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Welcome to the new year!

It's always an invigorating time of year, as the dust settles following the holidays. We can start to think ahead a little bit, knowing that in just a flash, it'll be spring's mad rush.



Josh Zielinski
OAN PRESIDENT

But because it's the dead of winter, we can also feel especially grateful for where we live: the state of Oregon.

While much of the nation hibernates beneath ice and snow, weathering one storm after another, we tend to get a bit luckier. We typically experience more steady rainfall, or when it gets a little colder, more "decorative" amounts of the other more burdensome forms of precipitation.

With just the right amount of cold weather to give plants their needed hardiness, our spring tends to come earlier than in other parts of the country. By the time the swelling buds arrive, our plant material is ready for harvest and shipping.

This issue is the annual Nursery Country issue, and this year it highlights four distinct nursery operations in our state. The nurseries that are featured represent just a sample of all the unique nursery businesses operating in Oregon.

This year's edition includes some great nurseries and the stories behind them. Just thinking of friends in the Oregon industry and driving around the state passing one nursery after another, I suspect the editors will never run out of nurseries worthy of being featured in the Nursery Country issue. There are so many impressive nurseries run by great people.

It may sound like I am "humble bragging" a bit. To be sure, I am quite proud of our industry and all the people who have dedicated their lives to making it what it is. Still, it's funny how we can take Oregon's landscape for granted.

Just last fall I was chatting with a running friend — one who does not work in our trade — and informed him of shipments to Long Island, New York. He stopped me and said, "Wait, what? You ship plants to New York? Why?"

I informed him that it isn't exactly uncommon for a wholesale nursery in Oregon to ship plants all over the country.

"Lots of really hardworking people set up shop here over the last century to take advantage of the climate and grow high-quality plants for the nation," I began. "You see, we have predictably long growing seasons ..." and then launched into a spiel listing the state's many other advantages.

But then I realized that even after a hot and dry summer, we had been blessed with a nice, long fall that finished off our plants, as well as it served the Pinot grapes in our hills. I realized I was talking to a friend who often runs before sunrise 300 days a year and needs gloves for maybe 60 of them. Finally, as we picked up the pace I muttered, "It's just perfect, you know. For the plants and for us."

So for those of us lucky enough to call Oregon home, let's be grateful for our wonderful "nursery country," and continue the hard work of those who showed us what quality and abundance our state can produce. And for those readers from around the country: come on out and have a look. You'll like what you see.

Here's to a great 2018! ☺