

Digger

MARCH 2019



A corner of the market

The challenges and rewards for specialty nurseries

PAGE 17

The value of influence

PAGE 21

Pest control for Christmas trees

PAGE 27

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On the cover: Amethyst Hill Nursery/Hydrangeas Plus® has become a leading specialty nursery with 320 varieties on offer. PHOTO COURTESY OF AMETHYST HILL NURSERY **On this page:** Left: Heathers and heaths are the specialty at Highland Heather. PHOTO BY DENNIS BAUERMEISTER Right: Christmas trees are investigated for aphid eggs. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY



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Couldn't stand the weather

Legendary Texas bluesman Stevie Ray Vaughan famously sang that he "Couldn't Stand the Weather."



Mike Hiller
OAN PRESIDENT

Here in Oregon, enduring the weather is one thing. As I suspect they do in Texas, we're just trying to figure out what's going on from one moment to the next.

While the rest of the United States was suffering under the yoke of a polar vortex, Western Oregon enjoyed the mildest January in recent memory. We had many sunny days and nary a frost to be found. Our plants were waking up from dormancy earlier than normal — even earlier than the mildest winters.

Of course, this was followed by February snowfalls, rain and cold. While not as bad as advertised, they surely sent our plants mixed signals.

As always, it seems like the weather does what it wants, when it wants — here and elsewhere — no matter what anyone might think about it. That's the weather's prerogative, but some consistency and predictability would be nice.

It's difficult to start running irrigation lines in the field, only to look up at the mountains and see very little snow. One starts to wonder: "Will we have enough water to get through this coming season?"

They say that "water is life," and it's doubly true in our line of work. We must do everything we possibly can to manage this resource to our best ability. That begins, but doesn't end, with investing in technologies that reduce our water needs.

We also need the state's assistance. There are many water users, from agriculture to municipalities to the interest groups that urge stewardship over our fisheries and natural resources. All of them have a stake in properly developing and maintaining our water supplies so they don't evaporate into thin air.

"Will we have enough water to get through this coming season?"

This is a call out to our membership: please help support the OAN's efforts on this front. We need you to get involved. I don't have to tell you what will happen if our industry's access to water is compromised.

It's important we be heard by the public. We must educate people on how we use water and why it is so critical to what we do. Many people have lost a connection to agriculture. They don't understand what it takes to grow a plant because it's not part of their daily life.

Academia can also help us. We need their continued efforts to study the effective irrigation of plants. We need advanced devices that give us real-time information on crop inputs, and the knowledge of how to use them. I'm a big believer in such systems. I've seen the results. Through the use of advanced sensors, we can better understand how much water a plant needs. We can manage and adjust fertilizer to meet the specific needs of the plant. We can use only the inputs the plant needs, thereby reducing waste.

As you start to plan out this season, keep in mind that the OAN is doing its best to maintain your seat at the table where decisions get made. We can only do this with your help. If you haven't renewed your membership, please do so, and while you're at it, please donate to our political or scholarship funds.

Most importantly, we need your voice. Oregon is a great place to grow plants. We need to keep it that way. And to do that, we need you. ☺



Calendar

Get the word out about your event! Email details to calendar@oan.org by the 10th day of the month to be included in the next issue of *Digger*.

MARCH 1

ONF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Do you know any high school, college or graduate students who are considering a career as a nursery or landscape professional? If so, March 1 is the last day to apply for one of the 19 different Oregon Nurseries Foundation scholarships. Awards range from \$500 to \$1,500, and are sponsored by individuals and OAN chapters. For more information, log on to www.oan.org/onf, or contact Stephanie Wehrauch at 503-582-2001 or sweihrach@oan.org.

MARCH 2

PLANT NERD NIGHT

Start your garden season off with Mike Darcy's annual Plant Nerd Night, brought to you through the support of The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon, as well as the Friends of the Rogerson Clematis Garden and the Salem Hardy Plant Society. Six regional specialty nurseries will offer previews of new or favorite plants, many of which will also offered for sale at the event. Doors will open at 6 p.m. on March 2. Presentations run 7-9 p.m. at Lake Bible Church, 4565 Carman Drive, Lake Oswego. Details are on www.hardyplantsociety.org/plant-nerd-night

MARCH 3

BEEVENT POLLINATOR CONFERENCE

Registration is open for the fourth annual Pollinator Conference, hosted by Linn County Master Gardeners. The event will take place from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. March 3 at the Linn County Fairgrounds in Albany, Oregon. Three lectures will take place, reviewing how to help pollinators, nurture mason bees, and suggestions for creating an environment for native pollinators in your yard. Cost is \$30. More info www.linnmastergardeners.com/tickets.html

MARCH 14-15

BIOCONTROLS USA WEST CONFERENCE & EXPO

As part of national series, this conference focuses on helping Northwest growers get the best results out of agricultural biocontrols as part of integrated pest management programs. Manufacturers and experts will share their techniques and inside knowledge to successfully incorporate biologicals, as well as their experience using biostimulants. Registered growers can participate in a pre-conference tour, post-conference workshop, and meet and ask questions of the leading suppliers during the Expo. To register, visit www.biocontrolsconference.com/usa-west. Oregon Association of Nurseries members can receive \$100 off the full \$325 registration price.

MARCH 20

NATIONAL AG DAY

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MARCH 31

NEW VARIETIES SHOWCASE

Submission forms are due for the 2018 New Varieties Showcase. Eligible plants must be new to the market for 2018 or 2019, have different attributes than plants currently on the market, and be in production and offered for sale by a 2018 Farwest Show exhibitor. Download the form online at www.farwestshow.com/nvs. For more information, contact Kristen Rae Urban, OAN event and education manager, at 503-582-2011, or kurban@oan.org.

will celebrate the contributions agricultural producers, associations, corporations, and government organizations make on National Ag Day. The program encourages every American to appreciate the role agriculture plays in our everyday lives, including its essential role in maintaining a strong economy. For more information, please visit www.agday.org

APRIL 3

OAN NURSERY GUIDE

Listings are due for the 2018-19 OAN Nursery Guide. This 360-plus-page book is the gold standard for finding the plants, products and services you want to buy — and letting people know what you want to sell. Only OAN members may submit listings, and each member receives one free listing. To submit listings, log on to www.NurseryGuide.com. If you need your username, password or other assistance, call 503-682-5089 or email nurseryguide@oan.org. For display advertising, contact Blair Thompson, OAN advertising manager, at 503-682-5089 or ads@oan.org.

APRIL 7

GARDENPALOOZA

More than 45 local nurseries and garden art vendors will showcase thousands of plants, tools and outdoor décor at the Spring Gardenpalooza,

a one-day gardening event. Festivities will take place 8 a.m.- 4 p.m. Saturday, April 7 at Fir Point Farms in Aurora, Oregon. Admission is free. For information about exhibiting, contact Jeff and Therese Gustin at 503-793-6804 or www.gardenpalooza.com.

APRIL 20-21

HORTLANDIA

The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon sponsors this annual plant and art sale at the Portland Expo Center, 2060 N. Marine Drive. Vendors from Canada to California will offer the latest plant introductions alongside old favorites. Admission is free. For more information, log on to www.hardyplantsociety.org

APRIL 27

GARDEN GALA AT THE OREGON GARDEN

Anyone with a love of horticulture — from plant enthusiasts to industry professionals — is invited to The Oregon Gala at The Oregon Garden in Silverton, Oregon. The evening social event begins with a garden tour starting at 4 p.m., and includes dinner and silent auction. Proceeds from the event will support The Oregon Garden Foundation, which provides educational opportunities for gardeners of all skill levels and enhances the horticulture collection of The Oregon Garden. Visit www.oregongarden.org for ticket information.



Northwest News

OAN members and chapters are encouraged to send in relevant news items, such as new hires, new products, acquisitions, honors received and past or upcoming events. Email news@oan.org.



Northwest Farm Credit Services offers sponsorship fund for OAN chapters

Northwest Farm Credit Services is offering a \$5,000 sponsorship fund to help support programs and events put on by OAN chapters – a generous increase of \$2,000 more than last year. Each chapter is initially eligible to apply for up to \$400 to help support one event that is beneficial for members. This first round of applications is due April 31. After that date, chapters may apply for additional funds to support additional events, provided there is still money available.

Chapter leaders have been provided with the application form. Those interested in applying for money from this Northwest Farm Credit Services sponsorship fund may contact OAN Director of Events Allan Niemi at aniemi@oan.org, 503-582-2005 or FAX 503-582-5099, with any questions.



Oregon Governor Kate Brown (far end of table) shares a dialogue with engaged OAN members on Lobby Day.

PHOTO BY CURT KIPP

OAN MEMBERS VISIT WITH OREGON GOV. BROWN, LEGISLATORS

Although it was Valentine’s Day, they were there to talk business.

Members of the Oregon Association of Nurseries Government Relations Committee visited Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and several state legislators in their offices on Thursday, February 14. The purpose of the face-to-face meetings was to discuss critical issues for Oregon’s \$1 billion nursery industry, which is the top segment in all of Oregon agriculture.

“It is so important that our elected leaders meet real people who are affected by what the government does or doesn’t do,” OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone said. “Our approach is grounded in problem solving, not partisan affiliations, and that is known and respected on both sides of the aisle. We had a great dialogue with members of both chambers and both parties. The governor made time for us, which not everyone gets. It’s a testament to our long-term relationship building.”

The OAN’s priorities at the state level include dealing with concerns about proposed carbon policy legislation, developing consensus legislation to address water supplies, expanding driver’s license eligibility to include residents of the state who can prove identity, and reducing the cumulative impact of wage and workplace burdens placed on employers.

Members interested in learning more, and

those interested in joining the association, may contact Jeff Stone at 503-682-5089 or jstone@oan.org.

OREGON LEAN CONSORTIUM LAUNCHES 2019 PROGRAM YEAR

The Oregon Lean Consortium welcomed two new companies as it launched its 2019 program year with a planning workshop on January 15. Seven diverse horticulture businesses will work together on process improvement for the next 12 months: **Bailey Nurseries**, Yamhill; **Eshraghi Nursery**, Hillsboro; **JLPN Liners**, Salem; **Marion Ag Service**, Saint Paul; **Peoria Gardens**, Albany; **Robinson Nursery**, McMinnville; and **Weyerhaeuser**, Aurora/Turner.

The Oregon Lean Consortium is a small group of companies that work together to learn lean principles and methods, and then apply them to processes in each other’s businesses over the course of one year.

The Peters Company facilitates these consortiums, delivering all of the training, materials, tools, and event coordination to bring outcomes that exceed participants’ expectations. Some results from the 2018 program year include: 32 percent productivity increase on a cutting extraction and grading process; reduced steps on an order fulfillment process from 262 to 126; Increased productivity 108 percent on a



Northwest News

Debbie Thorne and Scott Crossover, president of Skagit Horticulture, cut the ribbon on a new clean-stock greenhouse.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SKAGIT HORTICULTURE.

greenhouse plant selecting process. Read more online at tinyurl.com/y8bfqze5



SKAGIT HORTICULTURE OPENS CLEAN-STOCK GREENHOUSE, HIRES MANAGER

Skagit Horticulture (Mabton, Washington) has opened a new, clean-stock greenhouse for large-scale production of select agricultural plant starts launched last year, and appointed an agricultural division manager.

The new greenhouse will produce virus-free transplants for hop growers, vineyard operators, and orchardists. Initial plant starts for softwood cuttings are sourced from the National Clean Plant Network and will be isolated into the clean-stock greenhouse which is closely monitored for pests and sanitation practices.

Skagit Horticulture has also promoted Debbie Thorne to agriculture department manager. She will oversee the specialty ag division, including sales of hops, wine grapes, berries, and tree fruits. With nearly 30 years of experience, Debbie has held positions in management, production, new product development, marketing and sales for Skagit Horticulture company, which includes her time at Skagit Gardens and Northwest Horticulture. Visit www.skagithort.com for more details and information.

NEW DENNIS' 7 DEES LOCATION FOCUSES ON INDOOR PLANTS

Following the business motto "location, location, location," owners of **Dennis' 7 Dees** have opened a new retail store in the high-end retail shopping complex Bridgeport Village Shopping Center, 7325 S.W. Bridgeport Road, Tigard, Oregon. The storefront opened for customers at the end of October 2018 following a substantial, fresh renovation to the space.

The urban plant shop offers many >>

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In Memoriam SANDRA POWELL

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to report the passing of Oregon Nurseries' Hall of Fame member Sandra Powell, who owned and operated **Garland Nursery** for more than five decades along with her late husband and fellow HOF member, Don. She died unexpectedly January 31, 2019 at the age of 79, with loved ones nearby.

A memorial service was held February 7 in Corvallis, Oregon.

Sandra was born June 4, 1939 in Tacoma, Washington to Jeanette and Allen Nichols. She grew up in Key Center, Washington and attended Peninsula High School. She graduated from Washington State University with a bachelor's degree in home economics. While teaching school in Port Orchard, Washington, she met Donald Powell. They were married August 5, 1961 in Gig Harbor, Washington.

In 1962, the couple moved to Corvallis, Oregon to assist

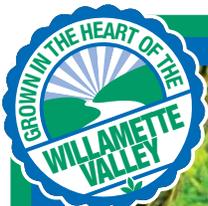


in the operation of Garland Nursery, which then was owned by Don's mother. Sandra's job was to help the customers and she excelled while working side by side with her husband. The nursery was recognized with the OAN Retailer of the Year Award in 1995.

Don and Sandra were designated as OAN Honorary Life Members in 1997. They were both inducted into the Oregon Nurseries' Hall of Fame in 1999. A full obituary is online at tinyurl.com/y4fe8see.

Sandra was preceded in death by her parents and her husband Don, who passed away last August 27, 2018. She is survived by her son, past OAN president Lee Allen Powell (Linda); two daughters, Brenda Powell (Mitch Brown) and Erica Powell Kaminskas (Jim Kaminskas); her sister, Margaret (Bruce) Tornquist; two granddaughters; and two nephews.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Sandra's name to P.E.O Sisterhood Chapter DQ Oregon fund, supporting Women's Education, c/o McHenry Funeral Home: 206 NW 5th St., Corvallis, OR 97330.



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Northwest News

of the same products and services as other Dennis' 7 Dees interior spaces but does not extend into outdoor plant material. Staff members will maintain an inventory of indoor tropical plants, containers, pottery, gift items, and garden-related design pieces.

A workshop area was integrated into the retail space remodel so the business could conduct hands-on educational classes and consultations. Customers may sign up to receive expert advice from staff about caring for specialty varieties, gardening basics, and other plant-related skills. Course registration is required, and fees may apply.

"We are having a great time connecting people with plants!" said Kelley Kenyon, retail general manager at Dennis' 7 Dees.

Dennis' 7 Dees has two other locations in the Portland area, as well as one location on the coast in Seaside, Oregon. The three Portland locations are in Bridgeport Village, Cedar Hills, and Lake Oswego, Oregon. Each store has unique hours of operation and seasonal openings.

SEED YOUR FUTURE LAUNCHES CAREER EXPLORATION TOOL

Seed Your Future has launched a new, free online horticulture career exploration resource at www.SeedYourFuture.org/careers. It is for parents, teachers, students or anyone looking for work opportunities. The program is an industry-wide effort, supported by more than 150 partner organizations, to promote horticulture and inspire more people to pursue careers working with plants.

The career site lists 100 horticulture careers as well as a tool to help site visitors explore options. It asks them to consider what they are interested in, and then lists horticulture careers that might match their interests. Each career has a unique page with job information, education requirements, study programs, salary data, links to professional organizations, and engaging videos of people in that career. Organizers hope to expand the site with more careers and videos.

"Seed Your Future is committed to providing quality, reputable information about

(Continued on page 16)

Start here: your marketing budget priority list

WOULDNT WE ALL love to have the advertising budgets and marketing teams of Nike or Apple? Unfortunately, that's not in the cards for most of us. Generally, small- and medium-sized business owners must prioritize their time and money. Are you wondering where to start, or whether you've covered the most important things? Here is my marketing priority list:

Website. If people hear about you, see one of your ads, or search for you online, they will go looking for your website. Websites convey legitimacy in a way little else can. If your website looks old or its content isn't kept up to date, your customers will notice. Pro tip: If at all possible, choose a site address that ends in ".com" and does not contain dashes.

Logo. Your logo is the visual basis for your brand. It sets the tone for your design look and feel, and a good logo will

be memorable and effective. A logo can't tell your whole story, but it's an important start. As long as your logo looks modern and professional, it will suffice.

Google business listing. Claim your official business listing on Google, which lets you input your contact information, locations (if you have multiple), and, importantly, your hours of business (including holiday hours). This doesn't cost money, but it does take time and patience.

Email marketing. As I've written in this column before, email marketing is still an important way to reach your customers. Cultivate an email list — a form on your website can help — and email your customers regularly. You can probably use a service for free, but even paid services aren't too expensive.

Professional design. This isn't a tactic, of course, but it is an expense. Hiring



Ian Doescher

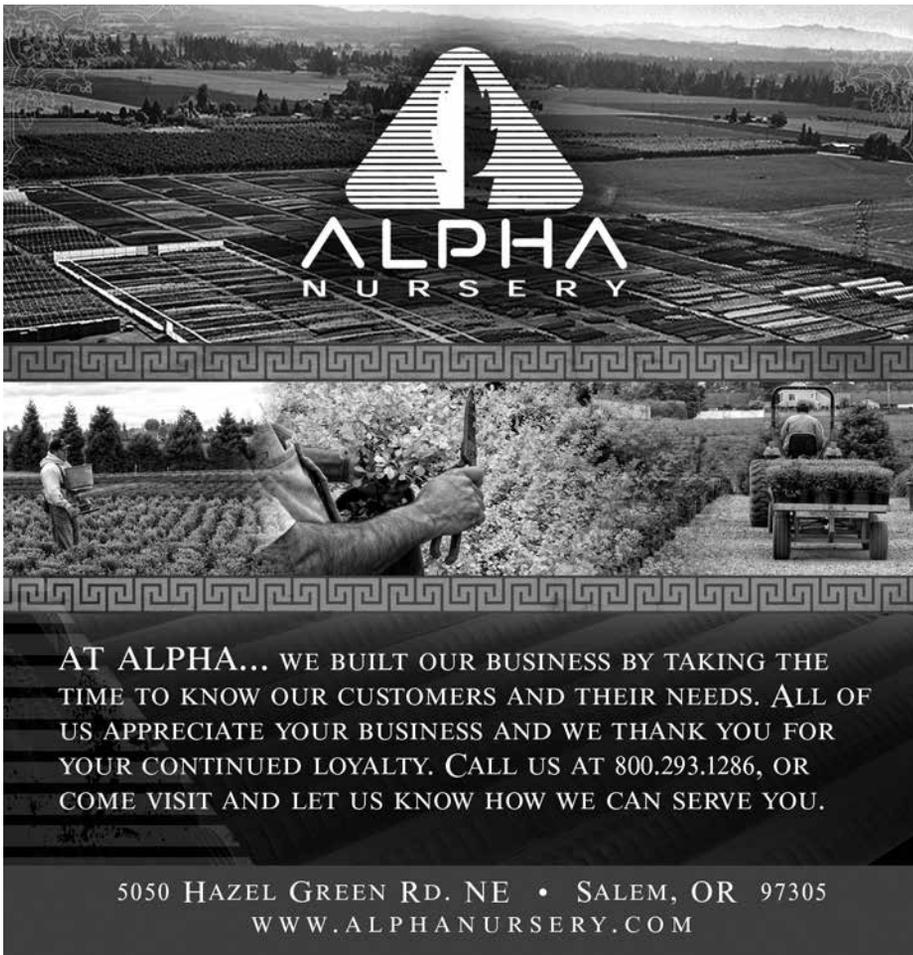
Ian Doescher is the Director of Nonprofit Marketing at Pivot Group, a marketing agency in Portland, Oregon. He can be reached at ian@askpivot.com.

a designer who can design things well is critical to making the remaining items on this list successful. Freelance designers are easy to find!

Signage. You may not think of this as marketing, but it is. When someone walks into your business, do they see signage that looks professional and well-branded, or a mishmash of printed and handwritten signs? What about the signage outside your business (particularly for retail businesses)? Are they eye-catching and on brand?

Product information. My sister- >>





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PIVOT POINTS

in-law is an organic farmer in Idaho. She recently showed me labels she designed herself to go on vegetable containers headed for the grocery stores in her area. I advised her to have them professionally designed. (The truth: Pivot's designers did them pro bono.) Your products should look just as sharp and professional — or more — as your competitors.'

Targeted digital advertising. Google search ads, Facebook sponsored posts, LinkedIn ads (particularly for B2B businesses), and so on are vital pieces of any marketing mix. These days, you should think about digital ads before you spend money on print. Digital includes Pandora or Spotify ads, which incorporate an audio component.

Print advertising. This is a big world, so it can be hard to navigate. Do the best you can to make sure your print advertising reaches your potential customers. If that means the local newspaper, okay. If it's an industry publication — like *Digger* magazine — go for it. If it's a billboard on a nearby road with heavy traffic, and you can afford it, more power to you. If it's the Yellow Pages ... no. I strongly advise you not to spend money on an ad in the Yellow Pages. Put that money toward digital ads.

Final random notes

The list above assumes, of course, that you already have a business name. (If not, that's #1!) Also, when it comes to advertising, it's ideal to mix digital and print to cover your bases.

There may be industry publications or local print pieces that you think your business should appear in for reasons beyond marketing. If so, let those take higher priority than other items. Generally speaking, though, the list above can help you prioritize where to put your budget, or maybe show you where your dollars can move from one place to another. Happy prioritizing! ☺



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MEET THE LEADER

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TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

I grew up on a farm in the San Joaquin Valley of California where my parents had a greenhouse operation that grew hothouse tomatoes and European cucumbers for grocery stores. In 1985, we moved up to Hubbard, Oregon. In high school, I worked for Case Nursery (Aurora, Oregon) doing cuttings on Saturdays and was very active in North Marion FFA. I held chapter positions up through president and district treasurer. I attended a private college in Iowa to study business, administration and communications, where I worked at the local radio station and received my FCC license to broadcast on the air. My parents started Grower's Nursery Supply near the end of 1992 in Hubbard, before moving the business just north of Salem in 1995. I started working for them as a salesperson at the beginning of February 2003. When they retired and sold the business, I stayed on doing the bookkeeping and a lot of essential duties.

WHAT'S YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

I really love being in the business of getting to know all the growers in the industry. I have formed relationships with our customers and worked to help them get what they need. I strive to help everyone to the best of my ability.

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

Taking the job my parents offered me was my best decision — I wish I had started in the industry sooner.

WHAT'S YOUR GREATEST MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

When my parents decided to sell the business, my parents offered it to me first. As a single mom, I felt overwhelmed and didn't know how I was going to do it alone. At that time, I only had worked there for a short time doing sales, so I turned it down. If I knew then what I know now, I would have bought it. But as they say ... hindsight is 20/20 and things happen for a reason.



Janet Poot
Office Manager
Grower's Nursery Supply Inc.

OAN member since 2006

- Willamette Chapter president.
Previously: vice president and secretary

WHO IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR?

I have a few mentors: Growing up, I learned from Dad by watching and helping him in the greenhouse operation. There are times I wish I had asked more questions, paid more attention. Overall, my parents showed me the ropes of the industry. In high school, I looked up to my FFA advisor, Joe Wehrli, for helping us students achieve our goals. I admire my boss, Don Top, who has brought Grower's Nursery Supply up to another level of quality as a supplier.

WHAT IS YOUR BEST BUSINESS ADVICE?

Treat everyone fairly with integrity and respect. Every customer who supports your business and livelihood is a valued customer, regardless of the size of their operation.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE?

My annual "greatest challenge" starts with busy season, which involves juggling sales and keeping up with all the books so

I don't have to bring work home. It can be exhausting at times, but I just strive to be the best person that I can be as a mother, an employee and a leader 110 percent.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GO TO WORK EVERYDAY?

Even though my folks no longer own this business, I still feel the need to honor what my parents started and treat this like my family business. I love the work that I do. I have a great boss and co-workers. I get to see regular customers as well as new ones. I enjoy building those relationships and I couldn't have asked for a better work environment.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE NURSERY INDUSTRY?

I enjoy getting to know all the growers and other professionals throughout the industry. We are all one big family, connected in one way or another. We see each other at events, we watch each other's children grow up and see each other getting older.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I'm very proud of my boys — Randy, Dakota, and Reggie — who have dealt with my late-night board meetings and chapter events over the years. I am proud to be part of the Willamette Chapter, going on my second term of president. We received the OAN Chapter of the Year award for 2018 and we couldn't have done that without awesome sponsors or past and present board members.

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

A commonly heard of complaint is that our costs are going up, but end buyers aren't paying much more. Adding to that list are labor, minimum wage, and wage boundaries. Our state is making it hard to operate in this industry and unfortunately that may drive some folks out of business. It's challenging to be up-to-date on all the regulations and have guidance for jumping through all the hoops to operate our businesses. ©

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Northwest News

(Continued from page 12)

all of the exciting careers available across the art, science, technology and business of plants," said Susan E. Yoder, executive director of Seed Your Future. "(Our goal is) showing students, parents, mid-career changers, educators, and anyone else interested in plants that there are meaningful and rewarding careers working with plants."

The program was created in response to research showing a lack of detailed, centrally accessible information about horticulture careers. Demographic trends show an advanced age profile for the horticulture and agriculture workforces, meaning these industries must attract interested replacements.



In Memoriam:

DONNA WRIGHT-GAUNCE

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to report the passing of Donna Sue Wright-Gaunce (Koffler) at the age of 66. She died January 11, 2019. Services were held at Cornwell Colonial Chapel, Woodburn, Oregon on January 17. Donna worked at **Sun Gro Horticulture** as a district sales manager for 26 years and created many memorable displays at the former Yard, Garden and Patio show. Read her obituary online at tinyurl.com/yd8ythgd.



In Memoriam:

DENNIS WALTERS

Dennis Walters, one of the founders of **Walters Gardens Inc.** in Zeeland, Michigan, died on January 11, 2019. He was 93 years old. Dennis began working in the industry in 1942. With his four brothers, he rebranded Knoll and Walters Perennials to Walters Gardens, which remains a family-owned growing operation that produces bare root plugs and potted and packaged perennials. Read his obituary online at tinyurl.com/ydd8e359. ©





A corner of the market

The path of the specialty nursery has unique challenges and rewards

BY KYM POKORNY

THERE ARE MANY Oregon wholesale growers that offer something for everyone. For them, it's all about variety — growing and shipping as much of what their customers need as possible.

Specialty growers, by contrast, are a whole different breed. They pick one plant and offer more unique varieties, more colors and, generally, more knowledge about that plant than growers who don't specialize.

Oregon is home to many of these, and their pathways to success have been almost as varied as the plants they grow. For Kristin and David VanHoose, it all started with a visit to a nursery.

Kristin remembers that day well. She and her husband, David, visited the old Bell Family Nursery in Aurora, Oregon. It was Valentine's Day 1999.

The sky was blue, the sun shining, and the air mild. They'd seen a "For Sale" ad in the newspaper and Art and Terri Bell invited

them to visit the nursery with the idea the couple might buy it.

The VanHoses were sick and tired of the corporate life, where 60-hour work weeks were typical.

They had no experience in the nursery industry, but they had smarts and determination. They got home, looked at each other and said, "Gosh, did you even look at the house?"

Neither had, but they bought the place anyway. Now they're the biggest hydrangea nursery in the country.

Terri Bell had grown 60 varieties of hydrangeas, including a good chunk of older cultivars that no one else had. VanHoose now grows 320 different hydrangeas and their relatives, after renaming the business **Amethyst Hill Nursery/ Hydrangeas Plus®**.

"We jumped in not knowing what we were doing," Kristin VanHoose said. "Art

and Terri would come over three to four times a week and we'd go through things. They put together a map of what to do every month."

Different beginnings

The VanHoses were fortunate to have mentors. Many specialty nursery owners take on a business with a lot of enthusiasm and little experience.

"I would say, 'Go get yourself a good education' before deciding to go into the specialty nursery business," said Liz Schmidt, co-owner of **Schreiner's Iris Gardens** in Salem, Oregon. "It's tempting to start a small nursery, but you have to know the business. Go through the ag class for small farmers at Chemeketa (Community College)."

Janice Leinwebber, owner of **Highland Heather** in Canby, Oregon, is happy she took the education route. She'd already gotten a liberal arts degree and was work- ➤



ing in banking when she decided to send her resume out and got a job at **Gutmann Nurseries** (North Plains, Oregon) in 1986. It was her first horticultural experience and it encouraged her to enroll in the ornamental horticulture program at Clackamas Community College.

Leinwebber had already been collecting heathers, but wanted to start a cut flower farm. She soon learned such a perishable crop wasn't for her and turned to heathers, instead.

"I was looking for a niche," she said. "I wanted to stay small. There was a lady going out of business in Hubbard, so there was an opening in the market to sell the coolest plant in the world. I've been doing this for more than 20 years and I still get up every morning excited to work with them."

Thomas Johnson, owner of **Mid-America Garden** (Salem, Oregon) and co-owner with Kirk Hansen of **Sebright Gardens** (Salem, Oregon), considered getting a degree in horticulture, but life took him in different directions.

Regardless of a formal education in horticulture, Johnson knew about gardening from an early age. He grew up on a farm and started growing plants from seed and selling them from the age of 8. He progressed to perennials and bulbs in high school. He knew he wanted to work in the industry, even though his father would say, "You can't eat flowers."

At the age of 27, he moved from Alberta, Canada, to Oklahoma to take a job with Mid-America Garden, a grower of bearded iris. Eventually, he became a partner and then bought the whole thing in 2012 and moved to Oregon.

"It was exciting," he said. "The thought of being able to follow your passion with plants, wow, I never thought that it could be a career."

Why iris? Why hosta?

"It really could have been any plant," Johnson laughed. "But I never thought it would be hostas. I didn't even like them. They were just green leaves."

But one year before he worked for Mid-America, he noticed their catalog was almost bare of iris because of a crop failure. Out of sympathy, he bought some hostas from them and decided they weren't so bad. When he moved, cars lined up for three city blocks and bought \$35,000 worth of hostas.

It's almost as if the plant picked him. And he's not alone. Fate brought VanHoosen to hydrangeas, a woman selling a nursery induced Leinwebber into opening a heather nursery and a hobby led to the biggest dahlia nursery in the United States.

Nicholas Gitts, one of the family members that owns **Swan Island Dahlias** in Canby, Oregon, talked about his youth on a dairy farm and his dad's interest in dahlias. Over time, the hobby grew to a couple thousand plants so he put a sign out and started to sell them. In 1963, he started the three-generation farm.

Getting the word out

Everyone strives for success in the specialty nursery business in different ways, but some tactics are universal. Advertising for one, especially the OAN's *Nursery Guide* and gardening magazines.

When **Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm** in Woodburn, Oregon started in the mid-60s, the new business turned to nursery and garden shows as a major way to get the word out. Their first attempt was not very successful.

"We put up flyers — black and white — with the types of tulips we had to sell," said Barb Iverson, co-owner of Wooden Shoe. "Obviously, using black and white to

sell tulips wasn't such a great idea."

Just as obviously, that early misstep didn't slow them down, especially after they added the annual Tulip Festival. To get the word out, they put an ad in the local newspaper.

"We had a traffic jam the first year," Iverson recalled. "We thought, 'Maybe there's something here people want to see.' That was 35 years ago."

When the economy started to suffer in the 2000s, the family looked at each other and brainstormed. By 2003, they made the difficult decision to start charging people to come to the festival. Somehow it paid off.

"Attendance went up," Iverson said. "It was like we created value because we were charging. It was the darnedest thing."

Success breeds success, and sometimes that can bring its own set of problems. The Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival has been so popular, the original traffic jam repeats itself each year. Now the company is working with a traffic engineer as well as county and state officials to get it figured out. It's not cheap, however.

The gate fees help with that, Iverson noted. They also compensate for leaving more tulips in the ground rather than selling the tubers. That leaves 40 acres full of the brilliantly colored tulips people line up to see.

Though traditional advertising reaps benefits, social media can be even better. VanHoose, who sticks to Facebook so as not to dilute the waters, could be the poster child for the effective use of social media. She posts beautiful photos, useful tips and, when she has time, videos. To get people engaged, she asks open-ended questions like, "What's your favorite mophead hydrangea?" It's working: She's got 107,000 followers.

Social media pays off for Swan Island Dahlias, too. "It's really big," Gitts said.

A bird rests on a tulip at Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm. PHOTO BY BARB IVERSON



“We can get 100 catalog requests a day from Facebook.”

The challenges of specializing

Having a niche, which almost guarantees less competition, is one of the advantages of a specialty nursery, according to all of the nursery owners interviewed.

“We are unique,” said Schmidt of Schreiner’s Iris Gardens, a 94-year-old family nursery. “People want to buy from us. And we’ve got our own hybrids that people can’t get from anyone else.”

Hybridizing is something dear to the heart of specialty nursery owners. They’ve got one plant they love and sell and making new ones is important not only to their market, but to their sense of well-being. When he retires, Gitts of Swan Island Dahlias indicated he will spend more time breeding. Johnson, who has made 300,000 iris crosses in 27 years, doesn’t ever plan to stop.

“If I had my druthers,” he said, “I’d be hybridizing everything. But with iris, I have a reputation — a following. It would be dumb of me to do anything else.”

There are challenges to the specialty world, too. Sticking with one genus can be a sound business model, but if disease hits or fashions change, disaster is waiting in the wings. So, Johnson and Hansen have added other shade-loving plants like epimediums and ferns to their inventory of 1,000 varieties of hostas. They’d like to add more as time goes on.

At Wooden Shoe, the family has a tradition of farming, having grown 100 crops since the family bought 12,000 acres in 1950. They hedge their bets by continuing to diversify, recently adding wine and industrial hemp to the mix.

“You can’t be reliant on one crop or one customer,” Iverson said. “How easy is that to go upside down. No one likes >>>

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being in that scenario. So, don't fall in love with your crops."

For some people, it's too late. Even Iverson will admit there's nothing like a field of tulips.

Like all nurseries, specialty businesses suffer from lack of labor. Except for Johnson, the other owners said they may downsize in the future or already have because they can't fill their labor needs. Leinwebber, who has diversified with ornamental grasses, is one who won't cut back, but she also has no plans to grow either. With help from her husband and two employees six months of the year, she's at capacity and wants to stay there.

Owners find another challenge in trying to find equipment and other materials that fit their crop. No one else has the same needs, so it's necessary to have something custom made at a premium price.



"If you grow filberts, you can find someone else that has the machinery that will help you with your labor," Schmidt said. "It's already been built. We want to make things faster and more efficient, but we don't have a prototype. We have to design everything ourselves."

Volume is another thing that can be a challenge for specialty nurseries that sell less quantity at a higher price than larger operations. But once a plant gets attention and goes into mass production, no one wants to pay the original price.

"Who wants to pay \$30 when you can go to Home Depot and get the same plant for \$5," Johnson said.

Specialty nurseries have their challenges, but for these six owners, at least, the benefits outweigh any disadvantages.

"It's very rewarding to get the right plant in the hands of the right person," VanHoose said. "Like this guy at the coast who raises cows and is addicted to hydrangeas. He texts me photos. He's so proud of his hydrangeas. That's one of the upsides of owning a specialty nursery." ☺

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The value of influence

Nurseries strategically seek influence and reap the rewards

BY JON BELL

ABOUT 10 YEARS AGO, Costa Farms launched a campaign called “O₂ for You,” which was designed to play up the valuable role that houseplants can play in cleaning pollutants out of indoor air. The Miami, Florida-based horticultural grower — now one of the largest in the world — compiled a list of houseplants that had been shown by research to clean the air. They branded the tags and pots and made a big push to spread the word.

“As the research became more widely published, they had already laid the groundwork as the leader,” said Katie Dubow, creative director for Garden Media Group, a public relations and marketing firm that specializes in the lawn and garden industry.

Similarly, not too long ago, natural fertilizing company Espoma partnered with Laura LeBoutillier, the force behind the Garden Answer channel on YouTube. Though Espoma has been around since 1929 and is known far and wide, teaming up with LeBoutillier — who has more than 452,000 subscribers on her channel, and millions of views on her videos — helped the company gain exposure to a whole new audience it might never have before.

The main theme between the two anecdotes? Influence.

It comes in many forms in the nursery industry, from being

able to guide trends thanks to innovative products or services to sharing expertise and insights that help growers up their ability to thrive. Not everyone in the industry is out to be the most influential. Some keep their heads down and find they do just fine. Others, however, see the big benefits that can be harvested from having influence in the industry.

“The art of influence enables one to effectively carry out tasks and successfully achieve your goals,” Dubow said. “Isn’t that what we are all after? Whether it’s an introduction to a contact from a colleague or an investment in your brand, having influence allows connections to be made more quickly and successfully.”

Gaining influence

Gaining influence in the nursery industry can take many different forms. Some, according to Dubow, can be subtle and simple but still have big impacts.

For example, simply listening to people can go a long way in gaining helpful influence.

“Those who listen well are able to make emotional connections that make them more influential,” she said. “They are ➤

The value of influence

also able to garner informational benefits by learning new information.”

She also said it can be helpful to become genuinely interested in other people, share praise and honest appreciation and “make others successful.”

“True influence is rarely built upon the backs of others,” Dubow said, “but rather by serving others and helping them achieve their goals.”

Dan Heims, president of Terra Nova Nurseries, a flower and plant breeder and grower in Canby, Oregon, said just by opening gardens to visitors, one can gain influence.

“One of the best ways (to gain influence in the industry) is to open gardens,” he said. “Each visitor is an emissary to the world, offering geometric increases in coverage by posting pictures of your plants to various social media platforms.”

Making donations of plants to auctions or plant-driven auctions can also help boost influence, according to Heims, as can sharing expertise. Heims is himself a published author of “The Garden Clerk’s Dictionary” who has had articles and photographs appear in numerous nursery publications. He also has a lecture repertoire of nearly 30 different topics and has given speeches around the world.

“Writing books and giving lectures to local and national audiences inspires and creates demand for your products, as well as influence, in both local and national tradeshows,” Heims said.

Some of Heims’ speaking engagements have come as a result of numerous awards that Terra Nova has racked up over the years — another way that nurseries can gain influence in the field. One example: the Cultivate tradeshow named Terra Nova

as Nursery of the Year, one of many accolades that have allowed Heims and others at the the nursery to be speakers for both retail and wholesale audiences at flower shows as well as industry tradeshows.

Brent Markus is founder of Rare Tree Nursery and Instant Hedge, two of three nursery businesses he’s started over the years. While he said he has done some speaking engagements for groups like the Southern Nursery Association and the American Conifer Society, his efforts at influence are aimed these days more at landscape architects, garden centers and customers who are looking for the grown hedges that InstantHedge offers.

“InstantHedge is new to the Oregon nursery scene, and as a newcomer we’re focusing on servicing our customers,” Markus said. “That means we’re ever-improving the list of hedge varieties to satisfy our customers, and constantly improving everything from shipping to packaging to remain at the forefront.”

And then, of course, there are the much more straight-forward approaches to trying to gain influence. Those include advertising, marketing, public relations and other such efforts. In this day and age, that has become much more important in the digital and social media spaces.

“By strategically positioning your nursery on the internet and in social media, you can form strong and supportive connections within the industry,” Heims said.

Maintaining a solid online presence, however, can take time and resources away from other important functions of an operation. Heims said his company has found great benefits in hiring a “responsive and collaborative-natured” public relations firm that handles media placements, photography, events and other matters for Terra Nova.

Dubow added that influencer marketing has gotten big over the past few years — and it’s something that nurseries should pay attention to. For those not yet familiar with the term, influencer marketing is essentially marketing that targets not customers, but people who have influence



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over a certain customer segment. Those influencers could be celebrities, but more often these days they are folks who've built up large numbers of followers on social media. Espoma partnering with Laura LeBoutillier is a good example of that in the garden industry.

One caveat to influencers, however, is that as the trend has caught on, it's become clear in some cases that their authenticity isn't always sincere. Often, Dubow said, it becomes too obvious that an influencer is being paid to speak on behalf of brands.

"People will demand more transparency from influencers, watching carefully for signs of sincerity and accuracy," she said.

The potential pitfalls

Gaining influence can be a good thing. It can increase awareness of a busi-

ness and, as a result, boost sales, position folks as thought leaders and help spread recognition among customers.

But there are some potential pitfalls that come along with that influence.

Heims said it's important through the process of gaining influence to be consistent in "doing a good job and remembering to not spread yourself too thin." He's seen some companies who struggle with inaccurate data, poor photography and presentation style, which can poke holes in the influence that a company or individual does possess.

Dubow said a common mistake that influence-seekers make is to use a "one-size-fits-all approach."

"Remember that influencing is highly situational. Learn your personal, genuine tactics and follow those," she said.

"Strategies can range from education to

collaboration. The key is knowing which approach to use when."

She also cautioned that, with influence comes responsibility. Folks look to influential leaders for responses, analysis and other inputs. Because those influencers are often among the first to speak up, they're often the target of the harshest criticisms.

At the end of the day, Dubow said influence, when acquired and yielded wisely, will lead to good things.

"Whether you are a leader or follower," she said, "at some point you will need influence to be successful." ☺

Jon Bell is a freelance journalist who writes about everything from craft beer and real estate to the great outdoors. His website is www.jbellink.com. He can be reached at jontbell@comcast.net.




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GROWING KNOWLEDGE

Series content is coordinated by Dr. Jay Pscheidt, professor of botany and plant pathology at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon.



Oregon State University



An ongoing series provided by Oregon State University in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture and in partnership with the Oregon Association of Nurseries

Pest control for Christmas trees

Evaluating new and old insecticides, and beneficial insects, for aphid control

BY CHAL LANDGREN, JUDY KOWALSKI, DAVID HOWELL, PAIGE KUCHY

Aphid control on Christmas tree and other conifer plantings can be a yearly headache for growers. This is especially true for growers of grand fir which, for some reason, seems especially “tasty” to aphids.

Over the past four years, we have been evaluating a wide variety of aphid control options. These options run the gamut from releasing predatory insects, encouraging plantings that will attract beneficial insects, and testing some little-used or new insecticides.

There are a number of aphid species that feed on Christmas trees. The prominent aphid on grand fir is called the twig aphid (*Mindarus abietinus*), though all the aphids feed on needles along twigs. Twig aphids rarely kill the tree, although their feeding can often result in a tree that is unsaleable due either to the twisted/stunted foliage or the black, sooty mold that forms on needles. Often both are visible at harvest time.

Our study

The study reported here outlines aphid control results evaluating six insecticides (listed below) in a replicated trial at a grand fir field outside of Oregon City, Oregon.

Though there is no standard insecticide, Lorsban® is likely the most commonly used product. It is also a “restricted use” product and one of the insecticides under a great deal of scrutiny from various regulatory groups. In that regard, growers are looking at alternative insecticides to see if others might be effective.

Altus™ — also sold as Sivanto® — and



Movento®/Ultror® are both newer insecticides. Like many newer products they are more expensive per acre, not a “restricted use” product, have a safer use profile for applicators, and are touted to be safer around beneficial insects.

M-Pede® and Grandevo® are products that are both Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)-Listed for use in organic production. Few growers have reported using these products, so both were included in this trial.

WE-440 Superior Spray Oil is a crop oil produced by Wilbur-Ellis. Oils are one of the older control products for aphids. Only a few are registered for use in Christmas trees. Oils have little residual aphid control following application.

Products tested and rates used

Lorsban® (Chlorpyrifos): An organophosphate based insecticide from Cortiva

that is commonly used for aphid control in Christmas trees. Applied at 32 fl. oz./acre.

Altus® (Flupyradifurone): A newer Bayer product recently labeled for Christmas tree use. Useful with integrated pest management (IPM) programs. Applied at two rates — 7 and 10 fl. oz./acre

Movento HL® (Spirotetramat): Another Bayer product, also sold under the name Ultror®. This is the 2017 formulation, two-times concentration. Requires a methylated seed oil (MSO) surfactant for needle penetration. Highly systemic and used in IPM programs. Applied at 7 fl. oz./acre.

M-Pede® (Potassium salts): Potassium salts of fatty acids designed for soft bodied pests with minimal toxicity to non-target pests. Produced by the Gowan Company. OMRI-Listed for organic production. Applied at 2 percent volume to volume.

Grandevo® (*Chromobacterium subtsugae* Strain PRAA4-1): An isolated strain >>

Pest control for Christmas trees

Previous page: Figure 1: Green lacewing eggs on a tree needles. Figure 2: Researchers count aphids on Christmas trees. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

of entomopathogenic bacterium from Marrone Bio Innovations. OMRI-Listed for organic production. Applied at 3 lbs./acre.

WE-440 Superior Spray Oil: Applied at 2 percent volume to volume.

Treatments	Average Tree Damage (1-3)	Average live aphid Count	Average number of twigs with aphid signs (out of 20)	Average live aphid count within tree
Altus 10	0.8	0.00	4.1	0.2
Altus 7	0.8	0.00	4.3	0.0
Movento-HL	0.6	0.00	4.6	0.2
Lorsban	0.8	0.00	4.7	0.0
No Treatment (UTC)	0.9	0.70	5.2	1.4
WE-440	1.1	0.03	5.3	0.5
M-Pede	1.0	0.07	6.1	0.5
Grandevo	1.2	0.03	7.1	1.4

Table 1: Aphid control by treatment.

The test site and the application

The 24 blocks (1A-7C) used in the trial (Figure 2) each contained 80 trees. Measurements were made on 10 inner trees in each block. There was a pre-treatment evaluation of the plots on June 12, 2017, sprays were applied on June 20 and the final evaluation was made on July 21. The pre-treatment live aphid counts and damage ranking were similar in all blocks, yet not identical.

It's one thing to spray an insecticide on a tree with aphids and get an "impression" if it works (or not). It's quite another to quantify the impact of a given insecticide on aphids on specific trees. Aphids do not attack trees uniformly across a plantation,

nor does each tree respond the same way. Additionally, aphids are quite small, requiring a hand lens to see them. Dead aphids look similar to live aphids.

Nevertheless, we did attempt to quantify the impact of insecticides on aphid populations (Table 1). To explain the measurement column headings-

Average tree damage (1-3): Here we evaluated the entire trees for signs of aphids. A score of 1 indicates a tree with no damage, 2 indicated moderate visible damage, 3 indicated severe damages.

Average live aphid count: A two-inch long branch segment was selected on the bottom of the trees where aphids were suspected. Live aphids were counted.

Average number of twigs with aphid signs (out of 20): A total of 20 twigs in the upper one-third of the tree on the south-facing side were tallied for aphid presence.

Average live aphid count within tree: A beating sheet was placed in the tree and the branches above the sheet were shaken. Live aphids knocked onto the sheet were tallied.

Findings: Aphid control

Precise statistical confidence is difficult to determine in this type of trial. However, given the range of data points, it is illustrative to use the No Treatment — or under these conditions (UTC) — blocks as a midpoint. The Altus, Movento and Lorsban



Treatments	Beneficial Insects - Total
No Treatment (UTC)	52
Grandevo	34
Altus 10	17
Altus 7	16
M-Pede	13
Movento HL	12
W-E 440	10
Lorsban	10

Table 2: Tally of beneficial insects by treatment.

spray treatments all showed fewer aphids and less tree damages than the UTC blocks. The WE-440 oil, M-Pede, and Grandevo treatments however, had damage ratings and aphid counts that were similar to or worse than the UTC blocks.

Findings: Beneficial insects

Beneficial insects control aphid populations in a variety of ways, so preserving their populations is helpful for aphid control.

We tallied the beneficial insects we found in the evaluations. There was a wide assortment of beneficial insects including lady beetles (adults), hoverflies (adults and larvae), green lacewings (adults, larvae and eggs), pirate bugs, damsel bugs, assassin bugs, wasps and bees (Table 2). No attempt was made to determine if one species or life stage of an insect was better for aphid control.

As expected, the UTC blocks had the highest number of beneficial insects followed by Grandevo. The Grandevo appeared to have little impact on either the aphids or beneficial insects. The Lorsban and oil (WE-440) appeared to be the most damaging on the beneficial insects.

Conclusion

On this test site with pre-harvest trees, the beneficial insects alone were

likely sufficient to provide control without sprays. In a harvest year, the Altus, Movento or Lorsban sprays would be needed to produce a clean and saleable tree. All of these sprays will diminish the beneficial insect populations. ☺

Acknowledgements:

Funding for this project was assisted with a grant from the Oregon State University Clackamas Country Innovation Fund. Intern assistance was funded with a grant from Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon Association of Nurseries research.

Chal Landgren is the Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Christmas tree specialist, Judy Kowalski is a BioTech at OSU's North Willamette Research and Extension Center, Interns involved were David Howell of George Fox University, and Paige Kuchy of Purdue University.

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The debate over climate is one that the agricultural community needs to take seriously. Otherwise, bad policies and their associated costs could overwhelm our economic sector. The nature of our products means we are poised to make a difference. We must try to be part of a solution.

An early adopter

The issue of climate is nothing new to the Oregon Association of Nurseries. In fact, we led the way on the Climate Friendly Nurseries Project (CFNP), which took place from 2009–2011.

This project was the first of its kind in the nation. Participating nurseries worked with project partners the Oregon Environmental Council to measure energy use, resource use and greenhouse gas emissions, and try to reduce them. The goal was to achieve greater economic efficiency and profitability.

The project paid immediate dividends. At the conclusion of the three-year project, participating nurseries reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 20 percent.

These dividends continue. Nurseries who participated in the program, as well as others in the industry, continue to employ the best practices established with the CFNP.

As part of this project, we published *Best Management Practices for Climate-Friendly Nurseries*. This guide provides best practice recommendations and case studies. Further, it identified funding sources and technical resources to assist with the energy and resource-efficiency upgrades.

The success of the CFNP serves as an example of what the nursery industry

can accomplish in the environmental field to the benefit of all. It also demonstrates the importance of incentive programs that lower cost barriers, as well as regulation, for interested nurseries and greenhouses of all production types.

The specter of carbon regulation

It's all but certain — the Oregon Legislature will pass a bill to restrict carbon emissions in 2019.

The good news? The key players don't see agriculture as a carbon polluter and won't push to regulate our industry as such in 2019.

The bad news? The legislation may not be consequence-free for agricultural producers. It could impact the cost of natural gas used to heat greenhouses and the cost of fuel that's required to take our goods to market.

These are significant areas of concern to the OAN. We have done our level best to seek the advice and counsel of other nursery associations throughout North America that have dealt with similar legislation before us, including several Canadian provinces where carbon pricing has been implemented. British Columbia created a carbon tax, and Alberta, a carbon levy. Both Alberta and British Columbia's carbon pricing programs apply to the use of fossil fuels, but not electricity.

The nursery industries in these provinces compete with other provinces and U.S. states that are not subject to carbon pricing. Additionally, nursery products sequester carbon. In recognition of these two factors, their governments have attempted to compensate their nursery industries with rebate programs. These programs offset the significant natural gas cost increases resulting from carbon pricing by providing eligible greenhouse operators with rebates equal to 80 percent of their increased natural gas costs.

Canadian nursery owners told OAN that since the implementation of carbon pricing in their provinces, fuel costs have increased 10 percent, even though Canada is a net exporter of fuel.

While the incentives and programs offered by Alberta and B.C. do not completely mitigate the impact of these cost increases, they help.

OAN would like to see Oregon adopt similar measures. These include exempting on-farm fuels from carbon pricing, offering



Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

rebates to nursery owners for the substantial natural gas costs of heating their greenhouses, and offering financial incentives for improving irrigation equipment, installing renewable energy systems and making energy efficiency upgrades.

In simple terms, we want Oregon to hold Oregon nurseries harmless.

The road to opportunity

Oregon's carbon change legislation may create not just costs for the nursery industry, but opportunities as well.

The state of Florida has created a roadmap showing how green products can be incorporated into transportation projects. Their visionary program requires plants and trees from Florida nursery stock to be planted as environmental offsets for all road construction and improvements. It should serve as a national model.

Beautification is a luxury, but this program is NOT that. The key players in Oregon's climate change legislation recognize that planting large quantities of trees and other plants along roadways will sequester carbon, reduce erosion and create wildlife habitat. That's very valuable for those concerned with the climate change fight.

Anytime you look at Oregon, you must recognize that much of its land area is owned by the federal government (think forests). This land doesn't contribute to the burdens of climate change.

Opportunities exist for the nursery and greenhouse industry to be part of a solution. We must vigilantly protect against spikes in fuel and energy costs. I believe that Oregon's nursery and greenhouse operations can set the example, showing everyone the opportunities that are wide open to the nursery industry on carbon and climate-related issues. ©



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