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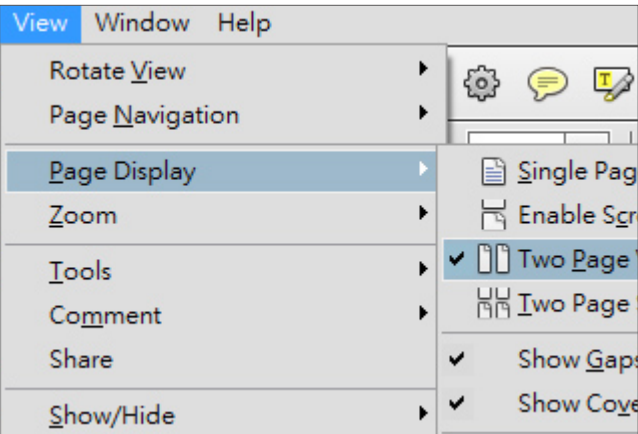


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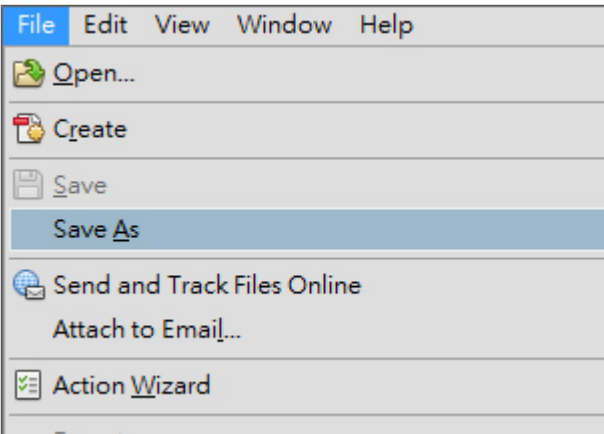
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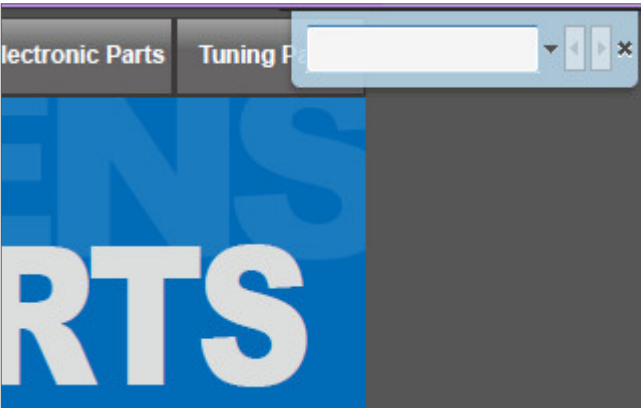
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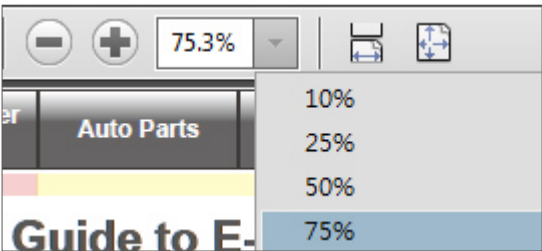
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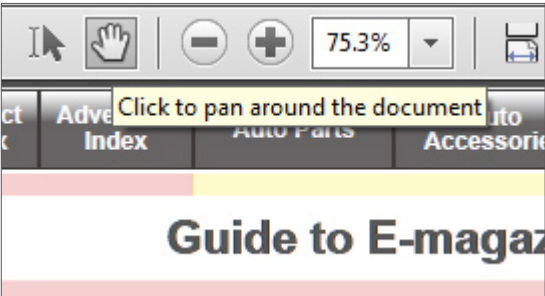


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Taiwanese Gardening Product Makers Pursue Sustainable Growth with Different Strategies

Less export stateside but more to Europe and emerging nations

Gardening product production makes up a significant part of Taiwan's hardware industry.

By STEVE CHUANG

Garden tools along with related accessories, which totally generate export revenue of around US\$95 million on average every year, are a major contributor to overall exports by the industry of hand tools in Taiwan, with most of which have been well received by professionals and DIY in the U.S. and European countries.

Despite global economic uncertainty and market fluctuations, most Taiwanese makers of garden tools and gardening equipments have remained in comparatively good shapes over the past few years for their successful strategies. Some of them share what they have done to keep afloat in interviews with CENS to underline the sector's vigor amid a sluggish global economy.

Optimizing Competitiveness

Gearing up to optimize its competitiveness by different means, Wise Center Industrial Group

Inc. has been growing steadily in recent years, well on its way to a world-caliber branding supplier of garden tools, said the chairman Thomas Lin.

Lin stated that his company has been building SOPs for production and other operations in compliance with TS16949, and is scheduled to obtain this certificate in October, which is rarity in this industry, but will help every employee to cultivate the concept of standardization to produce products with better quality and more efficiently. In short, this traditional small-and medium-sized maker is moving toward a world-caliber enterprise with systematic, efficient management.

"Implementing production and quality management to meet TS16949 is a lifetime job," said Lin. "This will take considerable efforts, but is worthwhile to enhance added-value for customers, because today a maker

must prove customers its capabilities besides making good products in this increasingly challenging market."

To achieve this goal, the company resorts to industry-academia-research cooperation, having effectively optimized its production and operations with help of professors and industry experts to improve its yield rates and operating efficiency. Besides, the company has also been working on building a worker-friendly working environment to boost its profile among foreign buyers, mentioned Lin.

He furthered, "Foreign customers tend to evaluate a supplier not only by product quality, but also by management systems, work environments and human ecology." Certification of BSCI (Business Social Compliance Initiative) established in Europe, for instance, is among the company's objectives to attain in the years to come.

Market-driven R&D

In the meantime, Wise Center has also been engaged in developing more garden tools to expand its product mix to enhance its brand sales. Lin said that his company plans to build 10 different product families in the short term for various applications in cutting and trimming bushes, trees, fences and lawns and other special purposes. "Our new products are specifically developed to meet market demands, instead of conventionally built for orders," said Lin. "This will enable our company, as a branding manufacturer, to dedicate resources more effectively to the right direction."

So far, this company has worked out three new product families, including telescopic shears with one-touch buttons, more effortless, enjoyable pruning shears and lopping shears featuring easier operation.

Hopefully, this product R&D project along with the said competitiveness optimization plan will start to contribute to Wise Center's business growth three years later, said

Lin, not to mention that his company has smoothly increased its footholds nationwide in China with sub-brands. Worth mentioning is that Lin confirmed that his company will set up a new production line of its branded products in China by the end of this year to feed the local market.

Since its foundation in 1991 in Taichung County, central Taiwan, Wise Center has been specializing in production of garden tools and related accessories on an OEM (original equipment manufacturing) and ODM (original design manufacturing) basis, with two manufacturing plants in Taiwan and one packaging plant in China. In recent year, this maker has also been moving upward to OBM (original brand manufacturing) business globally.

The company's main product portfolio comprehends pruners, tree pruners, handle tools, gardening peripheral equipment and parts, shovels, flower scissors, branch pruners, water pipe shears, lawn shears, step stools, ladders, lapping shears, hedge shears, pruner shears, grass shears, tree pole pruners and saws and long reach shears. Also, aluminum zinc castings, lighting fixture parts, household hardware, plastic products, building materials, molds, forged and die cast products are all available in its product category.

Targeted at Professionals

Mainly focused in professional-caliber sprayer guns for gardening and agricultural purposes, Evergreen Spraying Technology Co. has maintained brisk growths since its inception four years ago, said the president S.J. Lin.

With more than three decades of experience in developing, making and marketing sprayer guns and related accessories, Lin dedicates his company to this forte on an OEM and ODM basis, and successfully builds a solid name among buyers from Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., etc. Presently, this company also markets its

products under owned brand EST worldwide.

The main reason why this four-year-old company can quickly emerge in the segment for professional-level sprayer guns of metal materials is its cutting-edge know-how about structural designs, said Lin, who added that this segment has been dominated by Japanese suppliers, with few Taiwanese insiders.

For example, Lin effectively builds innovative structure into all of his company's sprayer guns, which allows interchangeability of various nozzles for different purposes. The improved structural design incorporated with use of light alloy or stainless steel has additional bonus, which makes every single sprayer gun able to spray water at high and

low pressure, while cutting the tool's weight.

To enhance working efficiency for professional users, this company also unveils a couple of special sprayer guns with unique designs and beefed-up functions. For example, its long range sprayer gun is built with a 360 degree rotatable nozzle along with a fixable trigger, and another model specifically for arecas is improved to spray water to a height of up to 13 meters. Also materializing this company's consummate know-how, the model for use in strawberry farms is developed with multiple nozzles that are interchangeable as well at three different angles on the fork-shaped shank, which assures effective, efficient irrigation of such plants.



Improved mechanical structure for effortless operation is a shared concern among Taiwanese garden tool makers when they work on R&D.

"Professional-level sprayers are more specific and functional than DIY models, which call for higher technologies and know-how to produce but turn out higher margins," said Lin. "EST has decades-long expertise to be a qualified supplier in the segment, so is well recognized by foreign professionals despite only four years old."

Lin mentioned a sprayer model for watering street trees to justify his company's banner growth, which has been sought-after by its customer in the U.S. for its excellent functionality, with shipment steadily increasing to exceed 10,000 units in 2011 from less than 6,000 units shipped in the first year. Since market demand for professional-caliber sprayers is more stable than that for DIY models, Lin hence believes that his company will keep growing in 2012 and faring well in the years to come.

In addition to sprayers, this maker also supplies hoses, valves, nozzles, sprayer parts, sprayer apparatus, spray rods, and hose joints, all of which are used in cleaning and sterilizing equipment, besides gardening and agricultural instruments.

New Products

Keeping concentrated on developing new products, Sheng Yih Hardware Enterprise Co., Ltd., founded in 1976 in Changhua County, central Taiwan, has also enjoyed revenue growth over past few years, with the momentum mainly driven by sales to Japan and China, said the chairman J.T. Hsieh.

Sheng Yih churns out a wide spectrum of garden tools, including pruners, tree pruners, garden tools, handle tools, gardening peripheral equipment and parts, shovels, flower scissors, branch pruners, waterpipe shears and lawn shears. The versatile maker also provides hardware, household products, building materials, molds, forged and die-casting products, aluminum zinc castings, lighting fixgture parts, household hardware, plastic products and hardware parts.

So far, Sheng Yih has successfully destined its products to markets in Europe and Japan, and earned its reputations due to its strenuous commitment to R&D, said Hsieh, who stressed that his company's garden cutting tools feature particular functions and innovations than competing models.

He furthered that only keeping doing research based on real experience can marketability and functionality of products, which is his company's R&D concept that has been well rewarded in the form of business growths in recent years.

The HH1411B hedge shear is a product of the company's R&D capability, which features a dual-pivot design between two blades, making cut more efficiently and easily than conventional models with a single pivot. Moreover, the dual-pivot structural design enables the shear to cut 20mm twigs and branches in diameters without need for any other supplementary tools.

To meet trends for lightweight garden tools, this shear has blades of SK5 steel coupled with a handle and shank made of a mixture of nylon and lead, and aluminum, respectively, and allows customers optional coating for added-value.

"We have continued applying practiced experience to develop new products and would repeatedly fine-tune them to attain optimal performance via real use," Hsieh once again said of his company's R&D concepts. "We aim to provide the best practical, useful garden tools living up to, or exceeding, users' expectation."

Committed to Quality Pumps

Committed to making high-quality pumps for power sprayers and manual backpack sprayers for professional use, Lu Shyong Machinery Industry Co. has also maintained a robust growth so far, confirmed by the manager K.C. Lin.

The quality-driven company has been

awarded with ISO 9000 and ISO 9001 certification, and has managed to penetrate the supply chains of major customers in Germany and Japan on an OEM basis. With its constant emphasis on R&D, it is well experienced in handling ODM orders as well, and going upward to an OBM with owned brand Whale Best, which is synonymous with reliable quality.

Lin said that high quality and functionality of its high-pressure pumps is mainly attributable to its consummate aluminum die casting and CNC machining technology, which is backed by 6 CNC machining centers and skillful workers employed at factories. Presently, the company's pumps have output pressure of up to 280kg, and all have been certificated by CE Mark.

Drawing on its technologies, the company has developed and produced a wide range of agricultural equipment, including power sprayers, knapsack sprayers, sprayers with built-in rechargeable batteries, portable power sprayers, high-pressure cleaning machines, high-pressure industrial pumps, fogging machines, air coolers, diaphragm pumps, brush cutters, power tillers, spray guns, washing guns, nozzles, pullers, hose reels, hoses, extension rods, and swirl preventers.

Lin introduced the SB 528 pump, which, one of the company's hot-sellers in the past four years, is improved with a water seal to be free of grease in maintenance, and built with a piston design to achieve lower power consumption. The LS1311 high-pressure pump is also atop the company's list of sales contributors, which features use of timer delay switch systems, a ceramic plunger and pump head made of brass forged, ideal for industrial use.

In the face of increasing rivalry against Chinese makers, Lin said that his company will try to keep emerging competitors behind by developing more niche products, while expanding its factory in China to step up integrating its production across the Taiwan

Strait. "We will continue to develop high-quality pumps for our customers to achieve bigger market shares," said Lin. He continued that his company will also venture into electromechanical products for agricultural use to differ from rivals. "Presently, few Taiwanese pump makers are capable of venturing into this forte, but we are scheduled to unveil such a product by the end of this year," he added.

Lu Shyong is capable of supplying about 6,000 units of its agricultural products, together with related accessories, every month. More than 70% of the output is shipped abroad; 39% of the exports go to Asia, and the Middle East, 15% to America, and 8% to Europe. [CENS](#)



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Gear Transmission Hedge Shear



Ratchet Lopper

Aluminum Alloy Forged Handles
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Pump, Garden Tools, Booster



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S3 puls MTS



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HWCP

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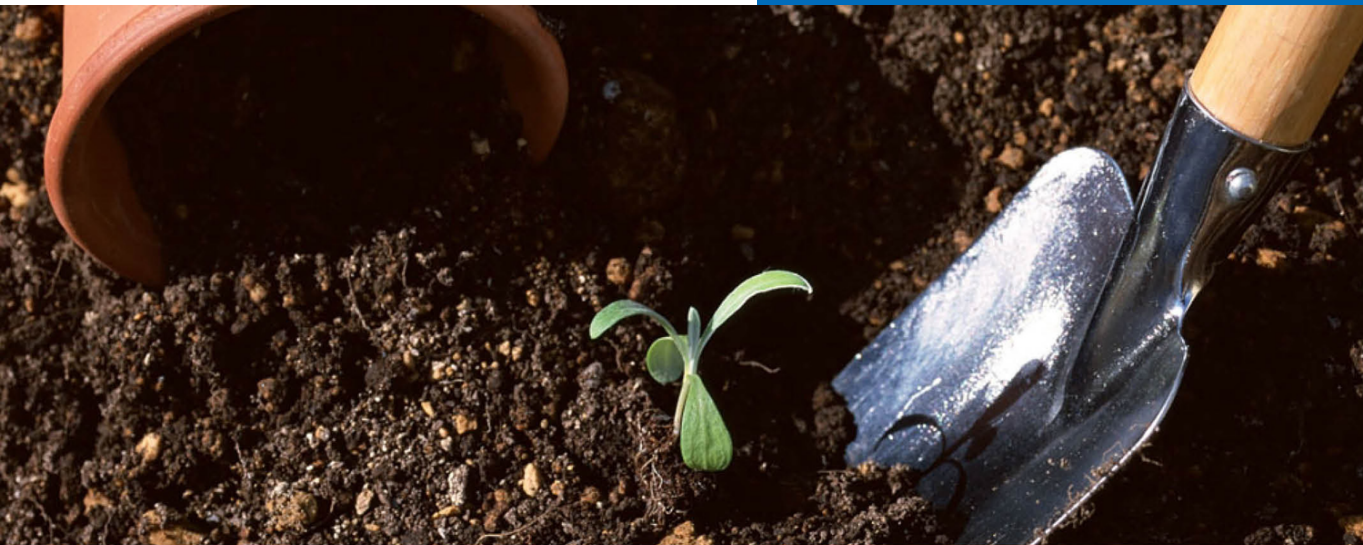
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