

## 2017-2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Josh Zielinski**  
PRESIDENT  
josh@alphanursery.com

Alpha Nursery  
5050 Hazelgreen Rd. N.E.  
Salem, OR 97305-3519  
503-390-1286  
FAX 503-390-2639

**Mike Hiller**  
PRESIDENT-ELECT  
mike@kniusa.com

Kraemer's Nursery Inc.  
P.O. Box 930  
Mt. Angel, OR 97362  
503-845-2283  
FAX 503-845-6557

**Jim Simnitt**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
simnittnsy@canby.com

Simnitt Nursery  
138 NE 22nd Ave.  
Canby, OR 97013  
503-266-9640  
FAX 503-263-6330

**Kyle Fessler**  
TREASURER  
kyle@stchristophernursery.com

St. Christopher Nursery LLC  
12936 Portland Rd. N.E.  
Gervais, OR 97026  
503-580-4470  
FAX 503-792-3902

**Mark Bigej**  
PAST PRESIDENT  
mbigej@als-gardencenter.com

Al's Garden & Home  
1220 N. Pacific Hwy.  
Woodburn, OR 97071-3616  
503-981-1245  
FAX 503-982-4608

**Josh Robinson**  
SECRETARY  
josh@robinsonnursery.com

Robinson Nursery Inc.  
P.O. Box 100  
Amity, OR 97101  
503-835-4533  
FAX 503-835-3004

**Denec Messenger**  
MEMBER AT LARGE  
denecemessenger@comcast.net

Decorative Bark Products  
P.O. Box 1198  
Tualatin, OR 97062  
503-510-4029  
FAX 503-859-3764

## STATE BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

**CENTRAL OREGON CHAPTER**  
**Gary S. English**  
gary@landsystemsnursery.com

Landsystems Nursery  
541-382-7646

**CHRISTMAS TREE CHAPTER**  
vacant

**CLACKAMAS CHAPTER**  
**Adam Farley**  
afarley@countysidenursery.com  
**Amanda Staehely**  
amandastaehely@gmail.com

Countryside Nursery  
503-678-0511  
Columbia Nursery  
503-810-2598

**EMERALD EMPIRE CHAPTER**  
**Tamara Clift**  
tamaragreg@msn.com

McKenzie River Nursery  
541-747-2767

**GREENHOUSE CHAPTER**  
**Andrea Avila-Aragon**  
andrea.avila-aragon@smithgardens.com

Smith Gardens  
503-678-5373

**Mark Leichthy**  
mark@littleprinceoforegon.com

Little Prince of Oregon Nursery  
503-678-5687

**MT. HOOD CHAPTER**  
**Scott Ekstrom**  
scott\_ekstrom@yahoo.com  
**Anthony Kinen**

Ekstrom Nursery Inc.  
503-663-4035  
Kinen's Big & Phat  
Special Plants  
503-866-3627

**RETAIL CHAPTER**  
**Laura Hammond**  
lhammond@als-gardencenter.com

Al's Garden & Home  
503-981-1245

**SUNSET CHAPTER**  
**Matt Gold**  
matt.gold@midasnurserysolutions.com

Midas Nursery Solutions  
503-628-3059

**Ron Kinney**  
rkinney@monrovia.com

Monrovia  
503-868-7941

**WILLAMETTE CHAPTER**  
**John Maurer**  
john@evergreengrowers.com  
**Robert Van Klaveren**  
vansnursery@aol.com

Evergreen Growers Supply Inc.

Van's Nursery  
503-463-4507

# The 'offseason'

Sometimes I feel that people outside the nursery industry think we only really work during our harvest season, which for most of us is in the spring.

The prevailing thought among my non-industry friends seems to be that after we ship the present crop and plant next season's crop, we simply kick back and wait. They're under the impression that life between harvests is just a giant, lazy offseason.

Now, I am sure that somewhere, someone has arranged their schedule like that. Good for them. For the rest of us, there's a lot to do in the summertime. We may celebrate (hopefully), but we also work on our weaknesses, prepare for next season, and of course do the stuff we put off during shipping season (or is that just me?).

To offer a comparison, I enjoy running as a hobby. It is a very challenging sport. Often it is not difficult for me to draw parallels between my long-distance running and operating a business — especially a grower operation in Oregon.

Typically, a hobby runner has key races planned that create a loosely defined season. For instance, I have the California International Marathon in the beginning of December, and I always set an ambitious goal. Marathons aren't easy. I usually sign up for shorter races as part of the buildup to that cool (please), dry (please), and windless (please) morning in Sacramento.

That's my "season." A competitive or professional level runner — which I am not! — may actually have a defined season. Either way, the runner can look out at some period of time and know they have to be "ready to roll" by such and such date.

As growers, likewise, we see early spring on the horizon and we know we better have our ducks in a row. The plan to prepare for the harvest may look simple. It might even be spelled out as a 12–18 week program. But do we sit around the rest of the time and twiddle our thumbs? No. Most nurseries around Oregon are just like great athletes. We know that, as they say, "the separation is in the preparation." What we do between seasons makes us better.

As I mentioned, we celebrate in the "offseason." We finish a big shipping season and maybe we do kick back with a family vacation or remodel (ugh) to remind us why we work so hard in this uniquely challenging industry, dealing with all the stresses of business plus whatever Mother Nature has in store.

Likewise, after a big race season I go into a similar mode of just running relaxed in preferably new and beautiful places. These adventures simplify things and serve as a good reminder to me of why I really do like running.

The "offseason" is a good time to address weaknesses. During my present running offseason I am trying to focus on form and strengthening certain muscles that will help me avoid injury on the next big training cycle. Likewise, even after a relatively smooth harvest and ship, we can typically look back and say we should have tweaked this a little or utilized this more.

By identifying weaknesses that need help, we can improve our communications, software, dock layout, label room, checkout stands or many other things. It's the same as a runner doing lunges or squats to improve running form.

Our offseasons aren't empty. We conduct inventory, create catalogs, gather pre-orders, place pre-orders, educate customers on new products, generate marketing materials and market ourselves at shows (like Farwest!).

All this stuff (somewhat sadly) keeps us inside on some beautiful days — much nicer ones than when we tromped through the rain during the spring — but all of it has to be done.

So lace up your trainers or put on your boots, and stay after it. It pays off at the finish line — whatever your finish line may be. ☺



Josh Zielinski  
OAN PRESIDENT