



April 2, 2020

John Tory
Mayor of Toronto
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Email: mayor_tory@toronto.ca

RE: Cancellation of Canada Blooms (co-located with National Home Show) & Exhibitor Relief

Your Worship,

Canada Blooms was a brainchild of the Garden Club of Toronto and Landscape Ontario to create a world class garden festival as a gift to the City of Toronto. Since the first festival in 1997 Canada Blooms has strived to achieve this lofty goal and is recognized as a top-10 global Flower Event. As a non-profit organization it has helped fund community greening efforts such as the June Callwood Park and every year thousands of plants are donated to City of Toronto Nursing homes. You were so kind to personally paint a gnome this year to raise funds for Gilda's Club.

Canada Blooms and the Home Show have partnered with Exhibition Place, (and through it the City). It provides an opportunity for local business and homeowners to interact, to buy and sell home and garden related goods and services, as well as to inspire and entertain people living in this wonderful city well attracting thousands of tourists. Canada Blooms and the National Home Show together create the largest home & garden event in North America and is a tradition for almost 160,000 attendees annually, as well as being an economic engine for local business and the region. In 2019 the attendees indicated their intent to spend over \$1 billion dollars in the coming 12 months with some 675 participating exhibitors.

For the first time in its history the festival was forced to cancel hours ahead of opening, following the announcement by the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and subsequent guidance of Toronto Public Health. This, of course was the right thing to do, but it has had disastrous consequences for the Canada Blooms, and more importantly for the builders, florists and exhibitors, most of whom are small local businesses and employers.

Not surprisingly these businesses are asking for full refunds as the festival did not open, and therefore the product was not delivered. The financial hardship experienced by our partners (and Canada Blooms itself) is unique given the very nature of the festival and consumer show business, where all costs are incurred in advance of opening, from space rental, and construction to products being offered at the event. (Likewise show production expenses like rent, media buys, rigging and decorations are all paid in full and in advance and in our case months of greenhouse rents and plant production).

Canada Blooms is a vital and often irreplaceable part of these businesses' model, especially for seasonal businesses launching in the spring. It is used as a marketing and lead source to sustain their business throughout

the year. Unfortunately, due to the double hit of the show closure and the current state of emergency, their normal sources of revenue are being restricted as they rely heavily on face-to-face interactions. Furthermore, these companies are now paying to store stock purchased for the festival.

In order to assist these businesses, we are committed to directly reimbursing all of the rent refunded by the Enercare Centre to our exhibitors. To date, the Enercare Centre has committed to only partially refunding the rent. We have advised our exhibitor partners of our intention to pass these funds along immediately upon receipt.

Your Worship we recognize and appreciate the efforts that all levels of government have undertaken to support businesses during this unprecedented and challenging time. The opportunity to support the full and expeditious refund of Enercare rent paid by the National Home Show and Canada Blooms, is unique to Toronto and we encourage and request your support for the following to assist our exhibitors and ensure that Canada Blooms continue to be a strong economic multiplier and feature for the City:

1. Secure the full rent refund from the Enercare Center. Together we have a unique opportunity to do more and provide much needed assistance to these businesses by ensuring that 100% of the rent is refunded. This would amount to an additional \$540,000 being made available to the exhibitors, providing additional financial resources at a crucial and, in some cases, period of time when survival of some of their businesses are in question.
2. Canada Blooms, like many trade and consumer shows, have been an anchor tenant and a feature in at Exhibition Place for 10 years, and in Toronto for 24 years. We would like for there to be a 25th, 26th, 27th.... and continue to create a vibrant market for these local businesses and boost the local economy. We may be unable to do this without your help and partnership. Given the uncertain environment, particularly related to the length and duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, or similar circumstances in the future, we would also request the cancellation clause for the upcoming Shows, taking place at Enercare Centre, be reviewed. Allowing the show to cancel with full rent relief 6 weeks prior to the scheduled opening (just before costs escalate) would mean that under such extreme circumstances we could refund exhibitors more of their money and save everyone additional costs.

I will contact you to follow up and to provide you with any additional information you may require. Thank you for your strong leadership during this period, it is greatly appreciated and respected.

Sincerely



Terry Caddo
Executive Director
Canada Blooms