

# Digger

FEBRUARY 2020

## The healing power of trees

How the research-backed benefits are providing a new market for growers

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## Proper credit

PAGE 21

## Vole control

PAGE 27

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# February 2020 Vol. 64 No. 2

# Digger



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**On the cover:** Legacy Health Systems invests in gardens and green spaces to improve patient health. PHOTO COURTESY OF THERESIA HAZEN

**On this page:** Left: John Lewis, president of JLPN Inc., avoids using customer credit to lower the risk of not meeting their production costs.

PHOTO BY BILL GOLOSKI Right: Gray-tailed voles are a nuisance to many production fields and nursery crops. PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

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## Instant gratification

This past fall I was able to take time away from my nursery and visit a few of our new retail customers.

It's always great to get out and see how the retail sector of our industry is doing.

One of the things that kept coming up was an emerging trend of "just in time" orders. In the past, complete spring orders could be booked in the prior summer or fall and then minor adjustments would happen as the spring season emerged. The trend now is to book the foundation of an order early and wait to see what else is needed as the season gets closer.

I thank Amazon, or I should say I blame them; the internet behemoth has taught us that just about anything is a click away.

With the readily available technology in our pockets, we have brought that instantaneous experience to our industry. Customers can call, text or email with a question and a grower can have an answer, an availability, and a picture to them in minutes.

A few fellow growers have told me their spring sales are now 60-70 percent pre-booked and the rest are done during the season for just-in-time orders. This is in contrast to the 90 percent or more that they indicated would be pre-booked just 20 years ago. I personally have experienced the same change in buyer habits.

The gradual shift to more "just in time" orders completely makes sense from a buyer's point of view. They want the plant material when it is at the peak of readiness and their customers are in the stores ready to buy.

One of the platforms that brings a wide array of growers and buyers together is the *OAN Nursery Guide*. It has been the most comprehensive wholesale buyer's guide in the industry for years. We have seen it evolve from a yearly printed book of listings to adding an up-to-date and up-to-the-minute website. Almost 400 growers are represented, and over 700 companies total. It's a place for growers, suppliers, and buyers to connect.

**NurseryGuide.com** was developed by us and for us. The OAN has done a wonderful job setting up this marketplace but we only get out of it what we put in. The staff at the OAN are willing and able to help set up or update your listings at any time. You can add new plants, add photos of your nursery, connect your current availability to your online profile, and much more.

For buyers, *Nursery Guide* is an invaluable resource for sourcing those hard-to-find plants or finding availability for the just-in-time plant orders in the spring. It is also a go-to resource for looking for services and supplies.

As members we have the benefit of this great and easy-to-use platform. One of the great features is the ability to update listings at any time throughout the year. This is wonderful through the spring season to get your plants out there to customers when they are peaking and looking great. And buyers have a go-to resource during the hectic spring when the weather turns nice and customers are in the stores and more plant material is needed.

Spring is right around the corner, or already here by some accounts, so put

**NurseryGuide.com** on top of your go-to list for finding those just-in-time plants, or get your listings updated today to reflect the readiness and quality of our Oregon Grown plants. ☺



Jim Simnitt  
OAN PRESIDENT

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# Calendar

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

## FEBRUARY 3-4

### FIRST AID AND CPR CLASSES

Two OAN-sponsored First Aid and Adult CPR training classes are available in February. Successful completion results in certification that is good for two years. The first class, conducted in English, will be on February 3. The second class, in Spanish only, will happen February 4. Both sessions take place from 8 a.m.-noon at Oregon Association of Nurseries, 29751 S.W. Town Center Loop West, Wilsonville, Oregon. Register online at [www.oan.org/cprclass](http://www.oan.org/cprclass)

## FEBRUARY 4

### BOXWOOD HEALTH WORKSHOP

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is teaming up with the Horticultural Research Institute and AmericanHort to bring an all-day boxwood health workshop to the Willamette Valley, which is a major hub of boxwood production in the United States. Experts from across the nation will help local growers identify and manage boxwood blight, which can be difficult to detect in the Pacific Northwest climate. The event includes a session by a mid-Atlantic grower who will share commonsense ways to reduce the incidence of the boxwood blight at the nursery level. The sessions will take place 8 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Oregon State University North Willamette Research & Extension Center, 15210 N.E. Mile Road, Aurora, Oregon. Registration is full. However, a wait list is accepting names at [www.oan.org/event/boxwoodhealth](http://www.oan.org/event/boxwoodhealth).

## FEBRUARY 5-7

### PROGREEN EXPO

An educational green industry conference, the ProGreen EXPO features seminars and exhibits on the latest in green technology products, new business efficiency methods, and opportunities for continuing education exams and certifications. More than 6,000 professionals attend the event held at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. Visit [www.progreenexpo.com](http://www.progreenexpo.com) for more information.

## FEBRUARY 20-23

### PORTLAND SPRING HOME & GARDEN SHOW

Taking place at the Portland Expo Center, 2060 North Marine Dr., Portland, Oregon, this show entertains and informs homeowners of the latest trends in remodeling and garden design. Guests browse exhibits of the freshest garden projects, new products for upgrading their living spaces, and helpful service providers who can upgrade nearly any aspect of their property. Attendees may collect magazines, snap photos, and grab the latest edition of the Retail Nurseries and Garden Centers Road Map. For more information, visit <http://homeshowpdx.com>.



## FEBRUARY 26

### OAN OPEN HOUSE

All OAN members and their guests are invited to drop in between 3-5 p.m. to the OAN office, 29751 S.W. Town Center Loop West, Wilsonville, Oregon to learn more about the terrific programs and benefits that are available to association members. Representatives of several programs will be available to answer questions, including Legal Access, health coverage, Trucks to Trade Shows, fuel discounts, credit card processing, discounted Farwest Show booths, OAN advertising, and much more!

## FEBRUARY 21

### PNWCTA CHRISTMAS TREE 2020 SHORT COURSE

Christmas tree growers and retailers are invited to the Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association (PWNCTA) 2020 educational session, starting at noon at Holiday Inn Portland South, 25425 S.W. 95th Avenue, Wilsonville, Oregon. Experts will discuss new growing and harvesting methods, research updates, pesticide and safety information, business practices and tax implications for those involved in the industry. Registered attendees may earn pesticide re-certification credits in Oregon and Washington. The lodging deadline is February 7. See [tinyurl.com/y61puw6t](http://tinyurl.com/y61puw6t) for more information.

## FEBRUARY 26- MARCH 3

### NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN FESTIVAL

This year's festival theme celebrates "Spring Fever" with over 30 fully landscaped display gardens, 100 free world-class seminars, and thousands of treasures in the garden and vintage marketplaces. The festival is held at the Washington State Convention Center, Seattle, Washington. For more information, visit [www.gardenshow.com](http://www.gardenshow.com).

## FEBRUARY 27

### NOR CAL LANDSCAPE & NURSERY SHOW

The Nor Cal Landscape & Nursery Trade Show is a one-day professional collaboration between California's horticulture and landscape industries, taking place at the San Mateo

Expo Center, 1346 Saratoga Drive, San Mateo, California. It features more than 250 exhibits and nine educational seminars. Revenues raised by the Nor Cal Show are reinvested in the industry through education, research and philanthropy. The event Register online at [www.norcaltradeshows.org](http://www.norcaltradeshows.org).

## 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](http://www.oan.org/onf), or contact Stephanie Weihrauch at 503-582-2001 or [sweihrach@oan.org](mailto:sweihrach@oan.org).

## MARCH 6

### PLANT NERD NIGHT

Start your garden season off with Mike Darcy's 19th 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 and gardens 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 1. Presentations run 7-9 p.m. at Lake Bible Church, 4565 Carman Drive, Lake Oswego, Oregon. Visit [www.hardyplantsociety.org/plant-nerd-night](http://www.hardyplantsociety.org/plant-nerd-night) for more 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](mailto:news@oan.org).

## Oregon bans single-use checkout bags

Oregon's new statewide ban on single-use checkout bags took effect January 1, forcing retailers including nurseries to change their procedures — and customers to change their habits.

The new ban is part of a spate of local and state laws nationwide designed to reduce waste from plastic bag use. Retailers in other states can perhaps expect to see a similar push, if they haven't already.

Nurseries are not exempted from the law. Any garden centers selling merchandise that typically goes in bags now must eliminate use of single-use plastic, with the exception of flowers in plastic bouquet bags and potted plants in single-use bags. Those are still permitted.

However, many garden centers send their customers away with cardboard or plastic flats packed with plants, for easy carrying and convenience. These flats aren't targeted by the new law, which only addresses bags.

Like other retailers, garden centers who bag some merchandise have the option to offer customers recycled paper bags, reusable cloth bags and reusable plastic bags. Except in limited circumstances, merchants must charge their customers at least a nickel apiece for these bags. Most stores have reported some degree of customer frustration as they adapt to the rollout.

The new law is intended to reduce bag use or encourage a switch to recycled or reusable bags, ultimately reducing the amount of plastic and other materials that enter the waste stream and the environment.

Certain other exempted items can also still go in single-use bags, ranging from nuts and bolts to bulk grains to prescription medications to frozen foods. More information can be found at [tinyurl.com/w3xjtsv](http://tinyurl.com/w3xjtsv).



The Charles A. Sprague High School choir sings in the Oregon State Capitol, decorated with poinsettias donated by OAN Retail and Greenhouse Chapter members. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE CAPITOL FOUNDATION.

## OREGON GROWERS CONTRIBUTE POINSETTIAS TO STATE CAPITOL

Velvet-soft, locally-grown poinsettias make the holiday season feel complete. Several OAN members donated hundreds of the red and white plants to add a touch of greenhouse grower magic to the Oregon State Capitol rotunda for the Christmas tree lighting ceremony and other holiday events. The vibrant flowers helped to showcase Oregon's \$1 billion nursery industry to legislators.

The OAN Retail and Greenhouse Chapter organized the decorative effort. They would like to give special thanks to the following growers for their continued support of the annual poinsettia drive: **Al's Garden Center, F & B Farm & Nursery, Fessler Nursery Co., Iwasaki Bros. Inc., Koida Greenhouses, Peoria Gardens Inc., Griffin Greenhouse Supply, Skagit Gardens, Spring Creek Gardens Inc. and Smith Gardens Inc.**

## TEMPORARY RULES ISSUED FOR NEW CORPORATE ACTIVITY TAX

The Oregon Department of Revenue has issued 12 new temporary rules for the corporate activity tax that lawmakers approved in 2019.

The rules, posted at [tinyurl.com/t7zq34n](http://tinyurl.com/t7zq34n), are intended to provide guidance so that businesses are aware of steps they may need to take to comply with the new law. The state also has created an informational page at [tinyurl.com/w2uqcgx](http://tinyurl.com/w2uqcgx)

The new tax is projected to generate \$1 billion in funding for education in Oregon. It will be collected in addition to the state's current corporate income tax. Notably, it taxes income rather than profits — a major minus for low-margin businesses.

The basics of the CAT tax are that businesses with more than \$750,000 in income must register for the CAT program. They become tax liable once they generate more than \$1 million in taxable commercial activity in a calendar year. Such businesses will owe a base amount of \$250, plus 0.57 percent of Oregon commercial activity of more than \$1 million.

Only transactions and activity within the state of Oregon are subject to the tax. Certain items are excluded from the definition. Additionally, a 35 percent subtraction is allowed for certain business expenses.

Payments are due quarterly for those businesses expecting an annual liability of \$5,000 or more, which equates to taxable activity of \$1.8 million.



## Northwest News

Suzi McCoy (left) is passing ownership of Garden Media Group over to her daughter Katie Dubow (right)

PHOTO COURTESY OF GARDEN MEDIA GROUP



## Announcements

### KATIE DUBOW TAKES OVER GARDEN MEDIA GROUP

On January 1, 2020, Katie Dubow took over as president and owner of Garden Media Group, succeeding her mother and company founder Suzi McCoy. The company is based in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.

McCoy started the boutique PR and marketing firm business in 1987 under the name IMPACT Marketing. The company focuses on home, garden, horticulture, outdoor living, and lawn and landscape industries. Garden Media is well known for publishing the annual Garden Trends Report that is used nationally and internationally by businesses that need to stay up to date with consumer behavior in the gardening industry.

From a young age, Dubow was continuously involved in Garden Media

Group, and joined the company full time in 2011 as a creative director and marketing strategist. With strong skills in brand management, she has managed PR and marketing campaigns for national and international clients while building new business relationships for the company.

Dubow was recognized in GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2017, and GardenComm's first Emergent Communicator in 2016. She serves on the Pennsylvania Nursery and Landscape Association board and Million Pollinator Garden Challenge marketing committee. Dubow previously worked as a marketing manager for Liz Claiborne, Inc and a technical production manager at CBS in New York, New York.

Visit [www.gardenmediagroup.com](http://www.gardenmediagroup.com) for more information.

### SKAGIT HORTICULTURE HIRES VP OF SALES AND MARKETING

Ron Vandiver has been appointed as vice president of sales and marketing at **Skagit Horticulture**, a national supplier of annuals and perennials.



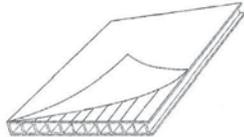
Vandiver joins the company with 20 years of experience in grower plastic supplies, which includes periods of starting his own company that was acquired by other commercial horticulture businesses. He was previously the vice president of sales at the Summit Plastic Company in Akron, Ohio, and national sales manager and accounts director for East Jordan Plastics, and business development director at Airlite Plastics.

"Ron's track record in business growth, leadership and innovative thinking is impressive," said Scott Crowover, president and CEO of Skagit Horticulture. ➤

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## In Memoriam



### JEAN FESSLER

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to report the passing of Oregon Nurseries' Hall of Fame member Jean Fessler, who co-founded **Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas** together with her husband, Bob.



She died December 22, 2019 at the age of 80, following a battle with breast cancer.

She was born Martha Jean Coleman on September 16, 1939 in Woodburn, Oregon to Robert and Martha Coleman. She was raised in St. Paul, Oregon and graduated from the Providence School of Nursing in 1961. She worked for Salem Hospital and Newberg Hospital.

Jean married Bob Fessler on October 28, 1961, and shortly after, the young couple started Fessler Farms Inc., raising mink, cane berries and filberts.

In 1968, they started Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc., which became one of Oregon's signature nursery operations. They started by growing florist azalea liners in a 25-foot by 96-foot greenhouse. They added outdoor nursery stock in the 1970s and added pot-in-pot production in 2000. The nursery today has 401 acres in production, including 220 acres of pot-in-pot, 65 acres of outdoor containers, and 116 acres of covered production area (including 65 for azalea production).

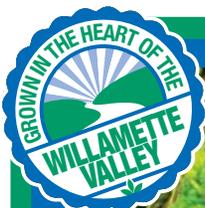
The couple raised five children, all of whom became involved in running the family business. Jean managed the bookkeeping and assisted in the day-to-day operations until the time of her death.

The company celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2018. In 2019, Jean and Bob were inducted into the Oregon Nurseries' Hall of Fame.

A woman of faith, she was a member of Catholic Daughters of America and St. Ann's Altar Society. She volunteered in church and school booths at Oktoberfest. She served on the Silverton Hospital foundation board. Jointly, she and her husband have earned many local community awards, including the Mt. Angel 1st Citizen Award, Mt. Angel Business of the Year Award, and Silver Spirit Award (Legacy Silverton Hospital).

Jean is survived by her her husband, Bob; children Tom (Debbie) Fessler, Rick (Melanie) Fessler, Karen (Ross) Jaeger, Sandy (Greg) Traeger and Jodi (Lance) Arritola; silblings Mary Ellen Wolf, John Coleman, Kathleen Macken, Jane Wavra and Bill Coleman; 19 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren. Jean was preceded in death by her parents and by her brothers, Bobby and James Coleman.

A rosary was held December 26 at St. Mary Catholic Church in Mt. Angel. A Mass of Christian burial followed December 27 at the church. Memorial donations may be made to St. Mary Catholic Church in Mt. Angel, Oregon. Unger Funeral Chapel in Mt. Angel was in care of funeral arrangements.



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## Northwest News

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## In Memoriam

### BRUCE C. HOSKINS

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to report the passing of Bruce C. Hoskins, owner of **Pacific Crest**



**Groundcovers** in Canby, Oregon. He died December 13, 2019 in Portland, Oregon, following a battle with brain cancer. He was 71.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Bruce was the son of Courtney J. Hoskins and Dorothy M. Beachler. He received a bachelor’s degree in horticulture from Penn State University, and moved to Oregon in 1970.

Partnering with other growers, he purchased 10 acres in Boring, Oregon to start JPB Rhododendrons, before changing to To-Kar’s Nursery. The operation moved to Canby, Oregon and the company’s name was changed to Pacific Crest Groundcovers in 2002.

The family-owned nursery has been a member of the Oregon Association of Nurseries since 1991. Bruce retired as president in 2019.

Bruce is survived by his wife, Karen; sons, Tyler Hoskins of Corvallis, Oregon, and Andrew Hoskins of Canby; daughter, Kelsey Hoskins of Canby; daughter-in-law, Brittany Hoskins, of Corvallis; brother, Gene Hoskins of Arizona; and sister, Alice Takase of Texas.

A private memorial service was planned. The family asks that memorial contributions be given to any brain cancer research organization. ©

# Gleams of an extended garden season



Mike Darcy

Head “plant nerd,” longtime speaker, host of gardening shows on radio and TV, and author of the *In the Garden* email newsletter. You can reach Mike, or subscribe to his newsletter, at [itmikedarcy@comcast.net](mailto:itmikedarcy@comcast.net).

**F**ORMER PORTLAND ROSE Society President Rich Baer sent me a photo that he took this past Thanksgiving from his garden.

It was a bouquet of roses.

I have lived in the Portland area for many years and it is not often I’ve thought of picking a full bouquet of roses at the end of November!

With the mild fall weather, there were many other roses in Rich’s garden with flowers to potentially use in a bouquet. Their blooms had been somewhat soiled due to the recent rains, but the rose plants themselves had not been damaged by any cold weather.

In my own garden in Lake Oswego, I still have some *Salvia* plants in pots that are blooming. The plants are not as lush as they were in the summer, but they are still flowering and providing a food source for hummingbirds. The one plant in my garden that astounds me is a variegated bush *bougainvillea* that is still alive. While it does not look so good, it has survived through mid-January in an area unprotected from the weather.



## It’s not unusual

From talking to other gardeners and visiting other gardens this past fall season, what Rich and I are seeing is not unusual. I know there are many plants still surviving that should have died to the ground several months ago. What’s more, some trees and shrubs have swelling buds already. Spring perennials, likewise, are showing new growth buds or perhaps poking through the soil much earlier than usual. This tenderness emerging so early concerns me. I’m always aware of that cold, snowy blast that can appear as late as February around here. We’ve seen it

many times.

So, what does this mean for garden centers and gardeners as we anticipate the up-and-coming spring garden season?

Lori Vollmer from Garden Fever! in Portland said if the weather stays mild, it could be a fantastic year for garden centers. With the fall season we just had, where many October days felt like spring, the 2020 garden season could easily be extended once again.

But she cautioned: “One winter of less cold does not mean a permanent change.”

Garden Fever! is not pushing the zone

of hardiness, but they do offer plants that may not always be winter hardy. Their sales personnel are taught to let interested customers know these plants carry a winter risk factor.

Meanwhile, low-maintenance, drought-tolerant native plants continue to be in high demand.

Ken Whitten from Portland Nursery echoed Lori’s observations on native plants. The term “native plants” seems to be a trigger in the minds of many customers — something that is perhaps magical. However, I believe that it is important to understand that not all native plants are easily adapted to a home garden. Different

native plants require different degrees of sun and shade. The “native” designation does not mean it will survive in any location with no care.

With the Willamette Valley having more heat units, and with warmer and more arid summers, Ken mentioned several other plants that, once rarely seen, are now becoming more common.

Crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia spp.*) are readily available at local garden centers and I often see this shrub planted in home gardens. Not only are there new selections to choose from, but new and more vivid flower colors are available with an earlier, longer blooming period.

They thrive in the heat and I have never experienced any insect

problems. At one time, powdery mildew was a potential disease issue, but many of the newer selections are resistant.

Ken also mentioned that not too many years ago, it was unusual to see olive trees planted in a home garden setting, or actually, planted anywhere. Not anymore.

The first readily available variety was ‘Arbequina’. It tended to be somewhat more winter hardy than others, and even if damaged, it seemed to bounce back. Newer varieties are now on the market. Olive trees have proven themselves to withstand heat and drought once established.

In my garden, along a very sunny slope, I planted three ‘Arbequina’ ➤

**Previous page:** Rich Baer's bouquet of roses from Thanksgiving Day. PHOTO BY RICH BAER

Mike Darcy has a *bougainvillea* still in bloom by the middle of January. PHOTO BY MIKE DARCY



olive trees about five years ago. Last summer, with a full and continuous blast of the hot summer sun, they received no supplemental water. They still thrived.

**Pointing in the right direction**

Other than plants, there certain hard goods that I see as potentially strong sellers in garden centers. If this coming summer is hot and dry, demand for mulches and compost mixes to help hold moisture in the soil will likely increase. This is important advice to give customers when they are planting.

Soaker hoses and drip irrigation systems would also be items to feature.

If this summer is like last, it presents an ideal opportunity for a garden center to step up and help customers succeed in a situation where they might otherwise fail. Using point-of-purchase materials and offering classes are two ideal ways to connect gardeners to your garden center.

Gardeners are continually hungry for new information. Local garden centers can pass along knowledge in a personal way the internet cannot match. Retailers advise customers which plants can withstand the full summer sun and which cannot; which plants are going to need supplemental water and which will not.

Don't forget about shade-loving plants. With many new homes being built close together, one home will often shade another. Offer customers more plant options that will thrive in such a situation.

The more information you can give out, the more you tie the customer to your garden center. Success is built on trust and knowledge. Go for it. ☺

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# MEET THE LEADER

The voices of Oregon's nursery industry

## TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

I grew up on a hazelnut farm, and I was part of an extremely hard-working family. I can remember my mother waking up at 5 a.m. every day to dive right into work. My father Jay and older brother Brent transitioned the farm into a nursery in the early 1980s. As any kid can be, I was not a fan of all the work and tried to hide from my nursery chores. I went to Utah State University and earned a bachelor's degree in horticulture and plant sciences. While I was there, I worked as an arborist on a golf course and started doing some landscaping for one of my professors. I realized how much I actually loved the work I had thought I hated the most. I've been working with plants for nearly 22 years now.

## WHAT'S YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

Working with as many people as I do, I have many different principles, such as "Err on the side of generosity," "Give people the benefit of the doubt," and "Be honest." I also think it's important to be creative, be innovative, and push your boundaries.

## GOAL YET TO BE ACHIEVED?

I hope to create a legacy that will carry on into the next generation of my family. I've helped create the strong business we have today, and I welcome anyone in our family who is interested in helping us be a better business as we grow.

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

Deciding to work with family was the right choice for me. We have a mantra that goes: "It's not about you; it's not about me; it's about the business." By keeping the success of Bountiful Farms business at the helm of the decision-making process, I know we can put our personal emotions aside. When we do what's best for everyone involved, we come out on the other side unscathed.

## GREATEST MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

We all struggle with it, but planting the right crops in the right quantities keeps me up at night. I have a three-pronged process of checking with my top customers, meeting with sales individuals, and looking at past



## Todd Nelson

Co-owner

Bountiful Farms Nursery Inc.

oan member since 1999

- OAN Board of Directors Treasurer; previously Member at Large
- Finance committee chair
- Executive committee liaison for Membership Committee, and Retail and Greenhouse Chapter

sales records to make every order I can. I'll have my customers get involved in crop and quantity decisions.

## WHO IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR?

I have two mentors — first, Lisa Nelson, who is my wife and the mother of our six children. Second, my nephew and business partner, Blake Nelson. In both cases, our strengths complement each other. With Blake, I love growing and sales, and he is great at finances and production.

## BEST BUSINESS ADVICE:

My father, who is now 88, still tells me, "Don't focus on what's happening on the other side of the fence. Focus on what we do best. Travel the world to find the best." It's been incredibly helpful. Every couple of years, I will travel to Europe to attend international trade shows like the Essen Show, see equipment shows, and tour other nurseries. I've visited everywhere from Canada to Italy to Germany and the Netherlands. It's where I find innovative robotics and products.

## WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE NURSERY INDUSTRY?

I love the great people — the friends, customers, my team — but there's also a lot to be said about how there's always something new and challenging. Whether it's politics, regulations, products, sales ... I don't know of anything that's not constantly pivoting.

## WHAT'S YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE?

Labor and working with ever-changing regulations are both challenges. We stay true to around 100 employees.

## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

I love what I do. It's important to me to make my family proud and provide an opportunity for any Bountiful Farms families to keep the business going. With three of my kids in college, one in high school and two in middle school, that is still to be determined. But if they have a passion for the work, I have the pathway for them.

## WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I'm proud of how innovative and different our business has become. It's not about being better than others, but more about how we're anxiously engaged in improving ourselves. When looking at a production process or new fertilizers, I won't sit back and think we have it all under control. I also take pride in the fact that I'm part of a happy work environment. One of our family's principles is "Work hard, play hard." If you come to work with a smile, you'll leave with a smile. I enjoy being around happy people.

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

Ever-changing regulations and limited labor supplies are huge concerns, but also staying ahead of the curve to predict trends in the industry. Being in the OAN helps me see what we're facing and what's coming down the pipeline. I've honestly been blown away at how much the OAN makes a difference. ☺

**Top:** Legacy Health Systems Therapeutic Garden Program installed green spaces to expose patients to the health benefits of trees.

**Bottom:** Legacy Health Systems now maintains 12 gardens on the grounds of its various hospitals.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THERESIA HAZEN



# The healing power of trees

BY TRACY ILENE MILLER

**S**CIENCE IS FINDING that, figuratively speaking, a tree a day keeps the doctor away.

Regular exposure to trees and nature can help people recover from illness and lead to better mental and physical health, according to an ever-growing body of research. To the working members of the green industry, such declara-

tions may seem like a given, but scientists have been working hard to substantiate the connection. They've turned up solid evidence that advocates hope will influence health regulations, urban planning and even economic policy.

For growers and retailers in the green industry, this growing body of research offers opportunities to promote trees in several

arenas, including policy and advocacy, as well as commercial and retail marketing.

## Health and lifestyle trends

The research showing the health benefits of trees comes as the world becomes more urban, health care costs keeps rising and the threat of climate change looms.

According to the United Nations, 89 percent of Americans will live in urban environments by the year 2050. That represents a 25 percent increase from 1964 and a 5 percent increase from today. Worldwide, 68 percent of the population is expected to live in cities by 2050.

Since the mid-1960s, health care spending as a percentage of the overall U.S. economy has been increasing, and it has done so at a faster rate than in other countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which includes 34 democracies. In 1970, the U.S. spent 6 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on health care, compared to 5 percent in the other countries.

Then, in the 1980s, U.S. health spending began to grow even more rapidly.

By 2017, at \$10,224 annually, the U.S. was spending 28 percent more per capita than the next-highest spender (Switzerland), according to a collaborative analysis by the Peterson Center on Healthcare and the Kaiser Family Foundation. The total bill came to \$3.6 trillion, or 17 percent of GDP.

Although the number of research studies that specifically address the role of trees and health remains small compared with the vast number focused on human health and well-being, one review of the literature found a 140 percent increase in such studies since the 1980s. Also in the 1980s, in the midst of what were the warmest years on record at the time, scientists began to pay more attention to climate change.





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### Green Cities: Good Health

The scientific community has been working consistently to research how plants and trees are more than just artistic decoration or a creative outlet — they fulfill basic needs in the lives of people.

Kathleen L. Wolf, a research social scientist with the College of the Environment at the University of Washington (Seattle), has made the human benefits of trees and nature the focus of her work. She started her career as an urban forester in South Florida and a landscape architect in the Midwest. Now she studies the principles of environmental psychology and the ways humans interact with — and benefit from — open space, urban forestry and natural systems.

One of her projects, a research review known as Green Cities: Good Health, has been conducted jointly with the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Washington.

As project director, Wolf has compiled a database of more than 4,500 peer-reviewed publications to create an “overview of the scientific evidence of human health and well-being benefits provided by urban forestry and urban greening.”

The literature review takes in more than a dozen research categories, such as “healing and therapy,” “mental health and function,” and “wellness and physiology.” People exploring the project website (<http://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/>) can view fast facts for each of these categories, then scroll down to review the detailed research, including references.

### Horticulture as therapy

Teresia Hazen works for Legacy Health, a health care organization serving Oregon and Southwest Washington. The nonprofit has six hospitals and several allied programs that combined include 14,000 employees, 3,500 medical staff and 2,500 volunteers. >>

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## The healing power of trees

Legacy Health gardens serve both patients and hospital employees.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THERESIA HAZEN



Hazen serves as coordinator of Legacy's Therapeutic Garden Program, launched in 1991, which incorporates academic research about the benefits of trees and nature into patient care. She pioneered Legacy's horticultural therapy initiatives and the construction of a therapeutic garden for Legacy's long-term care and skilled nursing patients.

The first therapy garden took five years to complete, serving as the strong basic model to emulate. A second garden followed in 1997, and today, Hazen oversees an integrated system of 12 hospital gardens for patient rehabilitation, recovery and restoration. These gardens have also become a place where employees can recharge, and Legacy encourages them to do so.

"We have 'troopers' who love to do patient care, and we have to remind them to take breaks — self-care," Hazen said.

In the research, gardens that are labeled "well-designed native settings" are ones that are designed in such a way that they require no direct attention by users looking to rejuvenate.

"Restoration happens automatically," Hazen said. "You don't have to think about it." Last year, the therapeutic design of Legacy's second-floor terrace garden at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland won the Center for Health Design's Evidence-Based Design Touchstone Award-Platinum.

The design was acknowledged for including a number of research-supported features of gardens that reduce stress. It incorporates an informal, natural style with abundant vegetation and is easily accessible for people with crutches and other mobility aids, while still offering privacy and shade.

"In our gardens, trees are the framework for our therapy," Hazen said.

Physicians make use of the gardens and will often prescribe garden time for their patients. They know the act of getting outside can improve patient strength and endurance. Moreover, the gardens serve as a desired destination, and as such, they provide patients with the motivation to move, engage and get back to good health.

"Coming to a garden with carefully placed and selected trees also provides

a supported setting where families can come together to take care of each other," Hazen said.

The gardens are open to the public and include botanical signage. While Hazen has planted familiar species as a comfort to patients, she likes to inspire and is always looking for new tree varieties to include. She seeks out plant material that offers sustainability, as well as disease and pest resistance.

Since the Therapeutic Garden Program first began, the J. Frank Schmidt Family Charitable Foundation has been donating trees to it.

"We invested in giving them the resources 20 years ago, and their research is now going mainstream," said Nancy Buley, director of communications at **J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.**, a tree breeder and grower based in Boring, Oregon. "The recognition of the health benefits is vaulting from science to the mainstream."

For instance, the Nature Conservancy, normally known for its support of wild places, published a white paper in 2017 on urban trees that champions tree-planting projects in cities. This past summer, *Science* magazine published an article on the potential of forest canopies worldwide to mitigate climate change.

And in late 2019, the *New York Times* reported that the City of Los Angeles is now focused on bringing trees to underserved communities in part to address tree deficiencies in those areas. Officials see it as a public health issue. Those living in areas with more trees experience lower asthma rates, reduced hospital visits during heat waves, and improved mental health, as compared with residents of communities that have fewer trees.

### Marketing opportunities for growers

According to Buley, this attention on the health benefits of trees opens up some distinct, and long overdue, marketing opportunities for growers.

"As growers of trees, shrubs, grasses, ground covers and all things green, we're an essential part of the solution, but generally speaking, we're not even part of the conversation," she said.

All sorts of tools — scientific research, websites, non-profit organizations — are available, with the information going mainstream, and there's room to embrace it, to add value to products and use the information to sell trees, she said.

The "Trees Are the Answer" trunk wraps Schmidt created four years ago to promote the health benefits of the trees represents one kind of tactic for growers.

"The wraps are very popular with our customers," Buley said. "They're colorful, carry a good message and attract the attention of garden center customers."

There are also partners like the Arbor Day Foundation, whose mission is to inspire people to plant, nurture and celebrate trees. "Studies give us this cumulative idea that trees are good for our health," said Pete Smith, urban forestry program manager at the foundation. "17 to 19 percent of our GDP is tied to trees."

The foundation has posted valuable research on the health benefits of trees on its website at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) and has established national programs, including Tree City USA and Tree Campus USA. Tree City USA recognizes cities for meeting certain standards of tree cover. Tree Campus USA recognizes educational institutions that establish and sustain healthy community forests, and which involve students in these goals.

More recently, the foundation added two new recognition programs: Tree City K-12 and Tree Campus Healthcare. These provide an opportunity for those campus grounds managers and sustainability staff of health facilities, respectively, to look beyond the footprint, engage tree professionals and contribute to the health of the community, Smith said.

Smith wonders whether the nursery industry could reach out more to targeted audiences — perhaps at health care or education conferences — and spread the word. Trees can clean water, clean air and improve human health, whether at home, work or a hospital, Smith said.

"It is helpful for growers to have an understanding that they are not just in the business of marketing this product, but part of what they are selling is the sizzle of

The Children's Garden was built for young patients.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THERESIA HAZEN



the tree, the benefits those trees provide,” he said. “You’re planting an energy-saving device when you provide a shade tree that will provide summertime cooling. You’re planting a new mechanism for healing.”

Nicholas Staddon served as director of new plants and national spokesperson for **Monrovia Nursery Company** (based in Azusa, California) for more than 27 years. He now works for **TreeTown USA** (based in Houston, Texas, with significant growing operations in Oregon) in the areas of intellectual property, new plants and marketing, and Mountain States Wholesale Nursery (Glendale, Arizona) in intellectual property and marketing.

Like others, Staddon feels more could be done to market the health benefits of trees and plants.

“If I was standing in a room of 100

growers and asked: ‘When you think of your plants, what’s the first thing you think about?’ Chances are the first thing they think about is profit,” Staddon said. “They’re growing plants to make money. But how good a job are we doing as a group in communicating the benefits of trees?”

Staddon met Hazen of Legacy Health years ago, and ever since, he has been a speaker (and a self-proclaimed “flag carrier”) on the topic of horticultural therapy.

“Plants have become a therapy whether



we realize it or not,” Staddon said. “When people look at or smell flowers, or it’s a hot day and they’re rescued under the shade of a tree, or eat an apple, their emotions are revitalized. Horticulture stimulates emotions in the best way.”

“Our professions, whether growing plants or creating landscapes, are on the precipice of an opportunity as people begin to realize how important plants are for their health and well-being,” he said. “There’s an opportunity to seriously focus on the emotion and the good trees do.”

There’s the financial side, and there is the health side that sales teams could be marketing as well, Staddon said.

“We can talk about that they are >>

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## The healing power of trees

Events are held in the hospital garden to draw people to the spaces. COURTESY OF THERESIA HAZEN

seedless, what they look like in fall, their flowers and that they are 15 feet high, but are we talking about the benefits of these plants, whether in cities or individual landscapes?" he asked. "The door is wide open to become educated and to promote plants, to have materials to support the benefits, and communicate that to sales team and the communities they live in."

### Marketing opportunities for retailers

On the retail end, in 2007, the Arizona Nursery Association (ANA) hired a marketing firm to help it develop comprehensive messaging for retail garden centers. The advice the association got?

"This industry needs to promote the environmental, financial and health benefits of trees," ANA Executive Director Cheryl Goar Koury said.

Out of that came the Plant Something program ([www.Plant-Something.org](http://www.Plant-Something.org)). ANA has signed up 25 state and provincial partners, including the **Oregon Association of Nurseries**, who provide marketing materials and messaging that their members, and those in other participating states, can use.

For example, OAN created its Plants Make Life Better flyers under the Plant Something banner. These are available at [www.plantsomethingoregon.com/pmlb](http://www.plantsomethingoregon.com/pmlb).

It's not enough anymore to promote trees and plants only for their looks, that they are pretty, Goar Koury said. "The advice was to talk about the benefits of plants and trees, what trees do for you," she said. "Our industry needs to stand up and talk about those benefits."

The campaign is geared primarily to single-family homeowners who shop at retail centers, said Goar Koury. ANA found that retailers using the program aggressively reported 10 percent increased sales year over year. "It's another tool in the toolbox," Goar Koury said. "Our retailers find value in using the marketing tools we created. Trees, and the industry, have a positive effect, and we are at the point where people care about that."

### Making climate change personal

Buley said she hadn't thought about the personal nature of health as it relates to trees until attending the November annual meeting of the American Society of Landscape Architects in San Diego, California. There she heard former EPA administrator Gina McCarthy talk about climate change.

McCarthy mentioned that health makes climate change personal, and gives people a reason to care. That in turn can motivate action.

Wolf described it this way: "Health is not just access to care facilities, hospitals and doctors, but it's much more. It's the physical, mental and social well-being of people."

Her work with colleagues to comprehensively review research found specific scientific support that nature in cities improves air quality and many diseases associated with poor air quality as well as supports good health and stress reduction.

The next steps of economic valuation are the hardest, but necessary.

"Classic economics, of supply and demand, can't apply to urban forests," Wolf said. "We can determine the costs, but determining the benefits is quite difficult. We don't have market values that establish these price points."

But nonetheless, that is Wolf's goal, and that of her colleagues. They want to identify the economic value of nature to human health and wellness, so that politicians, economists and planners can more easily rely it for decision-making.

As this emerging research moves toward pinpointing the cost-to-benefit analysis of urban forests, growers and retailers can be watching as the literature for the health benefits of trees continues to evolve to bolster messaging to customers that trees are inextricably important to us all for our economy and for our personal health. ☺

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*Tracy Ilene Miller is a freelance writer and editor who covers several topics, including gardening. She can be reached at [tracyilenemiller@gmail.com](mailto:tracyilenemiller@gmail.com).*



# Proper credit

Nurseries need to play it safe when it comes to setting payment terms

BY JON BELL

**I**N 2006, ABOUT SIX years after he founded **JLPN Inc.**, a nursery seeding operation in Salem, John Lewis had finally reached a point where he was ready to begin operating on cash. Up until then, the business had been run largely on credit.

Lewis then borrowed what he calls “a ton of money” and maxed out a massive credit line to buy his father’s company, Lew’s Lakeside Nursery. The year was 2007.

“That was the year everything crashed and business took a 40 percent nosedive,” Lewis said. “I didn’t have money to pay my bills or payroll. My 12-month credit line took six years to pay off.”

Living through the Great Recession was an eye-opening experience for Lewis, as it was for other nursery owners. He said it took years to get back into the black, and during that time, he and other owners had a hard time paying invoices. At the same time, however, there were also some growers who were still able to prepay with cash and get the industry-standard 5 percent prepayment discount.

“I couldn’t figure out how everyone could be broke and yet a few growers were still so cash-heavy that they went for the prepayment discount,” Lewis said. “Relying on credit and being on cash was the difference between growers. I then realized the importance of credit at certain times, but also the Achilles heel, or noose, it could become. It was my goal to never use credit again.”

Not all growers may have the same take on credit as Lewis

does, but his experience with it illuminates the scrutiny that those in the nursery industry need to exercise when it comes using credit to keep the engine running.

Credit can be a helpful tool that allows customers to buy and sellers to ship. But it can also lead to a slippery slope of debt that can become overwhelming for any business.

As a result, nursery owners need to take a measured, well-thought-out approach to credit to make sure it’s used effectively and doesn’t become troublesome.

“I think it is so important for growers to get on a cash basis and examine financial risk from customer to customer,” Lewis said. “Knowing the impact that a bankruptcy or rough patch of a customer can cause you is critical. Too many companies get distracted by all the big zeroes they see on a purchase order, and as a result, they can’t say no to a big order. However, it’s the big zeros that make or break you when somebody can’t pay.”

## Where credit’s due

As in most industries, credit plays a big role in the nursery business. Growers need and use credit for a range of purposes, from acquiring land and equipment to paying for inventory.

“The nursery industry, in particular, will have pretty heavy investment in inventory, and the product mix can be multiple years of inventory, so you have a long cash cycle,” said 

Valentin Celaya, senior vice president of credit for **Northwest Farm Credit Services**, which provides lending services and crop insurance for the agriculture industry. “You try to match the structure of the debt to what the cash flow is and when it can be repaid.”

At present, Celaya said the environment for credit is fairly healthy. Interest rates have been “very attractive based on long-term historical trends,” and even though they rose a bit across 2019, Celaya said that rates dropped again toward the end of the year as the economy eased back a bit. Credit availability has been positive, as well.

“In general, it’s all pretty healthy,” Celaya said. “There are probably some concerns on the horizon if we go into a recession, what that will mean for the housing market and the nursery industry, but I don’t think there will be the same level of challenges as there were in 2008 and 2009.”

### Credit and customers

One of the most important areas in the nursery industry where credit plays a role is in transactions with customers and suppliers. Growers will often extend credit to customers as a way to keep transactions flowing and goods moving. But it is in these kinds of arrangements where credit can become a problem when, for example, a customer ends up not paying on time — or at all. That can lead to financial troubles for a nursery, especially if the customer is a large one.

“I’ve had people ask me how I’ve walked away from some very large orders over the last 20 years, and my response is always the same: ‘What good is a huge order, if they can’t pay their bills?’” Lewis said. “When you don’t get paid, it’s your profit margin you lose, not your overhead. It’s not personal, but I’m not risking my company and its people for somebody else’s business issues.”

That’s not to say that nurseries should never extend credit to their customers or use it themselves. But they do need to be cautious and cover their bases.

For starters, one of the most important steps a nursery can take is to simply

get to know its customers. Lewis said one of the first things he looks at when considering doing business with someone is “the known reputation of the business practices of the grower.” By that, he means the quality of a customer’s product or growing practices and, more importantly, if they have a reputation for paying their bills on time.

“The business is of no value to JLPN if they can’t pay their bills,” Lewis said.

Getting to know customers is even more important in this day and age of mass consolidation in the nursery industry.

Bill Stine, who manages the legal department for Cash Flow Management, a commercial collection agency in Portland, Oregon, said consolidation has found some nurseries using the same names but being owned by completely different people or entities than the original owners.

“Things have changed dramatically, and you don’t even know the people anymore,” he said. “You really need to recognize that you have to protect yourself. You need to know a little bit about your customers, have things established and know the routine.”

If you do decide to extend credit to a customer, Doug Cushing, a shareholder with the law firm **Jordan Ramis PC** who’s done work on both the creditor and debtor side of the law for more than 30 years, said it’s important to get some formal credit application and references. Try to find out information from banks or other credit providers, if possible.

“For a lot of the nursery folk who are selling out of state, that’s even more critical,” Cushing said. “You can’t just walk over to the local customer and get a sense of what they’re all about.”

Setting clear terms for credit leaves little room for surprises. It’s OK to give better terms to long-time customers than new ones.

“You have to decide how strict you want to be and how much business you could lose,” Stine said. “You don’t want to be so strict that people don’t want to do business with you.”

He also said that getting a personal

guarantee in a contract from a customer is a wise move. While a person could start a corporation and walk away from it if things go downhill, a personal guarantee legally requires the person to repay any debts.

In addition, Stine said establishing venue in your contract can be helpful if any troubles arise with a customer. Doing so requires out-of-state customers to come to the grower’s home state for any lawsuits, making it more challenging for them and giving the nursery, essentially, home-court advantage.

### Keeping watch

If nurseries do decide to extend credit to certain customers, it’s critical to keep a close eye on payment schedule.

“You want to have good communication with your customers there,” Celaya said. “Somebody may start to slow down, or they maybe don’t do as big of an order as they used to in the past. You want to keep an eye on those kinds of shifts so you have time to react.”

Pay attention, too, to make sure that your customers are keeping up their business. Watch for annual statements and check that they’re renewing their LLCs and otherwise tending to their companies. Red flags could signal that a company’s in trouble.

“Those are things that happen,” Cushing said.

And if things simply end up going awry with a customer — they’re late on payments, they cancel orders — sometimes the best thing to do is just walk away. In December, Lewis had to do that to a customer who’d developed a history of slow payments. Lewis pulled their credit and put them on pre-payment, then ceased doing business with them altogether.

“As far as breaking up with customers, it’s a real and necessary thing at times,” he said. “You have to be willing to have the hard conversation and say, ‘It’s actually not me, it’s you!’” ☺

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*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](http://www.jbellink.com). He can be reached at [jontbell@comcast.net](mailto:jontbell@comcast.net).*

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## EMPLOYMENT

### YARD SUPERVISOR

Portland Nursery is looking for an ambitious Yard Supervisor at our Division location! This position is heavily involved in the day-to-day supervision of employees and acts in the role of the Yard Buyer in their absence.

#### Job Requirements:

- Ability to establish and maintain a good working relationship with staff.
- Establish and maintain high standards of plant quality.
- Maintain an inventory of sales.
- Coordinate new staff training in the Yard Department.
- Coordinate seasonal construction and change of displays in the Yard Department.
- Assist the Yard Buyer with paperwork, coding, discards, and returns.
- Sustain a positive and customer focused work environment.
- Support customer policies and procedures.

To apply, email resume to:  
lindseys@portlandnursery.com

### INSIDE SALES / CUSTOMER SERVICE

A & R Spada Farms in St. Paul, Oregon is seeking an individual to join our inside sales and customer service team. Primary responsibility is to interact with customers and service their needs. The position also includes order entry, order processing, and assistance with shipping.

Our daily mission is to exceed customer expectations by providing fast, accurate, and dependable service. If you're the right fit, please send your resume to Vinny@spadafarms.com

## EMPLOYMENT

### MARKETING MANAGER

Portland Nursery is seeking a Marketing Manager! This position is responsible for all matters pertaining to marketing and advertising at both of our locations.

Must have a background in horticulture, work well with others, be professional and have exceptional customer service skills. Background in business and social media preferred.

#### Job Requirements:

- Responsible for overseeing and coordinating all social media. Including, but not limited to weekly newsletter, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Yelp, and Google Reviews.
- Includes regular communication with managers, buyers, website contractor, and ownership.
- Work with website contractor on a weekly basis to create newsletter – includes editing for grammar, punctuation and horticulturally accurate information.
- Take, edit and post high quality images and videos.
- Work with the class committee to promote classes with low attendance and edit class descriptions if needed.
- Oversee Stark and Division's Class Committee, make gift cards for class teachers, host combined committee meetings every 2 months.
- Promote events through social media.
- Support company policies and priorities.
- Sustain a positive and customer focused work environment.

To apply, email resume to:  
lindseys@portlandnursery.com

## EMPLOYMENT

### OFFICE ASSISTANT

A mid-sized wholesale grower of annuals and perennials in Portland is looking for an Office Assistant to answer phones, assist with taking plant orders, check out customers and other basic office duties. Assist with monitoring of plant inventory by counting, evaluating plant readiness and entering collected data into system.

Experience in retail or wholesale nursery industry is desirable. SBI a plus. Must have an upbeat attitude, be a reliable and motivated team player and be willing to learn. This position will require working seven days a week during the peak season.

Please email your resume and cover letter to DiggerJobs@oan.org with **Blind Box A** in the subject line.

### NURSERY MANAGER

Teufel Nursery is looking for a career-minded professional Nursery Manager to work out of our Cornelius, Oregon facility.

#### Job Requirements:

- Able to establish and maintain a good working relationship with field crews and farm managers. Be a respected leader.
- Be familiar with all aspects of nursery production including potting, pruning, field maintenance, weed and insect control.
- Have or be willing to acquire Spray Applicator certification.
- Be willing to travel within Oregon and Washington weekly.
- Establish and maintain high standards of plant quality
- Lead all crews to perform every work function safely
- Maintain all equipment in clean, good working order and insure regular service intervals are met.
- Have a valid driver's license and an acceptable driving record

Salary DOE, up to \$65K + vehicle + mobile phone. Benefits include Medical, Dental, Vision insurance plus PTO and 401(k) plan. Send resume directly to: louisr@teufel.com

## EMPLOYMENT

### IN-HOUSE SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Patterson Nursery Sales, Inc. located in Eagle Creek, Oregon is searching for an experienced In-House Sales Representative. We are unique in that we are both a Grower as well as a full-service brokerage of Ornamental Nursery Stock. Our mission is to supply the finest plant material available through exceptional service. We ship throughout the USA and Canada.

A successful candidate will maintain existing customer accounts as well as develop new accounts. In conjunction with those primary duties, he or she will also maintain, develop, and cultivate strong vendor relationships. Candidate needs to be extremely self-motivated, quality-driven, and possess a high work ethic. Must be a team player with extensive industry experience. Vehicle provided for to and from work as well as significant local travel visiting our suppliers and touring customers. Minimal overnight or out of area travel requirements.

Excellent benefit package, competitive compensation based on DOE. If we interest you, please apply!

All applicants remain confidential.

Please send resume to  
Bill@Pattersonnurseriesales.com

### OUTSIDE SALES ACCOUNT REP

Motivated individual sought for outside sales position with landscape design firm in Salem.

Applicants must have verifiable experience in horticulture, landscape technology, or landscape design. Love of people and great design skills required.

Generous commission package offered.

Please send resume to  
liz@thegardenangels.com



# Nursery Guide

## EMPLOYMENT

### SALES REP – UTAH & ARIZONA

J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co., a leading provider of the highest quality bare root and containerized shade and flowering trees in North America, is seeking an experienced independent sales representative for Utah and Arizona.

The qualified individual will proactively market, sell to and maintain our existing client base as well as establish new customers. Candidates must be positive, self-motivated and have experience selling nursery stock. Experience working in the territory is a plus.

If you're enthusiastic about partnering with a well-known and established leader in the nursery industry please email, fax, or mail your cover letter and resume to:

J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.  
Attn: Human Resources  
P.O. Box 189  
Boring, OR 97009  
Fax: 503-512-2209  
Email: dianar@jfschmidt.com



We are always looking for career oriented skilled staff. Our operations include wholesale growing, shipping, landscape contractor sales, and retail nursery. If you have the interest and skills needed to be a part of our team, please apply. We are growers of container and field grown ornamentals.

We are looking for people in the following areas:

- Sales / Customer Service (Wholesale/Retail)
- Production / Growers / Supervisors
- Shipping & Receiving
- Inventory / Office Mgmt & Admin / Purchasing
- Pesticide / IPM Managers & Applicators
- Irrigation Management / Skilled Laborers
- Outside sales throughout U.S. & Canada
- Controller / Accounting Manager
- Horticultural Website Developer

Applicants with specific work experience or education in the nursery industry is desired. Computer skills, Spanish / English bilingual, plant ID knowledge and equipment operation skills also preferred.

Pay commensurate with experience. Benefits to include: Paid vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, medical and dental insurance. Respond with resume to [hr@loennursery.com](mailto:hr@loennursery.com) to the specific job for which you qualify.

For more information, please visit us online at [www.loennursery.com](http://www.loennursery.com)

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Contact  
Blair Thompson  
503-582-2012 or  
[bthompson@oan.org](mailto:bthompson@oan.org)

## EMPLOYMENT

### JB INSTANT LAWN SALES REPRESENTATIVE

JB Instant Lawn is a leader in the green industry and has specialized in providing beautiful lawns since 1968. Headquartered in the heart of Oregon's Willamette Valley, JB farms nearly 2,500 acres of sod and seed in Oregon and Washington.

We have an immediate opening available on our sales team. We are seeking a motivated, responsible, assertive and highly organized professional to join our staff based out of our Redmond, WA location. The ideal candidate must have a minimum of two years of successful horticulture selling experience. This position will be focused on building and maintaining accounts for sod, seed, and nursery sales to the landscape trade.

Essential Abilities:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Sense of urgency and self-motivation; ability to work independently
- Ability to work under pressure
- Proven success in a sales territory
- Knowledge of turf and nursery stock
- Computer literacy
- Social media skills
- Some travel required
- Attention to detail with strong organizational skills

As an industry leader, JB provides you the opportunity to control your sales success with a competitive base salary plus a sales commission structure. We also offer our sales representatives a benefits package that includes company vehicle, vacation, medical, dental, and 401(k) plan.

Please contact Brad Veibell, JB VP of Sales, via email including your resume and cover letter to [greenteam@jbinstantlawn.net](mailto:greenteam@jbinstantlawn.net)

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For jobs and key employees throughout California and the Northwest, call Florasearch, Inc. You know us. For more than three decades we have been bringing together key people and excellent companies in the nursery and greenhouse industries and allied trades. Check our references. Confidential. Employer pays fee.

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Email: [search@florasearch.com](mailto:search@florasearch.com)

## EMPLOYMENT

### JOURNEYMAN MECHANIC – CANBY, OR

Our established and progressive wholesale nursery is seeking a skilled Journeyman Mechanic for our facility shop in Canby, Oregon. Extensive knowledge in the repair and maintenance of diesel semi and tractors, mechanical repairs on heavy and light duty trucks, system hydraulics and electronics are required.

Candidate must have an ODL with a clean driving record to be insurable, a familiarity with diverse farm/nursery implements and some experience with fabrication (welding an excellent plus). Must have the ability to work with a diverse team of employees, be goal-oriented, organized, workstation neat, energetic and maintain a safe work environment.

Excellent benefits package, competitive compensation DOE, smoke and drug-free workplace. Please send resume to:

Mail, fax or email resume to:  
J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.  
Attn: Human Resources  
P.O. Box 189  
Boring, OR 97009  
Fax: (503) 512-2209  
Email: dianar@jfschmidt.com



### B&B DEPT. MANAGER

We are currently looking for an experienced manager to coordinate day-to-day operations of our B&B Dept. in Boring, Oregon. Qualified candidates should have hands-on experience with production of B&B ornamentals and conifers.

Individual is responsible for plant growth, health, and all cultural techniques and must be an organized team player capable of supervising others. Prior nursery experience is essential. Bilingual (English/Spanish) is a plus. Must have a valid driver's license and good driving record. Excellent benefit package. This is a full-time position.

Mail, fax, or email your resume to:  
J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.  
Attn: Human Resources  
P.O. Box 189  
Boring, OR 97009  
Fax: 503-512-2209  
Email: dianar@jfschmidt.com



## EMPLOYMENT

### INSIDE SALES REPRESENTATIVE

J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co., a leading provider of the highest quality bare root and containerized shade and flowering trees in North America, is seeking an experienced Inside Sales Representative at our headquarters in Boring, Oregon.

The qualified individual will oversee demands of our existing client base as well as new customers and support 3-4 Outside Sales Representatives. Candidates must have experience in our Green Industry, be positive and self-motivated with a strong team work ethic.

Excellent computer skills and the ability to deal effectively in a fast-paced environment are required. Past experience in a similar role is a plus.

This is a full-time position with great benefits. Wage DOE.

If you're enthusiastic about partnering with a well-known and established leader in the nursery industry please email, fax, or mail your cover letter and resume to:

J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.  
Attn: Human Resources  
P.O. Box 189  
Boring, OR 97009  
Fax: 503-512-2209  
Email: dianar@jfschmidt.com



### DECIDUOUS TREE GROWER

Wholesale deciduous tree nursery located in Milton-Freewater, OR is seeking a full-time grower with experience in tree production. Applicant must be fluent in Spanish and English, both reading and writing, and have proven supervisory/management skills.

Ideal candidate will be self-motivated and quality-driven, be honest, a team player, trustworthy and possess a high work ethic standard. Five plus years of horticultural education and/or work-related experience is preferred. Valid driver's license required.

Moving and/or housing assistance may be available. Wage DOE with full company benefits.

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P.O. Box 189  
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Fax: 503-512-2209  
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## EMPLOYMENT

### JOURNEYMAN MECHANIC – BORING, OR

Large wholesale nursery is seeking a skilled and self-motivated Journeyman Mechanic to join our team in our repair shop located in Boring, OR.

Applicant must have a valid driver's license and insurable driving record. Candidate must have the ability to work independently and assist other mechanics in the repair and maintenance of vehicles, tractors, forklifts, farm equipment and implements for a large variety of repairs, diagnosis and general service and upkeep.

#### Required experience:

General Service, Gasoline/Diesel/LPG Engine Repair and Diag., Clutch/Transmission and associated component replacement (Tractor and Vehicles), Brake systems (Hydraulic and Air), Heavy Equipment Repair and Service including drive systems, Electrical Systems and wiring, Hydraulic systems and cylinders, some level of experience with farm equipment.

Any additional experience in welding and/or fabrication is a plus as well as familiarity with diverse farm/nursery implements or tire repair and replacement on vehicles/tractors.

Candidate will have good communication and organizational skills, be highly motivated and goal oriented as well as being aware of and practicing safety in the workplace. Candidate must also possess knowledge of electronic diagnostic equipment and be open to further training and use of electronic data and labor management software platforms. The ability to maintain accurate records by recording service and repairs completed with parts and product usage is vital to the position. Must be able to handle and carry objects up to 80 lbs.

We maintain a drug-free workplace. This is a full-time position with excellent company benefits. Work hours are 40+ hours per week and are conducted inside of a shop but may require outdoor work in potentially inclement conditions out in the fields of the nursery at times. Opportunities for advancement; wage DOE.

Mail, fax, or email your resume to:  
J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.  
Attn: Human Resources  
9500 SE 327th Ave.  
Boring, OR 97009  
Fax: 503-512-2209  
Email: dianar@jfschmidt.com



## EMPLOYMENT

### PLANT BUYER – TEUFEL LANDSCAPE

Bring your talent to Teufel Landscape! We are looking for an energetic and ambitious Plant Buyer to join our Plant Nursery Team!

#### Job Summary

The Plant Buyer / Purchasing Agent works out of our Roy Farm Nursery in Cornelius, Oregon. Daily interaction with local area, regional and national nurseries to acquire the highest quality plant material at reasonable prices.

#### Responsibilities and Duties

- Negotiate and procure plant material for multiple jobs in multiple locations
- Work from plant lists to produce price quotes for projects, locate and procure plant material that meets contract specifications
- Work with external and internal growers to deliver the sizes and quality that we need at the right times of year
- Coordinate inbound and outbound deliveries to reduce freight costs, ensuring that all materials are acquired at the lowest cost consistent with considerations of quality, reliability of source and urgency of need
- Support and maintain vendor relations/performance to facilitate quality, service, price and delivery objectives
- Interviewing vendors, analyzing quotes, recommending resources and scheduling deliveries
- Obtaining delivery certifications and reviewing materials received against orders placed
- Verifying and approving invoices for orders placed
- Developing and maintaining necessary records and files
- Be able to work inside and outside as needed at all times of the year
- Assist Nursery Manager with reports and/or tasks as required

#### Qualifications and Skills

- Procurement experience in landscaping, construction, plant nursery or related industry
- Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure
- Horticulture knowledge/experience is a plus
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Ability to prioritize and multi-task in a fast-paced environment
- Strong work ethic
- Exceptional customer service skills
- Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions
- Have a valid Oregon driver's license

To apply, email resume to: [louisr@teufel.com](mailto:louisr@teufel.com)

## EMPLOYMENT

### GREENHOUSE SALES REP

Are you a sales professional who enjoys the mechanical and technical side of horticulture? Do you like working with clients on configured and integrated projects? Stuppy is looking for a territory sales rep for expansion in the Western United States (OR, WA, ID, MT, UT). Our account reps work with several types of greenhouse users including ornamental growers, perennial growers, retail centers, schools, researchers, hydroponic vegetable growers, and aquaponic farmers. Stuppy does not pursue cannabis growers as clients.

We are looking for bright, outgoing people who can continually build and maintain strong relationships with clients. With national and international competition, an attitude of success and enthusiasm is necessary to compete for, and win, our customer's confidence. Stuppy customers expect an understanding of their unique growing requirements and confidence in our technical recommendations. You will be required to manage multiple sales opportunities, communicate enthusiastically with customers, and generate quality results.

Horticultural experience and knowledge are ideal but not required. A passion to learn and connect with horticultural professionals is a must. People with engineering, construction, and configured product sales will be considered. You will be trained and we have excellent home office staff to support you.

Compensation is commissioned based. Our best salespeople earn over \$100,000 annually. The ideal location for a home base is in the Portland, Oregon area.

Travel is a must – expect to be out and about ten or more days a month. Most expenses are reimbursed and a vehicle is provided. In your first year, expect regular travel to the home office in Kansas City, Missouri.

Visit us at [www.stuppy.com](http://www.stuppy.com) to learn more about our products, services and markets served. To apply, email cover letter and resume to: [salesopportunity@stuppy.com](mailto:salesopportunity@stuppy.com)



## EMPLOYMENT

### NURSERY OPERATIONS MANAGER

Sobella Nursery in Boring, Oregon is a family-owned grower/broker seeking a full-time Nursery Operations Manager to work in a fast-paced environment focused on high quality and personalized customer service.

Primary responsibilities include but not limited to:

Oversee daily nursery operations; Manage inventory; Ensure every order is shipped in full with quality; Receive and ship inventory including unload/load; Plan and execute tasks required to grow plants; Ensure equipment and facilities are maintained; Work directly with employees, customers, vendors and business partners with professionalism at all times.

Key skills: Communication; Computer proficiency; English/Spanish preferred. Requirements: Associates degree; Legal to work in U.S.; Valid insurable driver's license.

Applicants should send cover letter and resume to [office@sobellanursery.com](mailto:office@sobellanursery.com)  
Direct questions to [office@sobellanursery.com](mailto:office@sobellanursery.com)

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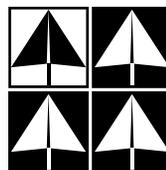
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# GROWING KNOWLEDGE

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



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



## Vole control

These tiny, burrowing rodents can cause problems for nursery crops

BY DANA SANCHEZ

**A**S WE ANXIOUSLY WAIT for the first breeding-season birds to arrive and signal winter's end, most vole species are also gearing up to produce more young.

Voles are small, native rodents that are often called “meadow mice.” Oregon is home to a total of 13 vole species. They vary in their distribution across the state's diverse habitat types, in their population density, and in other aspects of their ecology.

One famous aspect of vole ecology is their rapid reproduction, in spite of the fact they only live 2–16 months.

Unlike some species that come into conflict with human endeavors, voles do not hibernate. In fact, gray-tailed voles are capable of breeding nearly year-round in mild weather years when food is plentiful, survival rates are high, and female voles have large, healthy litters.

Our encounters with some vole species have been so infrequent that much is unknown about their ecology. However, we know that several are associated with grassland ecosystems, while others occupy habitats in forest ecosystems. The species we commonly encounter in nuisance situations in western Oregon are those whose natural diets include grasses, forbs, roots and bark.

### The ecological role of voles

Voles and other burrowing small mammals perform an ecosystem service by burrowing, which aids soil formation, aeration,

and nutrient mixing. They move nutrients from the leached zone to the root growth zone in the soil as they construct and maintain their burrows. As voles go about their daily business, they deposit nitrogen and other nutrients via their urine and solid waste.

In the process of eating vegetation, voles help promote vegetation and ecosystem-wide diversity at both fine and broader geographic scales. Even when they promote or create patches bare of vegetation, they are creating habitat for other species that require that resource, such as several of our ground-nesting native pollinators.

Most voles are ultimately taken by predators — hawks, owls, some snakes, and other mammals — which in turn contributes to population regulation of a variety of species. Dead vole carcasses nourish invertebrates and the soil through decomposition. As a worldwide group of species, burrowing animals play important roles as ecosystem engineers. In some systems, the loss of burrowers is contributing to system collapse.

### Problems caused by voles

Often implicated in nuisance situations in the Willamette Valley is the gray-tailed vole (*Microtus canicaudus*), which is endemic to the region (it evolved here).

Originally a prairie species, the gray-tailed vole is now closely associated with the agricultural tracts that are now



## Vole control

**Previous page:** Evidence of vole feeding on an olive sapling.

Vole trails in grass field can be blocked to prevent their movement on a nursery.

PHOTOS BY NEIL BELL

in those spaces, and it has expanded into formerly forested areas that have undergone agricultural conversion. This vole is classified as a medium-sized vole species, weighing about 1.3 ounces, and spanning a total length of about 5.5 inches.

Another westside culprit is the long-tailed vole (*M. longicaudus*; 7.5 inches long and 2.3 ounces). It is somewhat larger and helps illustrate the range of sizes across species.

Not all vole species burrow, but those that do will reuse tunnels and entrances created by other species such as pocket gophers. We can often diagnose the presence of gray-tailed voles easily from numerous, intersecting above-ground runways underlain by a series of underground burrows accessed by small entrances. Tunnels are often occupied when underwater — gray-tailed voles are noted for their ability to swim through flooded sections to reach dry areas.

Direct impacts on vegetation are another sign we can use to identify vole presence. Damaged areas will reveal overlapping scrapes by narrow little incisors (1 mm). Generally, voles can only gnaw fairly low on plants, but they will readily take advantage of a height boost from snowpack, downed branches, or other structures, allowing them to reach higher plants.

Growers should be vigilant for vole signs that management treatments might hide. For example, weed mats or deep compost surrounding stems could allow voles to access plants they might not otherwise.

### Boom and bust

Vole populations are newsworthy for their boom-and-bust reproductive cycles. Periodically, conditions become optimal for irruptive, sudden growth.

Because voles reach sexual maturity quickly and have multiple litters, they often have overlapping generations of producers. A female, her daughters, her granddaughters, and her great granddaughters might all raise litters in the same season. When food is plentiful and survival rates are high, the population can deplete most of its food supply, causing



starvation. In captivity, females can begin mating in 18 days. Gestation (pregnancy length) is typically 21 days, although it can last 23 days. Somewhat older females (28 days or greater) at first pregnancy are likely able to optimize their lifetime production, having more litters of somewhat smaller litter sizes (average 4–5 young) with higher birth weights and greater offspring survival.

Estimates suggest 4–6 babies are born each year for the average female across most vole species. California voles (*M. californicus*) were observed producing 9–11 litters in a single year, breeding for 11–12 months.

### Vole control tactics

In any wildlife and human conflict, there are four resolution tactics. Given the site conditions and monitoring for what species are present in the immediate area, we can often proactively prevent the next recurrence.

1. **Deploy barriers.** These can keep the animal from meeting the resources. Create an above-and-below-ground barrier for relatively limited-size areas. Blocking large areas is often limited due to the initial cost. Depending on the crop or growth type of interest, single-stem caging can be used to block voles and other gnawers.

2. **Modify the habitat.** Remove or reduce the food and cover that would sustain a vole population. If the crop and growing system can tolerate it, periodically disturb the burrows between the rows, hiding cover and the food source for the voles.

3. **Deter the animals.** Apply bittering agents to make the rodents avoid or reject the very resources they need.

4. **Kill them.** Population reduction beyond trappable situations will likely require restricted-use products. Pesticide-treated grain baits require a pesticide

applicator's license. Products such as zinc phosphide are not species-specific in their effects and will hurt all animals and people that ingest the product.

Any pesticide product must be used according to the terms of its label, including crop type, setting or location, target pest species, application and other variables. Delivering chemicals in the burrow systems will reach the target animals without putting others at risk, including domestic animals and natural predators.

Be mindful of the vole's natural predators and look for ways to support them as a management tool. Add a raptor perch for daytime hawks, a nest box for barn owls, and be willing to tolerate the presence of foxes, weasels, coyotes, and other fur-bearing predators. In high-population years, however, natural predation alone will not be enough to prevent vole populations from having an economic effect on a crop.

### Vole control in greenhouses

Inside the greenhouse, significant damage may occur beyond the plants. Voles chew pots and tunnel through growing media and in-house walkways. For those who produce food-grade products, there can be an additional food safety concern around potential contamination from animal waste products.

1. **Put up barriers.** Attempt to exclude all rodents from the greenhouse interior. Following the first step above, set up a barrier: Use welded-wire hardware cloth with ¼-inch mesh at least six inches above the surface around the perimeter. Include a protective L-shaped apron extending at least six inches below the surface and bent outward 6–12 inches at a 90-degree angle. The apron is recommended to prevent digging under the barrier.

2. **Modify the habitat.** Immediately next to the greenhouse, remove natural or nuisance plant debris, garbage and stacks

of equipment or pots that can allow voles to hide from predators, get shelter or food, and access to the structure.

3. **Seal off potential food supplies.** If there are bins with general waste or discarded plant materials, make sure to use tight-fitting lids.

4. **Set up traps.** If populations inside the greenhouse are relatively low, snap-trapping can be effective.

Snap traps are laid out so that the trigger plate lies within an active runway. If the animals have burrow openings within the greenhouse, watch for fresh, moist scat to verify that that entrance and the adjoining runways are active.

Agricultural producers can request technical assistance by consulting with the USDA Animal and Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) by calling 1-866-487-3297. Trained and licensed private contractors, including wildlife control operators, are another option to consider when making and implementing a management plan. ([tinyurl.com/t6uz3uq](http://tinyurl.com/t6uz3uq)) ©

*Dr. Dana Sanchez is an Associate Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist who is based on the Corvallis campus of Oregon State University. In addition to presenting and writing for Extension and public audiences, she conducts research, mentors undergraduate and graduate researchers, is course designer and director for the online Field Sampling course. Dana Sanchez can be reached at [dana.sanchez@oregonstate.edu](mailto:dana.sanchez@oregonstate.edu)*

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# Success is the sum of many parts

**The nursery and greenhouse industry is chock full of successful operations — companies that have grown with the industry over time.**

To achieve that kind of lasting success requires a strong vision, as well as an ability to build a sound team to execute it.

I've been fortunate to participate in successful teams multiple times during my career. While working for a U.S. senator, I was forged by the brass-knuckled atmosphere of politics. Then, I served as chief of staff for the Metro regional government while it was undergoing an all-encompassing structural change. For the last decade, I have served as your OAN executive director — long enough to endure hard times and appreciate the prosperity that followed.

Every day, OAN members demonstrate how strong companies and organizations are more than the sums of their parts. Everyone contributes, from the office personnel, to the talented and skilled workforce in the field (or the greenhouse, or the store), to the ownership families who place a value on the craftsmanship of high-quality green goods.

I like to believe that our industry is modest, never boasting about success. That is a quality I hold dear. Your nursery association is run in a similar, businesslike fashion. The OAN is dedicated to supporting all facets of your business and every member business. We carefully invest the dues you contribute, and the volunteer hours many members provide, in programs that are built to help your business.

I want you to know your OAN staff is talented, professional and committed. I don't hesitate to declare that this staff does more for its membership than any other in this industry, in United States and Canada. As we built this team, we made sure it matched the work ethic of our members. We want to work as hard as you do.

## Building a team

Start a conversation about team building, and you're likely to hear sports metaphors in short order. Not everyone is a big sports fan, but we all know a care-

fully built team with clearly identified roles is more likely to lead to success.

The members of the association are the owners of the OAN, and the OAN Board of Directors is their representative. Our board is like an elite coaching staff. Through engaged and active thinking, the board helps us create strategies and a playbook to put association members in the best possible position to be effective.

The 10-person OAN staff is made up of seasoned professionals. They take direction from the board, working diligently to execute the game plan. As your executive director, I have a team that is collaborative, supportive, and knows what to do to make sure we stay on task.

## Making a commitment

Those outside of agriculture have little understanding about the level of commitment that it takes to make an agricultural operation successful. This element can build team chemistry if present, while a lack of commitment can hollow out an organization.

Success is most likely when team members believe in — and commit to — the mission and purpose of your business. This commitment is realized when a team member can set aside his or her personal ownership of a job description to benefit the team.

Establishing effective communication tools is perhaps the most difficult aspect of team building. It takes trust and openness. Strong teams need the ability to share thoughts and feelings without the fear of reprisal.

At the OAN, I have tried to build a culture that any idea is valued and listened to, no matter who raised it or where they fit on the organizational chart. These discussions may not lead to that idea being implemented in its initial form, but often, they can lead to a solution. They can open a different door that would have been closed before.

I am not big on perfunctory staff meetings where team members report what they are working on, but I do follow two practices.

First, catch people doing things right. An annual review should never include surprises about the successes or challenges



Jeff Stone  
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

that occurred over the past year.

Second, bad news does not get better with time. When a mistake is made or a project goes sideways, it's essential to have an open door to solve it right away.

## We can learn from each other

No matter how successful an operation may be, it is important to learn from others. Knowing what you don't know is key — it prompts you to look to teammates and outside resources when you sense a need or just want a reality check.

I am fortunate to be deeply involved with the Nursery and Landscape Association Executives, an organization that includes nursery executives from the United States and the Canadian provinces.

The talent of my colleagues is astounding. I can learn from seasoned leaders from Arizona, Idaho and Massachusetts who have served the industry for two-plus decades. This provides exposure to innovative ideas that serve the industry. It is a personal privilege to act as a mentor to new executive directors — one that I value.

The OAN does a lot of things right. Our association is structured to be member-driven. We are nimble on emerging issues and we serve as a fierce ally to our valued members.

Make no mistake about it: joining an association is not mandatory. However, every OAN member should rest easy knowing that you have an engaged, responsive board and an association that is committed to the success of the industry. ☺

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