



Mike Hiller

**Production Manager,
Kraemer's Nursery**

Water and labor are concerns for the OAN Executive Committee's current secretary and future treasurer

Background: I grew up on a family farm in St. Paul. This gave me a wide variety of experiences in agriculture at an accelerated pace, resulting in a foundation of knowledge that I continue to build upon. I attended Whitworth College in Spokane for one year, then transferred to Oregon State University and graduated with a degree in horticulture.

Guiding principle: It's so important to understand how a process/system works. Asking questions is key, as is applying principles.

Most significant mentor: My brother Steve has helped guide me through life. With the passing of my father at a young age, Steve taught me many life lessons.

Best business advice: To build communication and work together as

a team. Also, asking lots of questions and listening is critical, not only within a company but also among other businesses.

What do you love most about the nursery industry? Every day is met with challenges, some of them repetitious and others one could not even imagine. I love the challenge of diagnosis, developing a game plan and executing a solution.

What is your greatest challenge? Producing a consistent product year after year. So many variables come into play every year, posing new obstacles you must overcome to deliver the best, most consistent product possible. Water and labor were some of this year's most limiting factors.

What motivates you to go to work every day? I get great joy from being part

of a team that achieves its goals. It is also gratifying to produce plants that I know will grow for many years to come.

What are you most proud of? My wife Kirstin and our daughter Lola.

Involvement with OAN: I started serving on the Willamette Chapter board in 2004. Last year I signed on to the OAN Executive Committee and will be treasurer for the next two years.

In your opinion, what are the most critical challenges facing the nursery industry today? Water and labor are the biggest challenges that we face as an industry. These are the two important factors that will limit the ability to produce plants. We will have to work together as an industry to solve these issues and secure our future. ©