

AMBITION

5.0

**PLANT PROTECTION IN HORTICULTURE
IN DUTCH GARDEN RETAIL**



2024 - 2026



**TUINBRANCHE
NEDERLAND**

AMBITION 5.0 - 2024 - 2026

INTRODUCTION

The horticultural industry is a beautiful industry, and in times of climate change, in particular, plays a valuable role in greening and improving the sustainability of society in general. Greenery offers solutions for heat stress and peak rainfall in densely populated areas, contributes to promoting biodiversity, restoring ecosystems and helps to improve liveability in various environments.

At the same time, the industry faces a number of issues and challenges.

These are issues and challenges that need an answer to help make the industry future-proof and allow it to continue to deliver value to society in the long-term. At the same time, they are issues and challenges that we are just eager to take responsibility for. While up front we wish to focus fully on the positive impact that we have, we also want to ensure that behind the scenes, everything is in order. With this in mind, one of the topics that needs our attention is plant protection.

The first Ambition for plant protection in horticulture was put together in 2016. Retailers, parties involved in the supply chain process and knowledge partners came together to combine forces and jointly consider which steps could be taken together to phase out the use of harmful substances and to minimise the impact that plant protection had on bees and other beneficial insects. This happened in anticipation of the legislation in force at the time.

Since 2016, the Ambition has been revised a number of times. This is done by looking at what ambitious and supplementary steps can be implemented to contribute to healthy plant protection and the phase-out of harmful substances.

Ambition 4.0 was in place from 2021 to 2023 and committed to the phase-out of nine substances, also known as the GP9 substances. By the end of 2023, seven of those nine substances were prohibited by law in the Netherlands. This shows that the Ambition has a positive leadership role. It prepares organisations for legislation that may not yet be in place, but that is expected to be in place in the future. As such, it is particularly important to continue to sit down with the industry and to consider the next ambitious, supplementary and high-impact steps that can be implemented in terms of plant protection.

The result of that consideration can be found in this Ambition 5.0.





DEVELOPMENTS IN PLANT PROTECTION POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Developments in policy frameworks have not been stationary over recent years. Some of the relevant developments in this area are outlined in brief below.

Implementation Programme – Future Vision Plant protection in 2030

The Plant Protection Future Vision 2030 and the implementation programme are a development of the vision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in relation to circular agriculture. The goal is to provide direction for the future and ensure a common compass to allow us to get there. The vision broadly outlines three strategic goals for 2030:

1. Plant and cultivation systems are resilient;
2. Agriculture, horticulture and nature are linked; and
3. There are almost no emissions or residues.

For the purpose of this document, emissions refers to the unwanted emission of substances to the environment from the use of plant protection products.

More information about the Implementation Programme – Crop Protection Future Vision 2030 is available [here](#).

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive, a European directive in effect since 2000, states that the quality of the surface water and groundwater must be high. The Netherlands must achieve this by 2027 at the latest. This also means that from 2027 onwards, environmental standards for plant protection products must no longer be exceeded in water.

Vestering Amendment in the Lower House

On 1 June 2022, Leonie Vestering of the Partij voor de Dieren submitted an amendment to the Act on plant protection products and biocides. This amendment proposed the following goals:

1. A 50% reduction in the most harmful insecticides by 2025 when compared to 2021;
 2. A 95% reduction in the most harmful insecticides by 2030.
- Harmful plant protection products refers to those that are found on the list of Candidates for Substitution (CfS).

The amendment was adopted by the Lower House on 5 July 2022.

More information on the Vestering amendment is available [here](#).

This Ambition and the developments outlined above refer alternately to active substances and to used plant protection products. An active substance is part of a plant protection product and it is ultimately the (amount of) an active substance that determines the action of a product. In order to provide clarity about the relationship between the two, there is an overview for the substances that are to be phased out [here](#) showing to which products the active substances belong.

GOALS FOR 2030

We believe that the horticultural industry is an incredibly beautiful industry that can continue to deliver value to society in the long-term. To realise the full potential, it is important to work with the industry to identify solutions that do not have a negative impact on people, animals and/or the environment.

The aforementioned initiatives, including the Plant Protection Future Vision and Vestering amendment, clearly highlight the task for our industry. It is a complex task. The nice thing about an ambition is that it separates us from the reality of the day and puts us in a position to consider who we want to be five, ten or 20 years from now. It is up to the industry to rise to the challenge and pick the role it intends to play. Not on the basis of what appears possible or impossible today, but on what our common goal is.

As such, our goal with the Plant Protection in Horticulture Ambition is to work towards a goal that is consistent with the direction that we recognise around us and that offers tools to overcome challenges. We have defined these as follows:

By 2030, green products sold by garden centres, DIY shops, supermarkets and/or auctions will actively contribute to making and keeping the environment, biodiversity and society climate resistant and healthy.

What does this mean?

The positive effects of greenery are clear. But it cannot be so that the positive impact in one location is dependent on the negative impact in another. By 2030, we want to eliminate all doubt that people may have about the way in which green products are produced. This means that we must demonstrate that the cultivation of plants and crops is carried out in a healthy way everywhere.

To us, healthy cultivation of plants and crops means:

- Robust crops that require few products, such as plant protection products and artificial fertilisers;
- Counteracting and preventing harmful effects on the environment and nature;
- A sustainable cultivation system in which cultivation and nature are in balance, thereby minimising the need for harmful substances.

Transparency and traceability

One component that plays a core role in ensuring healthy cultivation is transparent and independent certification. With this in mind, as part of Goal 2030, we aim to work towards a situation in which 100% of the plants and crops sold by signatories are certified by 2030.

More information about the certificates covered by this is available [here](#).

OUR PLAN TO WORK TOWARDS OUR GOALS FOR 2030

To achieve our goal for 2030, there are steps that need to be completed in four areas. We call these the priorities of Ambition 5.0. These priorities are:

1. CREATING A RESILIENT CULTIVATION SYSTEM

2. COLLABORATING ON A SUSTAINABLE CHAIN

3. A TRANSPARENT AND DATA-DRIVEN SUPPLY CHAIN

4. SELF-LEARNING AND SELF-REGULATING CAPACITY

PRIORITY 1

RESILIENT CULTIVATION SYSTEM

A resilient cultivation system revolves around a healthy connection between two actors: the plant and the cultivation environment.

As the cultivation environment, comprising soil, substrate, climate and biodiversity, is carefully matched to the plant and properly maintained, the risk of disease or pests is minimised to the fullest extent possible. The plant is healthy, is resistant to all kinds of disruption and requires little to no intervention. In other words, an environment has been created in which the plant can flourish. A resilient cultivation system is comprised of:

- A 'strong' plant that needs little direct support to remain healthy; and
- A well-maintained cultivation environment in which there is almost no use of products that have a significant impact on people, animals and/or the environment.

Creating a resilient cultivation system requires use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

What is IPM?

IPM is an integrated approach for sustainable horticulture, focused on controlling disease, pests and weeds with only minimal disruption to agroecosystems. In IPM, this is done by combining the cultivation plan, cultivation, mechanical, biological and chemical methods. Within this, the use of insecticides is minimised in order to reduce their risk to people and the environment.

The basic principles of IPM in accordance with the European Directive on the sustainable use of insecticides are:

- Crop rotation;
- The use of appropriate cultivation techniques (such as the false seedbed technique, sowing time and density, under-wheel seeding, conservation soil cultivation, pruning and direct seeding);
- Where appropriate, use of resistant/tolerant cultivars and standard/certified seed and planting material;
- Use of balanced fertilisation, lime and irrigation/drainage practices;
- Preventing the spread of harmful organisms by applying hygiene measures (such as regular cleaning of machinery and equipment);
- Protection and promotion of important beneficial organisms, such as with adequate management measures or the use of ecological infrastructure in and outside production areas.

We have defined two steps for working with the Ambition on the further development of IPM systems:

1. Focus on strong crops; and
2. Preventing emissions to the environment.

Strong crops

► Phasing out crops that are susceptible to disease and pests and that require large quantities of active substances

In the first half of 2024, we will be conducting research with a working group to look at the possibility of gaining greater insight into frequently sold crops that are susceptible to disease and pests and thus require a high number of active substances for their successful cultivation. Discussions will be held at the annual autumn meeting based on the crops that have been identified that are susceptible to disease or pests on which a relatively high number of active substances are used. The following questions will be asked during these meetings:

What does this tell us?

What do we want from this?

If the autumn meeting reveals that there is/are one or several plants for which current use of plant protection products is irresponsible, there will be a discussion with growers about the options for change.

If growers indicate that there are no/insignificant options for reducing use of (harmful) plant protection products or this appears to be due to persistently high use, signatories will begin discussions with one another to determine what the next step might be in relation to the species of plant in question.

► Timing of crops

Plants that are grown (too) quickly in excessively heated greenhouses in order to prompt them to bloom early in the season for sale often require more products and tend to be weaker. Retailers will come together in a working group to explore whether different choices could be made in this regard.

No emissions to the environment

► Phase-out of substances with a high impact on the environment.

We are working on the phase-out of a number of legally permitted but environmentally harmful substances, such as the GP9 (Greenpeace list) and Toxic 12 (PAN list). As part of this, the following substances will no longer be used during the course of the Ambition:

Starting in 2024, the use of the following substances or purchase of plants on which the following substances have been used will be prohibited under Ambition 5.0.

2024	Insecticide	Herbicide	Fungicide
GP9	acetamiprid* deltamethrin*		
Toxic 12	cypermethrin	chlorotoluron	dimoxystrobin 8-hydroxyquinoline ipconazole ziram

*Exemption for some crop groups.

Phased out (partially) in the previous year.

Starting in 2025, the use of the following substances or purchase of plants on which the following substances have been used will be prohibited under Ambition 5.0.

2025	Insecticide	Herbicide	Fungicide
GP9	acetamiprid** deltamethrin*		
Toxic 12	cypermethrin esfenvalerate* lambda-cyhalothrin	chlorotoluron propyzamide* pendimethalin*	dimoxystrobin 8-hydroxyquinoline ipconazole ziram tebuconazole

* Exemption for some crop groups.

** Exemption for crop group expires.

Phased out (partially) in the previous year.

Starting in 2026, the use of the following substances or purchase of plants on which the following substances have been used will be prohibited under Ambition 5.0.

2026	Insecticide	Herbicide	Fungicide
GP9	acetamiprid deltamethrin**		
Toxic 12	cypermethrin esfenvalerate** lambda-cyhalothrin pirimicarb	chlorotoluron propyzamide** pendimethalin**	dimoxystrobin 8-hydroxyquinoline ipconazole ziram tebuconazole

** Exemption for crop group expires.

Phased out (partially) in the previous year.

Further explanation about 1) the choice to phase out these substances, 2) crop protection products that contain the above substances and 3) the excluded crop groups can be found [here](#).

► Maximum number of substances

The number of (permitted) products encountered and the contents must also be as low as possible. The maximum is ten substances per plant (assuming a content of 0.05 mg/kg).

► Dispensation rule

- If there is still the need to use a substance that has been phased out under Ambition 5.0 as the quality or yield of a crop is at risk, despite the precautions taken by the grower, there remains the option of dispensation.
- Dispensation will be granted when it is clear that a grower has done everything possible to prevent or control pests and disease and use of a phased-out substance is an absolute last resort.
- The document entitled Ambition 5.0 Dispensation Rules explains more about how this rule works. This document can be found [here](#).

PRIORITY 2

COLLABORATION ON A SUSTAINABLE CHAIN

Many of the steps referred to under Priority 1 are for the grower to carry out. But that shift is not something that the grower alone can make. Steps need to be taken all the way along the chain, from grower to consumer. The retailer assumes a central role in the chain, holding discussions with other chain parties.

Tuinbranche Nederland – Acceptance and promotion of beneficial insects and soil organisms

► Vrolijke Tuinhulpjes

De Vrolijke Tuinhulpjes is a campaign run by Tuinbranche Nederland and Velt every year. Campaigns are designed to show the added value of beneficial insects and soil organisms in gardens. They will include communication materials for retailers developed for placement in their shops. In this way, they will also be able to contribute to raising awareness and acceptance of beneficial insects and soil organisms in gardens.

Retailers

► No use of phased-out substances in shops or on business premises (including car parks, etc.)

Retailers are required to use the Scan je Tuincentrum Tool. This allows them to demonstrate how plant protection is carried out in the shop and that this also contributes to Ambition 5.0. The information that the tool retrieves can in turn be used to learn from one another.

► Retailer annual plan

Each year, retailers prepare an annual plan in which they:

- Incorporate relevant indicators for each priority
 - comparing this year with the previous year;
- Evaluate last year's actions; and
- Give thought to what they will do next year to contribute to the 2030 goals.

The format of the annual plan is available [here](#).

A retailer's annual plan must report on the following indicators:

- Resilient cultivation system
 - No. of suppliers with demonstrable improvements in terms of use of IPM
 - % of plants sold that are organic
 - % of bulbs sold that are organic
 - No. and % of suppliers (growers) that have signed Ambition 5.0

- Sustainable chain
 - Scan your garden centre figure
 - No. of (bi)annual discussions between purchasers and suppliers (grower or trade party) in which IPM and the goals of Ambition 5.0 were demonstrably the topic of discussion
 - The way in which consumers, personnel and trade parties are included in the acceptance of beneficial insects, pests and soil organisms
- Digitisation and transparency
 - % of purchased plants that were certified in accordance with the guidelines of Ambition 5.0
 - % of plants sold with a plant passport (and thus fully traceable back to the grower)
- Self-learning and self-regulating chain
 - No. of non-illegal breaches in most recent residue measurement
 - No. of illegal breaches in most recent residue measurement

Discussions with plant suppliers

► Retailer purchasers have discussions with suppliers of plants and crops (growers or brokers) every six months or year on the supply contract. Signatories to Ambition 5.0 address the following items during these discussions at a minimum:

- Which steps from IPM are applied to
- the production of the products and in which way?
- Which steps from IPM are applied to the production of the products and in which way?
- What does the supplier need from the retailer to be able to take the next steps in creating a resilient cultivation system?
- Goals from Ambition 5.0 are discussed.
- Suppliers of plants and crops are informed by the retailer that if they discover that the acceptance of plants grown under Ambition 5.0 is not going as it should, perhaps because the appearance of the plants has suffered, they can report this (anonymously, if appropriate) to Tuinbranche Nederland using a form that is available [here](#). In that way, Tuinbranche Nederland can engage with the retailer.

PRIORITY 3

TRANSPARENT AND DATA-DRIVEN

General trends and developments

An annual survey is conducted of the MPS data to show what the data say about the developments relating to:

- The use of chemical plant protection products (these include biological agents and beneficials not covered);
- The use of harmful plant protection products (red and orange products);
- The use of Toxic 12 and GP9 products; and
- The use of beneficials.

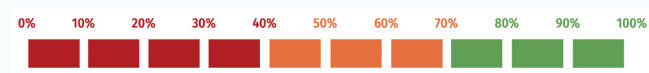
► **Natuur & Milieu provides advice on the data and development they contain.**

► **Results are shared at the spring meeting and published (shortly) afterwards.**

Retailers demonstrate what percentage of their purchased green products are certified.

As part of their annual plans, retailers ensure that they have insight into the percentage of their purchased green products that are certified. The retailer communicates this figure (via the annual plans) to Tuinbranche Nederland and, starting in 2025, will publicise this figure on a website of its choosing.

Tuinbranche Nederland reports, together with all other information, on the extent to which the signatories to Ambition 5.0 purchase certified green products in the format below. For each percentage category, there is also an indication as to how many retailers carry the respective percentage of certified green products in order to create a benchmark.



Developments in relation to data

Developments regarding data move quickly, including in relation to indicators that say anything about the sustainability of greenery. This includes developments relating to:

- Footprinting;
- FloriPEFCR;
- Plant Protection Environmental Indicator (MIG).

Over the lifetime of the Ambition, we will monitor these developments to see if and how certain developments might contribute to us achieving the goals

PRIORITY 4

SELF-LEARNING AND

SELF-REGULATING CHAIN

Residuumeting

As part of the Ambition, we initiate an annual survey into residues of plant protection products in the range offered by retail organisations that are signatories to the Ambition. CLM carries out the survey as a neutral

party and provides an analysis of the outcomes. Natuur & Milieu offers recommendations and advice. As such, use in line with Ambition 5.0 can be monitored. The outcomes for each retail organisation are fed back. Retail organisations therefore have the opportunity to engage with the suppliers of plants. These discussions provide insight into positive developments and learning points derived from the results of the residue measurement.

Residues that cannot be explained within Ambition 5.0 are discussed by retailers with suppliers. If necessary, a sanction may be applied. Tuinbranche Nederland and Natuur & Milieu provide annual general feedback on what can be learned from the points that have arisen in the residue measurement.

Steps in relation to breaches of Ambition 5.0.

Through the Ambition, suppliers and retailers work towards a sustainable chain. To monitor the goals in the Ambition and to ensure that parties know where they stand when deviations are identified, step-by-step plans are available that indicate what can be done when any of the following

► Illegal products

- Sanctions framework [click here](#)

► Products phased out by Ambition 5.0

- Breach of Ambition 5.0 policy document [click here](#)

Spring and autumn meeting

Knowledge sharing during the spring and autumn meetings will be focused on the needs of signatories and their supply chain partners in working towards solutions to the key challenges within Ambition 5.0. To promote knowledge sharing, the signatories actively contribute to the spring and autumn meetings by contributing both topics and substantive knowledge.

Knowledge sharing and collaboration

The signatories and stakeholders of the Ambition seek transparency and openness in the chain. The parties knowledge that collaboration, knowledge sharing, transparency and determining goals are ways to further accelerate the sustainability process of the industry. To that end, connection will be sought, inter alia, with existing partnership relationships in the industry and there can be an examination of the benefit of setting up working groups in areas in which there is a need in order to achieve Ambition 5.0.

The following working groups will always be set up (or there will be active engagement on these topics on an existing platform):

- IPM;
- Substitution of substances to be phased out;
- Desired timing of plants in shops and purchase abroad;
- Insight into crops that require large amounts of products.

Depending on the topic and whether there are existing partnership relationships in the industry, there must be an examination of who will coordinate the working group and who will be a part of it. Tuinbranche Nederland will monitor and encourage where necessary so that relevant collaboration meetings are established.



HOW AMBITION 5.0 CAME ABOUT

Ambition 5.0 came about in a number of phases and in discussions with different parties.

A small working group helped evaluate Ambition 4.0 and create the first pillars that needed to be incorporated into the new Ambition. Once these first pillars had been presented at the spring meeting in 2023, different signatories to Ambition 4.0 proposed a number of additions.

The development phase included research into the use of active substances that had previously been incorporated into the ambitions but not yet prohibited by law and Toxic 12. This was done based on data from MPS. This then led to a draft list of active substances intended to be phased out. Further concrete steps were then defined to ensure effective work towards the 2030 goal.

This development was then discussed with different knowledge parties, such as MPS and a selection of independent cultivation advisors. These discussions covered various topics and saw knowledge parties raise various complications, challenges and issues.

Knowing that the proposed steps were ambitious, the approach was to understand what is nevertheless needed to improve the chances of success. The proposal for Ambition 5.0 was ultimately completed and sent to signatories to Ambition 5.0 and certain growers for feedback

on the steps being proposed. The feedback was collected and analysed, which led to several changes that have been incorporated into the final version of the Ambition.

SIGNATORIES



Trading parties that support the Ambition are:



INITIATORS



The initiators are keen to see as many (chain) parties as possible, both nationally and internationally, embrace and implement this Ambition. They thus call on parties/organisations who identify with this memo to sign the Ambition. Interested parties can make their commitment known to the initiators.

The memo was compiled on the initiative of Tuinbranche Nederland, Natuur & Milieu and CLM.

TBNL

Tuinbranche Nederland is the industry association for the entire garden/horticulture chain. Its membership is made up of manufacturers, importers and wholesalers of garden products (suppliers) as well as garden centres for which the sale of garden products is central (retail). As such, Tuinbranche Nederland is the unique representative of the overall chain and speaks on behalf of a broad and strong constituency.

Natuur & Milieu

Natuur & Milieu is an independent environmental organisation and believes in a sustainable future for everyone. It works on sustainable solutions for energy, food, raw materials and mobility as a means of countering climate change and restoring nature.

CLM

CLM is an independent knowledge and consultancy firm in the field of agriculture, food, nature and the environment. CLM seeks to make sustainable agriculture in the Netherlands a matter of course. Its conviction is that healthy food, clean water, biodiversity, nature and cultural landscape are invaluable. Working with other parties, CLM is committed to preserving these precious elements for future generations.

The original ambition was drawn up in Dutch. This document is a translation and may therefore contain translation errors. You can contact Tuinbranche Nederland if you have any questions.

