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When You Change Your Perspective and Realize Our Differences Are Our Superpower

Backstory:

Flashback to 2002. I was a bright-eyed, fresh-faced kid stepping into the world of landscape for the first time. I loved the plants, the sunshine, and the endless opportunities that lay ahead. But what I didn't anticipate was just how different I would be from most of my coworkers. Over 90% of the workforce was men, and there was a significant age gap, too.

Our association has a proud history. Many of you remember when we were known as the Michigan Association of Nurserymen (MAN), and this very magazine was titled *The Voice of MAN*. At the time, the name reflected a long-standing tradition – but it also painted a narrower picture of who was seen and heard in our industry.

Fast forward to 2025. When I stepped into the role of MNLA President, I had the honor of

becoming only the third woman to serve in this position. As I stood on stage and looked out at the faces of our membership, I realized something powerful.

The story has changed.

Today, our membership is a vibrant mix of voices, talents, and perspectives. One of the changes I'm most proud of is the rise of women's leadership and participation across the Green Industry. Women are now owners, innovators, educators, field leaders, and decision-makers – bringing fresh perspectives and helping to drive meaningful progress.

But this evolution isn't just about numbers; it's about **impact**. By widening the table and welcoming more people to it, we've built an industry that's stronger, more creative, and more resilient. The Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association is committed to ensuring that everyone – regardless of gender, background, or how they found their way into the profession – has a place, a voice, and a chance to thrive.

As we reflect on where we started and look ahead to where we're going, I'm deeply proud of the progress we've made together. Our roots run deep but our future is defined by growth, inclusion, and innovation. The Michigan landscape industry is thriving because it represents all of us; and together, we'll continue to shape its future.



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