



*Lisa Ambrosio, president at Wenke Greenhouses:*

**US (MI): "Ellepots are faster to transplant and there's less damage to the plants during transplanting process"**

Chris and Ann Wenke opened Wenke Greenhouses in Kalamazoo, Mich., in 1942. Their son Lorence purchased the business in 1975 and he was later joined by his younger brother Dennis. Lorence's daughter, Lisa Ambrosio, purchased the company in January 2013.

The company has expanded to include three production facilities in Kalamazoo and one in Douglas, Ga. Wenke Greenhouses operates about 55 acres of production, of which 3 acres is outdoors and the rest is under cover.

Most of the plants produced are annual bedding plants along with some bedding plant vegetables. Young plants, which are sold through brokers, make up about 20 percent of the company's business.



*Lisa Ambrosio said 1801 Ellepots give the user, whether it is a grower or landscaper, the flexibility of transplanting even before plants are completely rooted.*

Finished plants are sold to landscapers, independent garden centers and the Kalamazoo Flower Group. The largest container-size finished plants are 15-inch patio pots and 16-inch coco baskets. Wenke also operates its own retail garden center in Kalamazoo.

Wenke Greenhouses was looking for an opportunity to provide its landscape customers with a product that would help meet their efficiency and plant quality needs.

Lisa Ambrosio, president at Wenke Greenhouses and daughter of Lorence Wenke, said her company has been using Ellepots for a long time. Initially the company started using them for rooting vegetative liners. “We started using the 1801 Ellepots for our landscape customers about 10 years ago,” Ambrosio said. “About 98 percent of the Ellepots we produce are sold to landscapers. The other customers who use Ellepots include growers like us who put them into combination patio pots or other large containers and hanging baskets.”

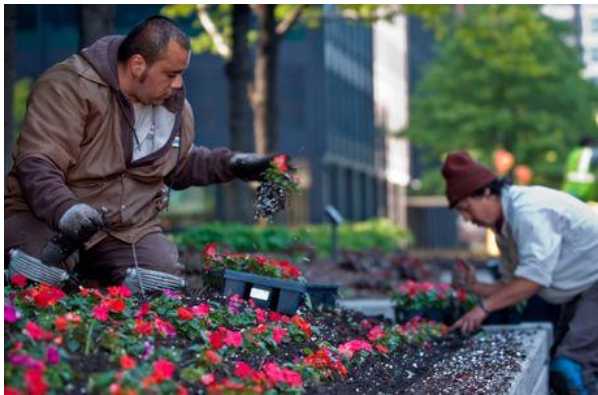


*Lisa Ambrosio, president at Wenke Greenhouses in Kalamazoo, Mich., said her company has been producing Ellepots for landscapers for about 10 years.*

Ambrosio said she has also noticed some differences between plants grown in 1801 Ellepots and 3½-inch 18 packs. “The 1801 Ellepot is about the same configuration as what we would call a 3½-inch 18 pack,” she said. “The difference is the 1801 Ellepot is round and 3½-inch 18 is square. There is a difference in the amount of airspace around the round Ellepot, which helps to keep the plants healthier and allows the medium to dry out faster. This is particularly helpful under our growing conditions. Our growers prefer growing in the 1801 Ellepots.”

Ambrosio said her landscaper customers have also seen the advantage of using 1801 Ellepots. “The Ellepots are faster for them to transplant and there is less damage to the plants during the transplanting process so they take off faster,” she said. “The landscapers say the plants grow better after being transplanted when they are grown in Ellepots. Then there is the reduction in

clean up. They're not left with any pots, only the carrying trays for the Ellepots. And we recycle and reuse the carrying trays."



*Ellepots enable landscapers to transplant beds faster and there is less damage to the plants during the transplanting process so they take off faster. And there is less clean up.*

Ambrosio said 1801 Ellepots give the user, whether it is a grower or landscaper, the flexibility of transplanting even before the plant is completely rooted. "The plants don't necessarily finish any faster in terms of time to root and how big the plants are, she said. "But with an 1801 Ellepot because the plants are not being pulled out of a pot or tray, the root system is not disturbed. This allows the plants to be physically transplanted directly into a combination planter or into a landscape bed faster."

Ambrosio said there is also some difference in how finished plants are grown for landscapers and for retail garden centers. "When we are growing plants that are going to a garden center and will be placed on a bench or shelf, there are certain standards that have to be met," she said. "Those plants have to be in flower and appeal to the consumers.



*Plants grown for landscapers in 1801 Ellepots by Wenke Greenhouses aren't treated with any plant growth regulators. Landscapers want plants that are going to take off, fill in the beds and perform well in landscape plantings.*

“When we are growing 1801 Ellepots, we know these plants are going to landscapers. The landscapers want plants that are really going to take off and grow and perform well in the landscape planting. We use minimal to no PGRs on landscaper items. It's OK for the plants to be larger and growing without restrictions or controls. The plants going into the landscape are not going to be sitting on a retail shelf and are transplanted directly into landscape beds. Also, the landscapers don't need the plants in full flower like a garden center would want to present the plants. It's actually better if the plants aren't in full flower.”

“We don't produce a lot of patio pots for our customers and purchase those from other growers right now because of production space restrictions,” said Lisa Ambrosio, president at Wenke Greenhouses. “In Kalamazoo we are close enough to other growers who specialize in these patio pots. We don't have enough space to do them all ourselves. We do some of these containers for our own retail store. We definitely like doing these containers using Ellepots. If we were growing more of the patio pots we would certainly be using Ellepots to produce them.”

For more information

**Wenke Greenhouses**

T: 269 349-7882

[lisa@wenkegreenhouses.com](mailto:lisa@wenkegreenhouses.com)

[www.wenkewholesale.com](http://www.wenkewholesale.com)



**Ellepot USA**

[www.ellepot-usa.com](http://www.ellepot-usa.com)

This article is written by David Kuack, a freelance technical writer in Fort Worth, Texas;

[dkuack@gmail.com](mailto:dkuack@gmail.com)

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