

## ***For Immediate Release***

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### **Alligators and Egrets Benefit from Sustainable Delray Plants**

*Delray Plants Earns VeriFlora® Certified Sustainably Grown Recognition from SCS*

Emeryville, CA – Delray Plants is the first potted foliage producer and the fifth potted ornamental plant producer in North America to attain sustainability certification under the VeriFlora program. The VeriFlora® label was issued by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), an independent standards developer and certifier of environmental, sustainability, and product quality achievement.

To qualify for certification, Delray Plants was required to demonstrate conformance with high standards of environmental sustainability, social responsibility and product quality. The certification covers Foliage Plants, Broadleaf Evergreen Trees and Shrubs, Coniferous Evergreen Trees, Deciduous Shrubs, Ground Cover and Vines, Herbaceous Perennials, Palms and Cycads. These plants are available to gardeners at major national retail chain outlets, including big box store garden centers.



Delray Plants' decision to become certified by SCS was instigated by the company's ongoing commitment to run a green company. "Achieving and maintaining VeriFlora certification allows us to publicly demonstrate the highest level of commitment to our employees, partners, customers and the industry," said co-owner and general manager Randy Gilde.

Jake Koorneef started the business on just 14 acres in Delray Beach, Florida 40 years ago and rapidly expanded to over 100 acres in several locations in Palm Beach County. Today, there are two full production sites in Palm Beach County and the newer 250 acre facility in Venus, Florida with nearly 600 acres available for future expansion. The company is managed by Jake, his son Ed Koorneef, and son-in-law Randy Gilde. According to Randy, "We have always strived to employ the newest and most effective business and production methods, usually without much fanfare."



**Lakes and marshes support wildlife at Delray Plants facility**

"We were very impressed by the extent of Delray Plants' efforts to manage their operations in a sustainable manner — environmentally, socially, and economically," said Dr. Michael Keyes, SCS Certification Manager for Sustainable Agriculture. Among the accomplishments cited by Dr. Keyes were:

- Conservation wetland areas have been upgraded beyond the required mitigation acreage of three acres to include a donation of an additional six acres, benefitting wildlife including hundreds of

ducks and egrets that mate and migrate in the area every year. For example, Delray Plants tied its flood control and run-off control efforts directly to its commitment to regional wildlife conservation by creating three large lakes on 50 acres and linking this system to existing marshlands. As a result, alligators, turtles, rabbits, raccoons and armadillos can now thrive in this sensitive area.

- Trucking has been made more efficient through space optimization of space, based on a 2-tiered box stacking system. The smaller, lighter-weight cardboard boxes on top reflect a packaging resource savings of 70%.



**Alligators bake in the sun**

- Another resource savings strategy is the use of reusable, collapsible metal racks for shipping plants by truck, which exposes the plants to light and can deliver a better product.
- By relocating the company's nursery operations 110 miles closer to its US markets, the business reduced its travel miles, substantially cutting costs while reducing greenhouse gases and pollution.
- Upon relocating to Highlands County, FL, a rural county west of Lake Okeechobee, Delray Plants created jobs for 350 people, the majority of whom are local and year-round employees. Highlands County is now putting a sustainability group together – and they have asked Randy to be part of that plan. More information on Delray Plants can be found at [www.delrayplants.com](http://www.delrayplants.com).

**About Scientific Certification Systems (SCS):** SCS is an independent certifier of environmental, sustainability, food quality and food purity claims. Over two decades, SCS has developed internationally recognized standards and certification programs aimed at spurring the highest level of environmental improvements, social accountability and product performance. Its programs span a wide cross-section of the economy, recognizing accomplishments in agricultural production, food processing and handling, forestry, fisheries, flowers and plants, energy, green building, consumer and business product manufacturing, and retail. You can find additional information about SCS and VeriFlora at [www.scscertified.com](http://www.scscertified.com) and at [www.VeriFlora.org](http://www.VeriFlora.org).

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