

MEET THE LEADER

The voices of Oregon's nursery industry

WHO IS PATRICK?

I'm kind of a city kid who found his way into the nursery industry. I had owned a couple of small businesses that focused on yard maintenance and hardscapes. My father-in-law presented me with a great opportunity at Powell's Nursery and I jumped on it.

WHAT IS YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

I want to grow a quality plant and to have good relationships with my customers. If we grow a plant that my employees and myself are proud of, then we are doing our job. Also, I treat others the way I want to be treated — that goes a long way in life.

WHAT IS A GOAL YOU HAVE YET TO ACHIEVE?

I want to go on a one-month cross-country road trip with my wife and kids. That might have to wait for a while, but will always be something I'm striving for!

WHAT'S THE HARDEST BUSINESS DECISION YOU'VE EVER MADE?

There are hard decisions every day. We are dealing with plants that we hope someone will buy in two or three years. Which ones do we grow? How do we treat this bug or that disease? But the hardest decision we had to make was to let all but two of our employees go in the fall of 2008. We saw the writing on the wall and knew we could not survive with the payroll we had. It's hard to let someone you've worked with for eight years go, but we had no choice. To this day, I still think of them and hope they're doing well.

WHAT WAS YOUR GREATEST MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

I should have taken Spanish classes in school.

WHO IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR?

I have a few mentors, like my dad Mike Newton and my father-in-law Howard Powell.

Howard founded Powell's Nursery in



Patrick Newton OWNER/OPERATOR

Powell's Nursery
OAN member since 1993

- Farwest Show Committee, Chairman
- Sunset Chapter

1990. He brought me on in the summer of 2001. Howard started me at the bottom and taught me how to grow a quality plant and run a nursery. I didn't like making minimum wage and working in the potting shed at the time, but looking back, I'm grateful. There is nothing on this farm I can't do, from potting and grafting, to spraying, and the office work. Hell, I can even change a spark plug. Now, I own Powell's Nursery and still get his advice on business decisions. Thank you, Howard.

My dad Mike was always there for me.



I knew I could call him with anything and he wouldn't judge. He would listen and give advice. I miss that.

Finally, two men I met when I first started in the industry, Kevin Guy and John Rissberger. I look up to and admire them both. I appreciate all the knowledge they have given me over the years.

WHAT IS YOUR BEST BUSINESS ADVICE?

Expand within your means. Don't over-extend yourself.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE NURSERY INDUSTRY?

I love the camaraderie — we're all in this together.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE?

The challenges I face depend on the year. Last year, it was weeds. This year has been the weather. The second warmest January on record has turned my grafting schedule upside down. However, with great employees putting extra hours in and a cold February, we have been able to get back on schedule.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GO TO WORK EVERYDAY?

I love what I do. I have great employees and am part of an awesome industry and association. I have become friends with most of my customers and look forward to our day-to-day banter.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

My wife Daniela and two kids Isabella and Alec. I couldn't be prouder!

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES FACING THE NURSERY INDUSTRY TODAY?

I know I sound like a broken record, but labor is our biggest challenge. With immigration issues, new construction jobs and the explosion of vineyards, labor continues to be a long-term — as well as the biggest — challenge. ☺