

Phoenix Perennials and Specialty Plants Ltd.

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Hello,

RE: Fundraising with Charity Shopping Weekends

Phoenix Perennials is an exciting cutting edge retail nursery. We offer one of the largest and most exciting selections of perennials in Canada with nearly 4000 different species and cultivars. Since taking over ownership of the nursery in 2004 I have been looking for ways to give back to the community while also helping to raise the profile of the nursery: hence, the idea of a Charity Shopping Weekend. Since its inception in 2004 Phoenix Perennials has donated \$14,000 to local charities through our Charity Shopping Weekend Program.

Charity Shopping Weekends will be held during the peak gardening season of late April through to mid June. On each Weekend a different charity or group of charities is selected to be the beneficiary of that Weekend. During that Saturday and Sunday 25% of each purchase made by a customer who tells us they are there to support your charity and its Charity Shopping Weekend is donated to your charity. The sky is the limit as far as the money that can be made. The more supporters of your charity that make purchases at Phoenix during your Weekend, the more money that will be raised. The challenge is to mobilize your supporters.

Phoenix Perennials will make an announcement in our monthly e-newsletter about your Weekend. While the e-newsletter does have a readership of over 7000 avid gardeners, the onus is primarily on the charity to rally its supporters as this is where the real opportunity to raise funds resides. Though we announce it to our customers very few of them participate in the CSW unless they have a connection to your charity. There is very little risk for either your charity or Phoenix Perennials since all that is required is the time of one of your staff or volunteers to send out emails or prepare an announcement to go out in one of your regular mailings. That being said, phone trees and direct one-on-one encouragement is the secret of our most successful charities. The benefit for your charity is much-needed funds for your programs. The benefit for Phoenix Perennials is the potential to raise our profile with members of the public while also gaining the satisfaction of giving back to the community.

The charity that can best use a Charity Shopping Weekend is one with a large and loyal base of supporters that can be easily and economically contacted and motivated. It is not necessarily important that you have many supporters that are avid gardeners since a large portion of the population is quite interested in gardening and home improvement.

If you decide to apply for a weekend, the best months are April, May, June, July and September since these are the busiest gardening times of the year. Talk it over with your staff and volunteers and let me know if a Charity Shopping Weekend sounds like the right kind of fundraising event for your organization. We put out a call for applications every January in our monthly e-newsletter with a deadline of March 1st for applications to be submitted.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Gary Lewis
Owner, Phoenix Perennials and Specialty Plants Ltd.