which cut foliage is produced for use in floral arrangements, the Volusia County region has the longest history of large-scale, commercial production, according to Ehlinger. More than 50 types of greens and ornamental products are represented by the Volusia County delegation.

The local growers and businesses participating in the event include Art Gallery Gardens – Daylily Hybrids; Bill Newbold Ferneries; Central Florida Fern Cooperative; Donaldson’s Ornamentals Inc.; Emporia Farms; FernTrust Inc., Forest Groves Inc.; Native Southeastern Trees Inc.; Nature’s Foliage; Pierson Supply Co.; Quality Growers Floral Company; The Water Shed Laboratories; Tiki Export Co. and W^m F. Puckett Inc.

The sales mission – branded “Volusia Grown Horticulture” – is an initiative organized by Volusia County Economic Development in cooperation with the Volusia County Extension Service, the U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Embassy and Enterprise Florida. The mission is funded by a \$60,000 trade grant from Enterprise Florida. Participating growers will be reimbursed \$2,000 each toward the cost of the trip. Additional expenses must be covered individually by the delegation members.

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News release page 2 of 2: Volusia County firms/Amsterdam trade mission

The U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration reports that, during the first six months of 2008, the value of exports from businesses in Volusia County was \$149,737,297. This represents a 9-percent increase in exports over the same time period in 2007.

Exports of agricultural and natural resource products from Volusia County businesses totaled \$293 million in 2008, of which horticultural products accounted for \$175 million (approximately 60 percent).

For more information about the trade mission, please contact Paul Mitchell, Volusia County Economic Development, at (386) 248-8048 or e-mail pmitchell@co.volusia.fl.us.

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