



# INFORMATION BROCHURE FOR WORKERS IN DIFFERENT TREE NURSERY ACTIVITIES (FELLING OF TREES...)

(INFORMATION FOR VDAB EURES)

## ACTIVITY: CULTIVATION AND HARVESTING IN TREE NURSERIES

### REGION IN FLANDERS

Tree nurseries are spread fairly widely over Flanders, but are concentrated in East Flanders. It mainly concerns ornamental trees in the Wetteren, Oosterzele, Laarne, Wichelen and Lede regions. The cultivation of forest trees is mainly located in the areas of Maldegem, Waarschoot and Evergem.

### ACTIVITY

The essence of the work consists of harvesting, i.e. felling trees, preparing them for sale, planting of new trees. The planting of new trees also include subsequent activities like pruning of trees, weeding, maintenance of plantations, etc.

*It is very important to carefully follow the producer's instructions!*

### PERIOD OF THE WORK

Harvesting:	October - end of December and beginning of January - March
Planting of new trees:	March - April

### JOB REQUIREMENTS

- No prior knowledge or studies required
- Flexible and motivated
- Suitability for (often) repetitive physical work: a good physical condition is needed, especially for harvesting
- A sense of accuracy: an eye for quality and safety
- Stick to rules and agreements - follow work instructions
- Working in a team
- Working with people from other origins/countries
- Work is done in the open air or in a sorting area at the company

## TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- This concerns employment as a seasonal worker (SW).
- In 2022, 100 working days are allowed for SW.
- This concerns day contracts.
- The minimum hourly wage in 2022:
  - o Forest tree nursery: € 11.77 gross/hour
  - o Tree nursery: € 11.86 gross/hour

A wage calculation is made per month. There is a tax deduction of 18.725%. No additional tax will be payable on this amount afterwards. Unless this is interpreted differently by your employer.

As a seasonal worker, you will receive a copy of the wage calculation every month.

**Note:** if you have earned more than 75% of your total professional income (earned in Belgium and in your home country) in Belgium, it is in your interest to file a tax return in Belgium the following year. You will then receive a partial refund of the taxes.

- If a worker has worked more than 50 days, a year-end bonus of € 200 is paid by the *Waarborg - en Sociaal Fonds voor het Tuinbouwbedrijf* (Social Guarantee Fund for Horticultural Enterprises). This premium is paid in the year following the season. Inform the *Sociaal Fonds Tuinbouw* (Social Guarantee Fund for Horticultural Enterprises) of your address in your home country and your bank account number if you want to receive this premium.
- If a worker has worked more than 30 days for the same employer, a loyalty premium of € 0.50 per day is paid by the *Waarborg - en Sociaal Fonds voor het Tuinbouwbedrijf* (Social Guarantee Fund for Horticultural Enterprises). This premium is paid in the year following the season. Inform the *Sociaal Fonds Tuinbouw* (Social Guarantee Fund for Horticultural Enterprises) of your address in your home country and your account number.

## WORKING HOURS

Seasonal workers work with day contracts.

Working hours in the horticultural sector are normally 38 hours/week.

More hours can be worked in season: up to 11 hours /day and up to 50 hours /week.

All hours worked are paid at the normal hourly wage.

## SEASONAL WORK FORM

There is a seasonal work form for seasonal workers on which the days of seasonal work are noted.

Seasonal workers can keep this form during the season. If you change employers, you must take this document with you.

## LODGING

In many cases, the employer provides accommodation. The accommodation must meet certain standards (floor space, heating, sanitary facilities, etc.).

The employer may charge a monthly rent for the stay in the lodging.

Agreements on this should be made at the start of the season.

Rent is to be agreed with the employer and can be up to € 250/month.

## REGISTRATION WITH THE MUNICIPALITY

You must be registered as a seasonal worker with the municipality where you are staying. The municipality will issue you with a residence document.

You will also get a social security ID number or a BIS number in Belgium.

## SOCIAL SECURITY DECLARATION

You do not pay social security as a seasonal worker. Your benefits will be declared quarterly to the social security authorities in Belgium by your employer.

## HEALTHCARE

As a seasonal worker in Belgium, you can benefit from free health care during the first two years that you are in Belgium. Make arrangements for this with your employer.

Information related to healthcare in Belgium can be found on the websites: [www.cm.be](http://www.cm.be), [www.kcgs.be](http://www.kcgs.be), [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be), ...

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON TREE NURSERY PRODUCTION IN BELGIUM

Specific figures for tree nurseries (2020):

- Tree nurseries area: 5,285 ha (BE) of which 4,637 ha in Flanders
- Number of tree nurseries: 783 (BE) of which 679 in Flanders

In the tree nursery sector (2019), 274 employers employ about 1381 FTEs, and about 510 FTEs as seasonal workers. However, these temporary workers are crucial to absorb peak work (during harvest and planting).

Tree nursery: distribution of total employment in Flanders:

- 55% East Flanders
- 9% Antwerp
- 15% West Flanders
- 17% Limburg
- 4% Flemish Brabant