



Founded: 1976 by Glenn, Mildred, Gene and Sue Schiedel

Owned by: Mike and Lori Hanson

Known for: Conifers, broadleaf evergreens, and deciduous trees and shrubs

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SCHIEDEL NURSERY enjoys a presence at nursery trade shows all across the country. The wholesale grower exhibits its conifers, broadleaf evergreens and deciduous trees and shrubs at a number of industry shows each year.

Owners Mike and Lori Hanson like to get out and meet people. And wherever they go, they usually get the same question.

“Customers ask, ‘Where are you from?’ And I say, ‘Oregon,’” Mike said. “And they’re like, ‘Yep. I can tell.’ The product from Oregon looks so much nicer than everywhere else.”

It’s powerful validation for the third-generation nursery owners, who took over their family’s business in 2008, just before the Great Recession took hold.

“We lost a good portion of our customers, just like everyone else did,” Lori said. “The recession was tough to live through, but it gave us a forced education to look at who our customers were and what they want.”

Traditionally, Schiedel Nursery was best known for its line of grafted conifers, which are grown in the field and shipped as B&B material. However, the nursery has been broadening its horizons since the Hansons took over.

The nursery is growing more and more containerized trees and shrubs, and not just conifers. In all, the company’s repertoire now includes more than 200 tree and shrub selections. They continue to add new items to their

catalog annually, with focus on additional flowering and deciduous items, such as viburnums, *Hibiscus*, hydrangeas and barberries.

“It’s just changing with the times,” Mike said. “You’ve got to keep up with what people want.”

In the beginning

Schiedel Nursery officially began in 1976, but its roots run much deeper.

“It kind of goes back to my great-grandfather (Louis Coufal),” Lori said. “He worked for a retail nursery and had an acre of nursery production in his own yard. And that’s sort of where the nursery bug started.”

Lori’s grandparents, Glenn and Mildred Schiedel, also caught the bug. They farmed land for another nursery near the rural community of Boring, on the lower foothills of Mt. Hood. Their son, Gene, worked on the farm as well in the late 1960s, and then began digging trees for them in the early 1970s, along with his wife, Sue.

In 1976, the two families decided to start their own nursery and founded Schiedel Nursery. They began with 35 acres in Boring and focused on selling grafted ornamental liners, producing their own stock to plant out on the acreage along with customer orders. As the nursery grew, they leased 35 adjoining acres and gradually transitioned over into selling B&B material. Glenn retired around 1985, shortly after his wife passed away and Gene and Sue took over. Glenn passed away in 1992. >>

Third-generation nursery owners Mike and Lori Hanson took over Schiedel Nursery in 2007 from Lori's parents, Gene and Sue Schiedel. The Hansons have ambitious plans for growth.



As Gene's daughter, Lori grew up on the nursery. "I was pretty much born into it," she said.

However, she didn't plan or expect to work at the nursery after she grew up. "I had more of a vision of an indoor job," she said. "I didn't particularly enjoy hoeing, or those sorts of tasks."

But in 1994, when her father needed someone to work in his office, she answered the call. "It was supposed to be a temporary thing when I started, but it became permanent," she said.

Lori's husband, Mike, joined the nursery soon thereafter.

The nursery reached a major decision fork in 1997 when the owner of the 35-acre parcel they were leasing passed away. The surviving owners decided to sell the land.

The Schiedels were interested in buying, but found the price too high. They still had the 35 acres that they owned outright, but it wasn't enough space for their operation.

Their search for additional property ended up leading them to the northern Willamette Valley, away from Mt. Hood. "We decided to relocate the entire nursery, as well as our residence, rather than commuting between the two properties," Mike said.

The new, 150-acre site had room for growth, and its other attributes proved to be more than satisfactory. "We did not have enough water in Boring for irrigation," Mike said. "The valley has plenty of water and no clay in the soil. It was a good change."

Post-move, the nursery grew at a steady pace, but by 2007, Gene was ready to retire. So, he turned the reins over to Mike and Lori. However, Gene has remained involved in the operation.

"You can find him most days in the greenhouse," Lori said. "My dad enjoys overseeing the propagation and grafting, so he still manages that portion. We are grateful for his help and years of knowledge."

Changing for the future

Since taking over, the Hansons have made a number of changes to better position the nursery for future growth.

One of the changes was engaging outside sales representatives and brokers for the first time. They have also invested more time and money in product quality. "Our goal is to send a healthy, consistent product to our customers so they know what to expect from us every time they order," Lori said.

Further changes are coming. The

Hansons plan to continue expanding their container selections, which will further their ability to ship products anytime they are ordered. "We want to grow more and more containers and keep summer sales going," Mike said.

The nursery also offers something called a "slip-in" tree product. These are B&B trees that are placed in a container with media just before shipment. The tree arrives at its destination ready to grow to a larger size — no transplant needed.

"Some of the garden centers like it," Lori said. "That way, they don't have to have people to pot it up when it gets there."

Schiedel Nursery sells to all regions of the United States and Canada, but areas of particular emphasis include the East Coast, the upper Midwest and the Pacific Northwest. And this is why, as mentioned before, they like to exhibit at the trade shows. It gives them valuable feedback.

When they aren't doing that, they're often busy giving tours of their nursery, or Mike is traveling to visit customers' establishments.

"I like the feedback from our customers," Mike said. "We want to know — what do you want that we don't have? How can we be more of a one-stop shop?" ☺