

Digger

DECEMBER 2020



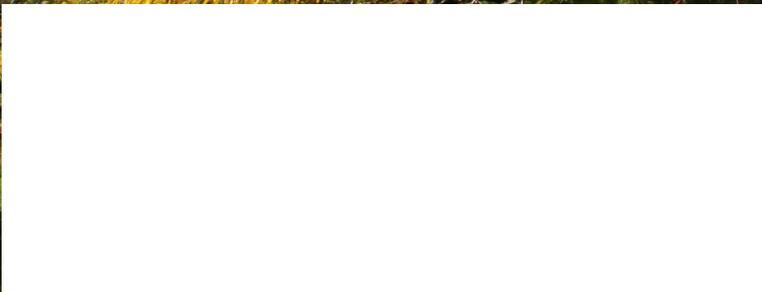
Tough, tall and reliable

Honeylocust trees adapt well
to many conditions

PAGE 20

Is gardening entering a
renaissance?

PAGE 15



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Honeylocust provides abundant shade, grows quickly and adapts well to extreme conditions.

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On the cover: Tree growers highly recommend Skyline® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Skycole') for steady sales. PHOTO COURTESY OF J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO.

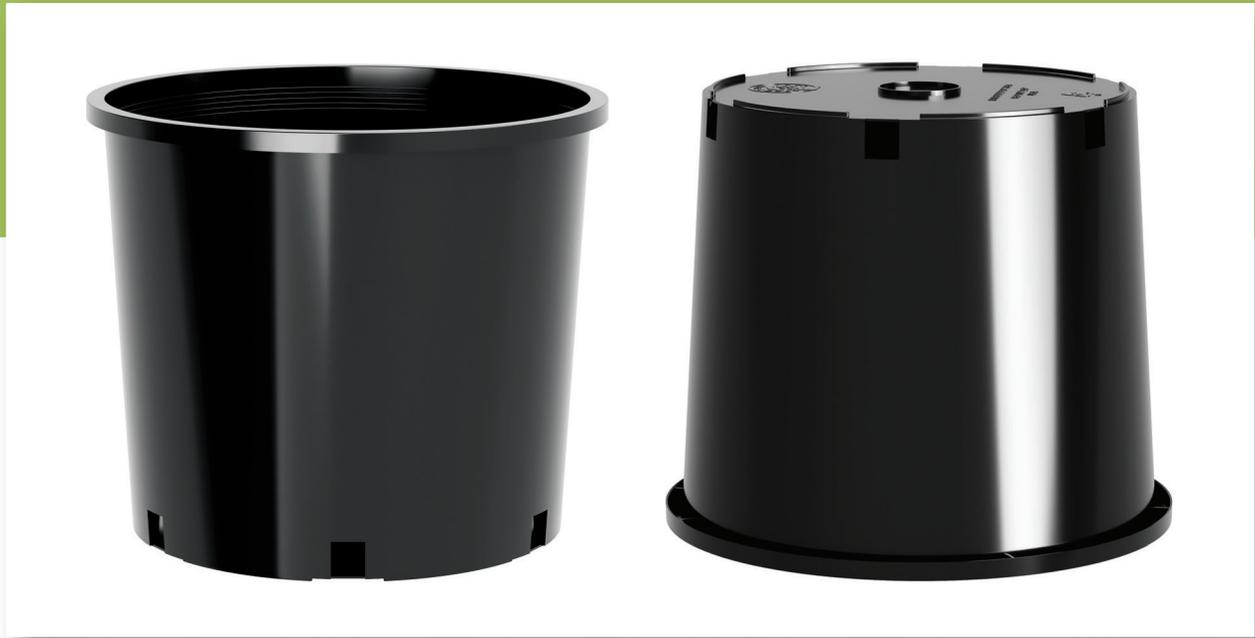
On this page: Left: Northern Sentinel™ honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* 'JFS GMorgenson1') is an upright tree ideal for city streets. PHOTO BY JEFF LAFRENZ, J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO. Right: Azalea lace bug nymphs (top leaf); their frass and exuviae (bottom leaves). PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY



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**For those of you whom I haven't
had the pleasure of meeting, my
name is Kyle Fessler.**



Kyle Fessler

I am grateful to be able to serve the members of the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) as president for 2021. My wife Mollie and I have been married for 11 years, and together we have five beautiful children: Elizabeth, Henry, Claire, Susannah and Frankie.

I consider myself one of the fortunate few that had the opportunity to be raised in a nursery family. Most of my early years were spent playing in a pile of dirt or gravel in our back yard, usually with a new greenhouse or can yard being built in the background.

Our family farm, Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc., had humble beginnings, starting with a 25-by-96-foot greenhouse behind my grandparents' house more than 50 years ago. It seemed like every year there were new structures going up all around the nursery, and my siblings and I had a front-row seat to all the action. We grew up right along with the operation, and it's amazing to see how far we've come as adults and as a business.

As is true on many of your operations, none of the achievements we've had would be possible without the hard work and dedication of family members and loyal employees. I see the same attitude when it comes to the OAN and its members.

The OAN has been a big part of my life for a long time. My father, Tom, was president of the association 25 years ago. The two biggest weeks of the year for us kids were the Farwest Show and the OAN Convention (which also doubled as our annual family vacation). I often heard the tales of Clayton Hannon and all the good he and his staff were doing for us and our nursery friends.

I see the same dedication today from director Jeff Stone and his staff. I've seen first-hand the sacrifices they have made during these difficult times, and I am beyond grateful to have them working on our side.

In 2013, my father encouraged me to get involved with the OAN. I had the opportunity to join the Willamette Chapter board, where I met many members (most of whom were not even growers) that wanted to see the industry succeed. It was a fantastic way to get to know other growers and the associate members that support us.

2015 launched me into a new role within the association. I attended my first Government Relations Committee meeting, and soon became a regular attendee. It seemed like every meeting introduced another piece of harmful legislation aimed at our industry.

It was hard not to come home depressed. It took some time, but I came to realize that the fight was worth having, and that our nursery folks are the masters of battling adversity. Our members stepped up and empowered themselves to be their own best advocates. We have made a name for ourselves at the Capital, and have made significant progress for our industry because of these efforts.

Many of your families are just like mine, having poured their lives and resources into building their businesses for generational success. My mission in the coming year is to continue the push for active member engagement, and to do everything we can to protect and promote the success of our members and the generations of growers to come.

From my nursery family to yours, I wish you the best of success for 2021. ☺





Calendar

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

DECEMBER 2

FIRST AID AND CPR CLASSES

The OAN Safety and Insurance Committee presents First Aid and CPR classes as a service to members and the industry. Successful completion results in certification that is good for two years. December's class runs from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the OAN offices, 29751 SW Town Center Loop West, Wilsonville, Oregon. The class will be in English. Seating is limited due to COVID-19 social distancing protocols. The cost is \$45 per person for those renewing their certification (two years) and for those taking the class for the first time. Register and pay at www.oan.org/cprclass, or call Zen Landis, 503-582-2011.

DECEMBER 4

MARION SWCD — WATER RIGHTS Q&A

Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has made their First Friday informational events virtual until April 2021. Experts will discuss conservation, new projects and more for attendees. Laura Schroeder, water law attorney for Schroeder Law Offices will host a free question and answer session 9-10 a.m. via Zoom. Register online through tinyurl.com/yxl4e2ye.

DECEMBER 7-9

NW HORT EXPO

The NW Hort Expo and Washington State Fruit Tree Association will host a virtual platform of their show. Companies will be showcasing their innovative solutions for the production, storage, packaging, shipping, and automation tools for fruit trees. Visit nwhortexpo.com for further details.

DECEMBER 8-10

FIRA

The Global Organization for Agricultural Robotics (GOFAR) non-profit association will present the International Forum for Agricultural Robotics (FIRA) virtual event over two days. Agricultural robotics experts from around the world will share their knowledge, innovations and experiences collaborating with growing business. The organization promotes the agricultural robotics sector at international level and provides informative opportunities for companies to partner and develop projects in agricultural robotics. Visit www.fira-agtech.com to learn more.

DECEMBER 9

TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE TRADE SHOW

The World Trade Center Palm Beach will host Technology in Agriculture virtual trade show. The show will connect American, Mexican, and other Latin American markets to share



DECEMBER 4-5

OAN CONVENTION

The 2020 OAN Convention will be held online this year with the theme of "Plant Wars." On Friday, pour your favorite drink and join us at 4 p.m. for an online happy hour gathering of friends and nursery colleagues. On Saturday, December 5, the four-hour Annual Meeting will start at 10 a.m., and will include the swearing-in of incoming OAN President Kyle Fessler and his board for 2021. It will be a great time for green industry professionals (and little green friends) to tell heroic tales of action and advocacy, character and friendship, from across the galaxy! A feature keynote address by retiring U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Oregon) will follow. Register at www.oan.org/convention.

new products, equipment, services, and technologies in one virtual trade show. Visit www.wtcpalmbeach.com/agriculture to learn more about registration and fees, or call Keila Molina at 561-969-2229.

JANUARY 4-5, 2021

NORTHWEST INSECT MANAGEMENT VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

80th Annual Pacific Northwest Insect Management Virtual Conference will be held 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. over two days. The conference will include presentations, posters, and formal discussions about insect and arthropod pest research in field, row, vegetable, seed, small fruit, and other crop production. There will be nine sections of reports about biological controls, IPM, infochemicals, and more. The deadline to submit a presentation is December 1. Visit agsci.oregonstate.edu for details. The cost is \$30 (students attend for free) and no pesticide license recertification credits will be available. Register online at agsci.oregonstate.edu.

JANUARY 6-8, 2021

MANTS.COM BUSINESS HUB

The new MANTS.com Business Hub was developed to offset the cancellation of the in-person

Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a searchable directory that will help green industry professionals make business connections. The hub utilizes intelligent matching to connect exhibitors and buyers based on selected categories of interest. It will also feature live video meetings, exhibitor profiles, live demonstrations, and drop-in hours. Attendee registration runs through January 8, 2021 and the cost to participate is \$10 per person. All registered attendees will have access to the Business Hub for 90 days following the event. Visit MANTS.com for additional show details.

FEBRUARY 17-18, 2021

NURSERY GUIDE LIVE

One of the most comprehensive buyers' guides in the green industry is expanding to host a LIVE online marketplace for the best plants, products and services this spring. Hundreds of growers, retailers and suppliers will be available to answer your questions and make a deal on the orders for next season. Join a real-time video chat or product demonstration available to attendees and exhibitors. This event for greenhouse and nursery businesses is unlike anything you've ever seen before. Contact Allan Niemi for exhibit booth details at 503-582-2005 or aniemi@oan.org.



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.

OAN staff return to full-time hours

In early June, the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) was forced to cut back its operating hours and professional staff due to the cancellation of the 2020 Farwest Show. Along with donations from members, a recent debt repayment has allowed the remaining seven staff members to return to full-time status. The OAN has yet to raise the total amount needed to complete the support campaign.

"Thank you to everyone who generously donated to keep the OAN above water during these tough times," OAN President Jim Simmitt of Simmitt Nursery said. "As you can see, this is your money at work. Getting the staff back to 40 hours a week is an important milestone, but more needs to be done so they can continue working hard to serve and defend the nursery industry."

The OAN campaign has raised 87% of its \$250,000 target. Donations can be made online at www.oan.org/donate.

"If we don't step up, we will be the ones who are hurt when the association is called upon to protect and advocate for us," Pete Brentano, an owner of Brentano's Tree Farm and past president of OAN, said. "We are almost there, and we need to finish the job. If you can dig in and join the many others who have contributed, we can go into 2021 strong and whole."

Employees continue to work largely at home due to the pandemic. The office is locked, but staff can be reached at 503-682-5089 or info@oan.org during regular business hours. Members may also call or text OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone at 971-235-3868, or email him at jstone@oan.org.

ZIELINSKI APPOINTED TO OREGON STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

Josh Zielinski, who served as president of the Oregon Association of Nurseries in 2018, has been appointed to a four-year term on the Oregon State Board of Agriculture.

The 10-member board advises the Oregon Department of Agriculture on policy issues, develops recommendations on key agricultural issues, and provides advocacy of the state's agriculture industry in general.

Zielinski is a manager and owner at **Alpha Nursery Inc.** in Salem, Oregon. Also involved in running the family business are his brother Scott, and their parents, Doug and Jamie. Their business is highly diversified. In addition to nursery crops, they grow grass seed, specialty seeds, vegetable row crops, hops and hazelnuts.

Also newly appointed to the board was Elin Miller, who owns Umpqua Vineyards with her husband, Bill. They also farm hazelnuts.

"Elin and Josh will provide a global view of Oregon agriculture and leadership to the Board of Agriculture," ODA Director Alexis Taylor said. "Their unique experience and interests will play a critical role in addressing the state's most pressing agricultural issues and challenges."

A native of Oregon, Zielinski grew up working on his family's farm. After attending college in southern California and studying a year abroad in Argentina, he returned home to join the family business. Zielinski serves on the Chemeketa Community College Horticultural Advisory Committee. He enjoys camping, hiking and gardening with his wife Kattie, who works in the wine industry.

"I believe Oregon's diverse agriculture sector is more relevant than ever and I want to do what I

can to help the state optimize the amazing natural resources and climate we have so that we may realize all of our potential," Zielinski said. "I think that my experience within the nursery industry, especially through involvement in the OAN, and

my exposure to a wide variety of crops in the Willamette Valley gives me unique perspective that should prove valuable on the board. I also look forward to learning more about the Department of Ag, other sectors of agriculture, and other geographic regions of the state."

Miller co-chairs the Oregon Wine Council and also has a nursery connection — she serves on the corporate board of **Fall Creek Farm and Nursery Inc.** in Lowell, Oregon.

Overall, the board includes seven members representing different segments of farming or ranching, plus two members representing consumers, and the chair of the state Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Barbara Boyer). The director of ODA (Taylor) and the dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at **Oregon State University** (Alan Sams) serve as nonvoting members.

Zielinski was appointed at the urging of the OAN Board of Directors. He will replace **Pete Brentano**, an owner at **Brentano's Tree Farm LLC** in St. Paul, Oregon, who completed his second four-year term. Like Zielinski, Brentano is a past president of the OAN.

"Josh will do an outstanding job representing nurseries, which are Oregon's largest agricultural sector," current OAN President **Jim Simmitt of Simmitt Nursery** said. "He will bring a broad, balanced and inclusive perspective, with his experience not just in nurseries but a variety of agricultural sectors."

Other OAN past presidents who previ- ➤➤



More COVID-19 coverage online

Further updates on how the COVID-19 virus is impacting the greenhouse and nursery industry is online at www.diggermagazine.com/category/coronavirus. We are reporting on the most current information as of press time, but please check online for the most up-to-date information.



ously served on the state ag board include **Rod Park (Park's Nursery), Clint Smith (Four Mile Nursery LLC), and Tom Fessler (Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc.)**. All chaired the board at some point in their tenure.

Zielinski's first meeting with the state ag board will be on December 1.

DISASTER LOANS AVAILABLE FOR SOME NURSERIES

Nurseries in Baker, Grant, Harney, and Malheur counties are eligible for the Small Business Administration (SBA) economic injury disaster loans (EIDL) due to the declaration of a drought since August 11, 2020, according to a release from the agency. The deadline to apply is June 15, 2021.

Certain businesses are eligible for a maximum loan of \$2 million, based on the financial obligations and operating expenses that could have been met had the disaster not occurred. The loans have a maximum interest rate of 4% for businesses and 2.75% for non-profits, for up to a 30-year term. A factsheet is available to download with more details on loan eligibility restrictions, requirements, and application process at tinyurl.com/y6nl9al

GOVERNOR EXTENDS OR-OSHA RULES FOR WORKER HOUSING

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown issued an executive order to extend COVID-19-related distancing and sanitation requirements in farmworker housing through next April 30, 2021.

Executive Order 20-48 includes requirements related to physical distancing, sanitation, and isolation in order to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 amongst farmworkers. It mirrors provisions of Oregon OSHA's temporary COVID-19 rule for farmworker housing and transportation, which expired October 24. The order's scheduled April 30 expiration allows Oregon OSHA more time to adopt permanent rules.

Those in violation of the executive order, or Oregon OSHA's guidance in connection with it, can be subject to civil and

criminal penalties under ORS 401.990 and 431A.010.

According to OAN Executive Director **Jeff Stone**, the executive order was issued with less than 24 hours' notice. "We recognize the need for safe farmworker housing, and we have been providing input on this policy area to Oregon OSHA on how to make it work," he said. "To have this executive order dropped on us with little notice was a profound disappointment. When we saw they added criminal and civil penalties in the order, it was news to the ag community and doesn't make sense. Farmworker housing hasn't been a source of identified outbreaks, and only 33 COVID-related violations have been attributed to Oregon farms, out of 12,000 workplace complaints received statewide."

JRM LAUNCHES ORGANIC ROOTING COMPOUND

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For more information, visit www.soilmoist.com or call 800-962-4010.

Announcements FALL CREEK TRANSITIONS LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Oscar Verges has been promoted to co-CEO of **Fall Creek Farm & Nursery Inc.** and Amelie Brazelton Aust has been named executive vice chair of the board of directors, according to a release from the blue-

berry breeding company. Cort Brazelton will share the CEO role with Oscar, and Amelie will continue to work with them on the company strategy while streamlining the communication between the family shareholders, external board members and Fall Creek employees.

Cort and Amelie assumed co-CEO positions in 2018 after their father and company co-founder Dave Brazelton retired. Oscar became president and COO, and has been with the company since 2016. Dave currently serves as the executive chair of the Fall Creek board.

Amelie will continue to work closely with Cort and Oscar as they work together to grow and develop the blueberry industry. She was recently appointed to the board for the Produce Marketing Association.

"This is a natural evolution," Dave Brazelton said. "I see our leadership team continuously improving how we do things, and this is a shift for highest impact. In their years working together, I've seen Cort and Oscar have an extremely varied and complementary skill set. That unique synergy is well-suited to this shared role and essential in serving our customers. Together, they can lead and grow the company as we continue our mission of Building a World with Better Blueberries™."

For more information about Fall Creek, visit www.fallcreeknursery.com.

MCHUTCHISON AND VAUGHAN'S NAME PEOPLE TO NEW ROLES

McHutchison and Vaughan's Horticulture have made a series of organizational changes to their leadership roles.

Nathan Lamkey has been promoted to president of both McHutchison and Vaughan's Horticulture. He previously served as vice president of sales and marketing for McHutchison since 2017, and has 20 years of industry experience from TERRA NOVA Nurseries, Inc., Shemin Landscape Supply, Ball Horticultural Company and PanAmerican Seed. He will



be based out of the Naperville, Illinois.

Mike Pezzillo has been appointed to the position of vice president of the nursery division of McHutchison. He has



worked for the company since 1994 in various roles, including regional nursery manager, national nursery manager and vice president of operations prior to his current role. He will be stationed at its New Jersey office.

A director of plant operations, senior brand manager, customer service manager, and vendor program manager have also been hired for the companies. Six other people have been brought onto the sales team. For more details about McHutchison, please visit www.mchutchison.com. Vaughan's Horticulture information is available at www.vaughans.com.

TERRA NOVA NURSERIES PROMOTES NEW MANAGERS

Rebecca Orr has been promoted to marketing manager at **Terra Nova Nurseries**. She will manage



all of the company's marketing activities and publications for new and existing plants. She will also provide marketing assistance to licensees, distributors, and grower-customers.

Orr joined the company in May 2017. She will remain an account representative in the sales department and continue to serve as a trials manager for all new plants in trial gardens across America. She will also continue to serve on the licensing team.

Chris Park has been appointed as the research and development administration and contracts manager for the company. She was previously a shipping and logistics

manager and will continue to support contracts and licensing, royalty administration and photography. She has been with the company since November 2009.



Park will help the nursery organize and automate research and development data collection, systems, and distribution.

For more information about, visit www.terravanurseries.com.

OREGON GARDEN FOUNDATION RECLAIMS MANAGEMENT ROLE

The Oregon Garden Foundation (OGF) has resumed management of the 80-acre **Oregon Garden** property after 12 years of outsourcing those responsibilities, according to a release from the foundation.

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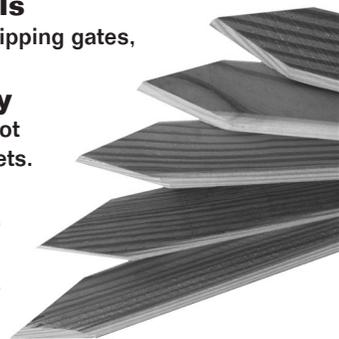
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previously managed the garden under contract. The California-based company defaulted on its financial obligations to The Oregon Garden, and the agreement was terminated. The 103-room Oregon Garden Resort will remain in service as a separate enterprise, and the garden will continue to partner with the City of Silverton, which owns the land.

The foundation is prioritizing its plans to recover from the financial losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Allison Pennell, development director of the OGF, is optimistic about the change and expects it will serve as an opportunity to bring back many community events for their visitors, following health and safety guidelines.

The garden is a significant partner and regional tourist attraction for Marion County and the state at large. Visitors learn about Pacific Northwest ecology through the garden's educational programs and visit the area for seasonal celebrations and entertaining events. Locally, the City of Silverton cools its effluent water supply through the garden's wetland ponds, dually supplying irrigation water for the operation's plant life.

In Memoriam
DIETER TROST

The Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) is saddened to report Dieter Helmut Trost died November 1, 2020. He was 85.

Dieter's German-born parents, Helmut and Emily Trost, moved to Medford, Oregon in 1945, and founded Southern Oregon Nursery. At the age of 20, he became co-owner of the nursery, before taking the role of the owner in 1963. The family-owned-and-operated garden center recently celebrated 75 years in business.

A second-generation nurseryman, Dieter discovered the Trost Birch tree in 1976, which has been entered into the U.S. National Arboretum. He was one of the founding members of the Northwest Nursery Buyers Association (NNBA), and he also served for a decade on the board of the Charlotte Water District.

A private service was held for family members. Memorial contributions may be made to Dogs For Better Lives. ©



A gardener's optimism has no limits

RESILIENT IS A GOOD word to use to describe Diana and Colby Lamb. Resilience is defined as spirit, hardiness, toughness, strength, buoyancy, and resistance.

On September 8 at 12:15 a.m., there was a banging on the door of their Gates, Oregon house. It was a Marion County sheriff's deputy telling them that there had been a recent change in the wind of the Beachie Creek wildfire that was raging not too far away. They needed to leave immediately for their safety.

On the previous night, September 7, the winds were 50–75 miles per hour and the fire was growing at a rate of about 2.77 acres per second. With the shifting winds, it looked as though the path of the fire was heading directly toward the Lamb property.

Diana said that upon hearing these words from the deputy, it was very difficult to decide what to take in such a short amount of time. Luckily, they had a trailer, which Colby hooked up.

They quickly grabbed their meds, phones, computers and laptops, but very few personal things. No freezers full of meat, no fish from their pond, no pantry stuff, no food, no coats, no art objects and no records or handmade turntables from Colby's shop.

Diana laughed when she told me that

just as they were leaving, she noticed two large ripe tomatoes on the windowsill and took them for bacon and tomato sandwiches! It is amazing how the mind sometimes works.

The road to Gates

In 1996, Diana and Colby began their Northwest Portland garden. It soon became a showplace and was on many garden tours, including The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon Study Weekend, Garden Conservancy, Metro Garden Tour, Rogerson Clematis Garden Inviting Vines Garden Tour and many other open garden events.

Twenty years later, they sold the house and garden. The idea was to downsize the garden for Diana, move from Portland to a smaller community, have land for a garden but also a shop so Colby could continue his metal and woodworking hobby.

The move to Gates gave the Lambs a fresh start. Their new property was outside of the town and had gardening potential, which was exciting for Diana. It had a fairly clean slate from which to start a new garden. Another bonus was that there was a well for their water source, both for drinking and for the plants.

This new space was quite different when compared to their Portland garden,



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.

because now there were large Douglas fir trees surrounding the property and plants would have to be selected that would tolerate shade.

The new home also had a shop where Colby, a machinist, could continue with his metal and woodwork. Colby is a professional craftsman. His metalwork sometimes consisted of making sundials, one of which is in the Rogerson Clematis Garden, as well as one in my own garden.

The wildfire turned their lives upside down and changed everything. Their house and shop were a total loss.

Currently, they have no power and there is no way to run the well. The property is not a safe place because of hazardous materials, and they are waiting for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) to assist in the waste removal and deem the property safe.

Both Diana and Colby stressed how very supportive the community has been — both the Portland gardening community and that of Gates and the surrounding area.

Many fir trees are still standing throughout the destruction zone, but they are not safe and will need to be removed. Tree workers in the area are offering to work pro bono to help with this task.

Portland gardening friends have offered Diana some plants. Although physically visiting the area is very depressing, she sees hope in a new garden. Diana explains that it has been very odd the way the fire has affected plants. It sometimes appears as there was no logic to the way it ravaged the area. ➤





WHAT I'M HEARING

A rhododendron in one area is burned to the ground, and in another area a large rhododendron seems unscathed. Roses have survived and new buds are swelling. There is great joy in some of the very simple things that happen in the garden. Seeing a green shoot appear from the base of a hydrangea can bring a tear to one's eye.

Their new property had a very large working metal waterwheel, 25 feet in diameter, which had become a local landmark. It was located next to a creek and was turned by a gravity-fed pipe above the waterwheel.

Colby painstakingly restored it, painted it barn red, and even decorated it with lights for Christmas. It was visible from the road and a favorite photo opportunity for many local photographers.

Miraculously, the waterwheel survived

the fire. The only damage was a dent in an area where a large fir tree fell on it.

I commend the spirit of both Diana and Colby because the road ahead is not going to be easy. I'm sure there will be many difficult times. However, when I hear Diana talk about her new garden, which will have roses, hydrangeas, hellebores, epimediums, rhododendrons and more, I see her mind is full of ideas regarding the creation of this new space. It will fulfill her goal of having a "garden for all seasons."

In the spirit of being not only resilient but optimistic, Diana has an order of lily bulbs due to arrive in the spring.

For me, the essence of this story is to validate once again that a gardener's optimism has no limits. Considering this challenging year and everything that has changed, it is nice to know that gardens are



still a source of comfort to many of us.

Gardens continue to demonstrate to us that some things will go on and we can eagerly anticipate those occurrences. In fact, gardens may be the most optimistic things in our world and as such, they need to be nurtured and enjoyed. Joyful experiences definitely incite optimism.

Happy New Year! ☺



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A demand ‘renaissance’ for nurseries

Growers advise flexibility as they anticipate shortages, substitutions and sustained demand for 2021

BY CURT KIPP

IN 2020, NORTH AMERICAN nurseries experienced a roller-coaster ride of escalating dread, stomach-churning twists and unexpected thrills.

There was uncertainty in the early spring due to COVID-related shutdowns in the U.S. and Canada, but nurseries were allowed to stay open, resulting in robust orders and shipments from spring into summer. With travel canceled and many white-collar employees working from home, more folks than usual found refuge in their backyard gardens, driving sustained demand for plants.

The spring may have started off wobbly, but the summer had serious legs lasting into the fall. Many growers had to hustle to keep up.

“Everyone wanted everything at the same time,” said Debbie Lonnee, product development manager for **Bailey Nurseries**, during a recent panel discussion. Bailey is a large and highly diversified grower of shrubs, trees, liners, seedlings and rootstocks based in St. Paul, Minnesota, with additional growing locations in Illinois, Washington state, and Oregon.

That leaves green industry businesses to ask — what’s coming in 2021?

Shortages, substitutions and sustained demand

Lonnee and others took part in a recent online panel convened by the Nursery and Landscape Association Executives of North America (NLAE). Participants were bullish, saying they expect plant shortages, substitutions, higher prices and sustained demand for

plants this coming spring, as consumers continue their newfound love affair with gardening.

Jeff Olsen serves as president and CEO of Brookdale Treeland Nurseries Limited, a major Canadian grower headquartered in Schomberg, Ontario, with growing locations from the Maritimes to British Columbia. He said the strong demand his nursery experienced in late spring and summer of 2020 has continued into Christmas tree season, where the company also has a strong market presence.

Holiday orders are up 10–15% from a year ago. Olsen takes that as a positive sign for his nursery lines in the spring of 2021 and beyond.

“I’m so excited,” Olsen said. “I mean, I feel we’re in a real renaissance here. People are rediscovering their gardens. It’s such a wonderful thing for our business. So sad for so many businesses that are affected negatively in this pandemic, but certainly for gardening and home improvement, I see it continuing at least the next 2–3 years, at least into 2021.”

Chris Scott serves as director of sales for Altman Specialty Plants, one of the nation’s largest growers with locations in California, Texas, Florida and Colorado. As others did, he saw an increase in business as the spring of 2021 went on.

“We saw a lot of gardeners come into the fold as a customer base,” he said.

Scott said it remains to be seen whether staycations, and working from home, will continue as trends in 2021, but he expects to increase production and sales overall. His company is just tak- ➤

A demand 'renaissance' for nurseries

ing a more conservative approach.

"I think there's still some uncertainty out in the marketplace next spring this year for us," he said.

Making production adjustments

In an ideal world, wholesalers would be able to grow everything customers need in the size and format they want, ship everything to where it's needed, and sell through the entire crop.

Of course, that doesn't happen. One can't know the market that far ahead. Growers must look at sales trends and make ongoing adjustments to production quantities. The longer the cycle of the crop, the more difficult this proves to be.

"When you're a grower of woody material, the difficult part is to make drastic production increases that can take 2-3 years," said Martin Hackney, a sales representative

with Hackney Nursery Company, a large grower of woody plants and perennials based in Greensboro, Florida. "Really, the only the reaction we can do at this point is to try and find the largest liners we can and plant those when and where they're available, just to fill the gaps of what's being created now."

According to Lonnee, Bailey at this point in time can't significantly adjust its quantity of plants coming out for shipment in 2021. "All those plants are ready," she said. "They're going to be overwintered, and will be shipped in the spring of '21 or throughout the summer. We're actually planning for beyond that."

It's similar for **Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc.**, based in Woodburn, Oregon, which is one of the largest growers of woody material in the state. According to Kyle Fessler, a grower with the company, most plant offerings are "years in the making."

"I would say that next year's going to be very similar to this year," he said. "We're going to have a lot of sell through, and if we do run out of items, we'll be able to ship and sub with others."

The company has been in a growth mode for the past two years, which has positioned it well to handle demand.

"We've been bringing on new product lines, and we're really focusing on ramping up those product lines, if not for '21 but for the next three years," Fessler said. "We have seen more requests from unexpected customers for material, so I think it could be a really positive '21."

The true meaning of shortages

With the knowledge that woody material takes years to bring to market, nursery buyers are already aware they may encounter shortages in 2021 — but what that means has to be carefully defined. It doesn't necessarily mean you can't get plants.

"I think often times people use the term 'plant shortage' and it's associated with the term, 'outage,'" Hackney said. "So when it's said something is short on the market, it may just be short within the person's perceived parameters of how they should buy it, what price it should be, the

size it should be, based on what they've been able to purchase in the past.

"I think that there have been and will continue to be varietal shortages and size shortages ... but I do think there will be plants that are close substitutions to what they are looking for, with a different or similar plant with similar growth habit. Just as an example, a customer bade me looking for a 6-foot, 15-gallon Green Giant (arborvitae), and the only thing that's on the market is a 5½-foot plant. That's just one of the things that the nursery industry's going to have to deal with."

According to Lonnee, 2021 bookings for Bailey are strong, and the company is doing its best to meet customer needs. She expects the market will be particularly tight for bare root trees, container crops, branded items, flowering shrubs and hedging.

"I guess all of you who are staying at home want to hedge off the neighbors so that you don't see them anymore while you're out in your backyard, enjoying your new gardens," she said. "We think that people are going to need to be flexible, maybe not only on varieties but sizes, and be open to what we call black pot varieties and non-branded varieties, over branded varieties."

Olsen said it's often necessary to move customers "down the cycle" to a smaller and younger plant. "If you don't have a 5-gallon arb, you move them to a 3-gallon arb," he said.

According to Lonnee, the strong market may create some new opportunities for retailers or smaller growers.

"Geographically there are some areas of this country that can make up some plants a little quicker than some of us that live in the cold North can," she said. "And so whether it's a bare root plant or a large hort liner or something like that, I think there are opportunities for that. I know a lot of retailers have become used to just-in-time shipping, turning their benches often and quickly, and bringing in more shipments, but maybe some of the mindset might have to change on that, whether it is potting up some of your own or just having some flexibility within different sizes or varieties. I think there are some opportunities out there to hopefully



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cover the demand that's out there and that everybody can be successful this spring with getting the plants that they need."

While the time of COVID-19 has increased demand for plants, it has also increased production and shipping costs. Freight is more expensive, and growers have had to implement protocols to keep their workers safe and their production humming along. That, of course, costs money.

"We need to recapture that in our selling prices, so we're pushing price increases as well," Olsen said.

Loyalty matters

It's a time when existing relationships with growers is going to be particularly important for plant buyers, whether they are retailers, landscapers or other.

It's the first time I think in our history that we haven't gone looking for new customers in a large way, where we've looked to take on a new chain or something like that," Olsen said. "It's just we don't have the inventory to do it. We're just taking care of our current group of clients I think loyalty is so important in this industry."

Fessler said the same.

"We always have an early order deadline, and then we do our allocations in the fall for the spring," he said. "And the first thing we try to do is take care of our loyal customers. If you received so much of this variety last year, then we try to at least match that if possible, and so we take care of our loyal customers, and then see what's available for new inquiries."

The bottom line? Lonnee advised anyone buying plants for spring of 2021 to get on the phone, if they haven't already.

"It wouldn't have been smart to wait for spring of '21 to place an order for spring of '21," Lonnee said. "If you haven't done it, I encourage you to make a phone call to your sales rep whether it's our company or any of the other folks on the panel today." ☺

Curt Kipp is the director of publications and communications at the Oregon Association of Nurseries, and the editor of Digger magazine.

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has already dug the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) out of a debilitating rut. After reaching a budget threshold, the remaining association staff are back to work full-time, and are putting together plans to serve members with new and marketable ideas for the coming year. Your donations have already made a positive impact on the OAN.

More assistance is needed to fully recover from the disruption of COVID-19, as we have yet to reach our fundraising target. Please consider contributing to the only nonprofit association dedicated to the success of Oregon's greenhouse and nursery industry. We are here to keep your businesses profitable in the face of uniformed policy changes, environmental challenges, restrictive business regulations, and more!

If we all chip in, we will keep the OAN healthy, vital, intact — and working for us. Please log on to www.oan.org/donate to make a donation today.

To date, the OAN has raised **\$216,140** towards its **\$250,000** target, or 87%. Help us close it out!

87%

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BY TRACY ILENE MILLER

Acer (maple) and *Quercus* (oak) may monopolize spotlights on shade trees, but *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* (honeylocust) holds its own as a major crop and it's an important addition to the catalog of reliable tall trees.

Oregon nurseries grow more honeylocust than any other state in the U.S., providing 20% of the trees grown in the country — about \$2.6 million in sales annually, according to the USDA.

Although it was overplanted in the 1980s and 1990s (leading to certain issues with pests and diseases for some urban forest monocultures), honeylocust makes a contribution today to maintaining a diverse mix of trees. It is still recognized by experts as a reliable performer, and has a dependable selection of varieties, including a new introduction by **J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.** (Boring, Oregon) after years of trialing.

Attractive attributes

Overall, demand for honeylocust remains stable, consistent and strong, according to Rich Bailey, national sales manager of Schmidt. He views the Midwest as a hotspot for sales because of the tree's hardiness and adaptability. It has an ability to tolerate extreme cold and heat as well as highly acidic to highly alkaline situations.

"Honeylocust is a reliable plant that can tolerate a wide range of soil and moisture conditions," said Marion Hageman of **Robinson Nursery Inc.** (Amity, Oregon). It thrives in drought and wet, plus it withstands pollution. It's a popular choice in urban settings nationwide and in landscapes meant for fast-growing, larger trees. Honeylocust ranges from 35 to 70 feet tall and 20 to 50 feet wide.

"It is not a tree where you are going to find 20 in a yard," said Tim Sester of **Sester Farms Inc.** (Gresham, Oregon). "You're going to put one here and one there. They're big. I've seen honeylocust used along driveways, and they have a lot of neat characteristics."

They have a unique scent. "It's kind of like the name; it's sweet," Sester said.

"Pretty much every area [of the U.S.] likes honeylocust," said Tom Epler of **EF Nursery Inc.** (Forest Grove, Oregon). The grower sells honeylocust to markets from Denver westward. "In Denver, I've seen it in parking lots, and in Utah, it's a good parking lot tree too." With its large stature, honeylocust "covers an area to produce shade, keeping cars and parking lots cooler."

Sales are strong for honeylocust, said Sester, because it provides an alternative to maple. "Sprinkle in some honeylocust, even where



'Halka' honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* Christie) in summer, and fall color (right).



there is higher alkaline ground, and they do just great,” he said.

“[At maturity], it is light and airy,” Epler said. “Great for parks and for streets, if you have the room.”

There are pluses and minuses with the great number of small leaves. They potentially can clog gutters if planted too close to the house, but the leaves, which turn yellow in fall before dropping, are of such fine texture, they almost evaporate in lawns and parking strips, requiring little raking.

Honeylocust has a place in large landscape projects — at least 15 feet away from structures, 3 feet from fencing or pavement and 25 feet from overhead electric wires for tall trees, according to the USDA Forest Service “Tree Owner’s Manual.”

For the most part, Hageman said honeylocust is used in commercial and highway projects, in parks and as street trees by

municipalities. It’s rarer to be placed by homeowners. “[It’s] a showy flower, and the fall color is yellow, rather than the preferred reds, oranges and purples,” he said.

Production challenges

One of the main challenges of growing honeylocust successfully is pod gall midge (*Dasineura gleditchiae*), which feeds on emerging leaves in spring. Bailey explained that the presence of this insect can affect the aesthetic of the tree by destroying new growth and distorting the central leader and branches. Although the midge can be hard to detect, a combination of diligent field scouting and the application of appropriate sprays when needed keeps the trees clean, he said.

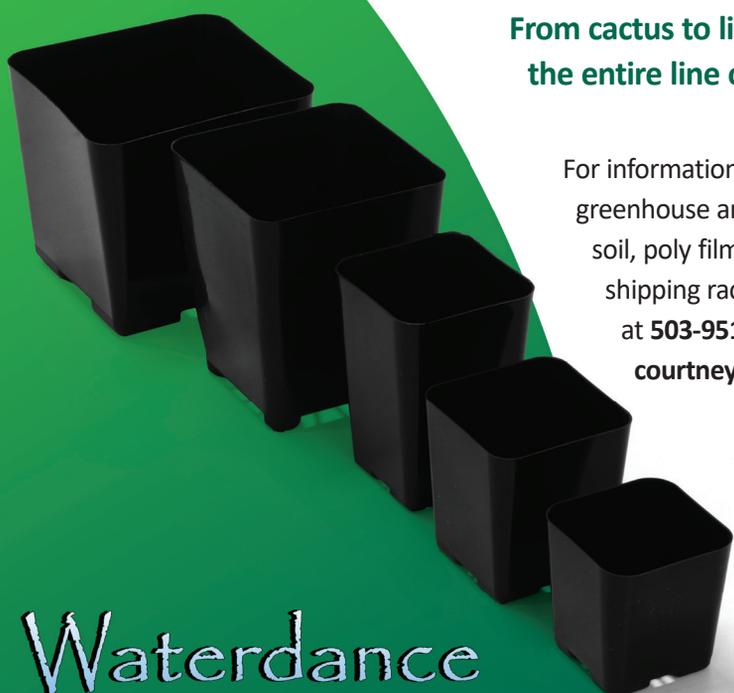
“Any nursery of any size on a spray program, they understand pod gall midge; it’s manageable,” Sester said.

All selections of honeylocust require frequent pruning in the first few years at the nursery to develop the branching structure the market desires, Hageman said.

“Timely, specific pruning practices ensure that sunlight will reach the lower >>

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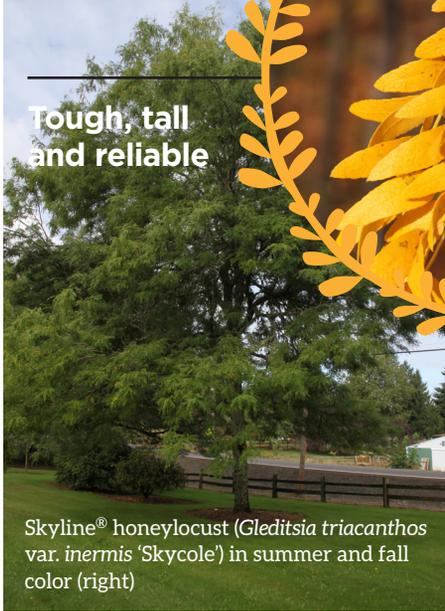


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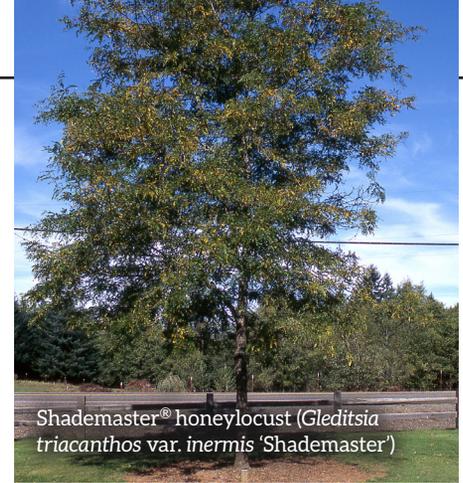
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Skyline® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Skycole') in summer and fall color (right)



Shademaster® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Shademaster')

branches for better limb formation and overall canopy structure — factors that aid in survivability,” Bailey said.

Epler adds that honeylocust requires a little more lime than other trees to grow to gets to the size for sale. “It will just take off, unless they have too alkaline or too acidic soil.”

To get a saleable tree with a 2-inch caliper takes about four years. Although the market is not there for very large sizes, Epler sells large trees ball and burlap, which can be a challenge. You must tie them just tight enough before they crack. It's a balancing act. Tie the tarp too tight, and the branches will break.

“But for the most part, they transplant well with limited losses if dug at the proper times of year,” Hageman said. “Due to their rapid rate of growth, honeylocust can quickly become an attractive addition to the landscape.”

Dependable varieties

Honeylocust cultivars are marked mostly by subtle distinctions. Skyline® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Skycole'; Zone 4, 40–45 feet high by 25–35 feet wide) receives top billing as the most popular, and all growers interviewed here produce it.

“It is what I refer to as ‘grower friendly,’ meaning a central leader can be established and maintained,” Hageman said. “It has a strong rate of growth, and can obtain marketable sizes in a reasonable number of growing seasons.”

“Skyline has a very nice texture, with golden fall color and a pyramidal shape,” Bailey said. “It is the most widely used, and a nice tree for its environmental tolerance, which is important.”

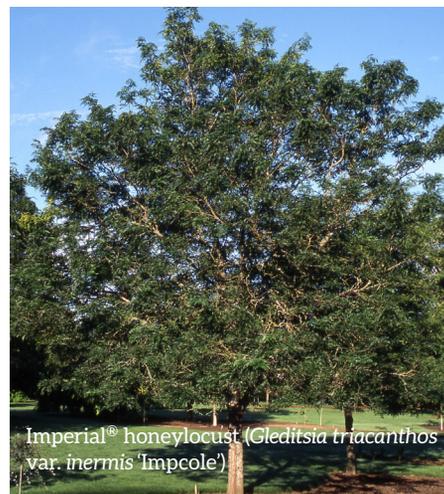
This variety has stood the test of time,

having received its patent in 1957. Like all varieties listed here it is “*inermis*,” Latin for “unarmed,” for the spines that have been selected out (although some mainstream sources still are unaware), and in most cases the seedpods as well. Skyline is more uniform than the next most asked-for, and grown, variety, Shademaster® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Shademaster'; Zone 4; 45 feet high by 25–35 feet wide).

“Shademaster’ has a more open form than Skyline, producing an upright vase shape with irregular, different branching, which landscape architects seem to like and ask for specifically. Epler started growing Skyline because of demand.

“Shademaster’ has a vase shape that may not be as strongly upright as Street Keeper® (*Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Draves', PP 21698; Zone 4; 45 feet high by 20 feet wide) or Northern Acclaim® (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Harve'; Zone 3b–6; 35–45 feet high by 30–35 feet wide), but it's good for traffic clearance because it can be pruned up high, according to Bailey .

Street Keeper, developed by Schmidt, was discovered in a residential area of Darian, New York, and observed for more than 20 years before being introduced commercially. It has become a desired street tree for its strongly upright, tight and columnar habit, and was bestowed Best Tree of the New Varieties Showcase at the Farwest show in 2011. It has a darker green leaf than other varieties and a good central leader, and is



Imperial® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Impcole')

usually seedless.

There may be subtle differences between Northern Acclaim and other honeylocust, but it being a zone hardier makes it a tree in demand, Sester said. Selected by Dale Herman at North Dakota State University, it has an upright shape similar to Skyline that gradually widens with age.

For a smaller, more compact variety, Imperial® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Impcole'; Zone; 30–35 high by 30–35 wide) has a rounded crown, slower growth and denser branching that helps to resist storm damage, according to Bailey. Epler considers it a good tree for eastern Oregon and areas like it because it thrives in dryer, warmer climates. And Sester said it is slower growing.

Introductions of honeylocust are less common than other shade tree varieties. Honeylocust started getting serious attention from growers in the 1990s, when demand started to increase, and like Epler and Sester, growers often started with two or three varieties to begin, and have since expanded. Schmidt offers seven cultivars of honeylocust.

“Over the last 20 years, we’ve only added three cultivars to the catalog, with our last introduction made in 1999,” Bailey said.

That was Halka™ honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis* 'Christie'; Zone 4, 40 feet high by 40 feet wide). Halka is notable for a rounded, symmetrical form and little branch drop. Its fast-growing trunk in early development results in a strong, heavy caliper at a young age. Then came Northern Acclaim in 2005, valued for its extreme hardiness, and Street Keeper in 2010, notable for its smaller and narrower stature.

Eleven years later, the 2020–2021 catalog debuts Northern Sentinel™ honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* 'JFS GMorgenson1'; Zone 4; 45 feet high by 25 feet wide). It joins the Sentinel® family of upright, narrow or compact trees ideal for city streets.

The initial offering of whips ranging in size from 5 feet to 8 feet were quickly reserved by existing customers. The nursery is building its inventory and anticipates having a larger number of whips plus branched trees of various sizes available in 2021–2022.

Discovered by Greg Morgenson, a research specialist in the North Dakota State University Plant Sciences Department, this unusually narrow and upright tree has been observed by Morgenson for years. Entrusted to Schmidt for co-introduction, Northern Sentinel was trialed at the nursery for seven years before it was deemed ready for introduction.

“We don’t introduce a new tree that isn’t better or an improvement over other trees already available in the marketplace,” Bailey said. “The key advantages of Northern Sentinel are its unusual form and excellent hardiness. It’s very adaptable, and can take harsh environments, from extreme heat to extreme cold.”

Thanks to its narrow, upright growth habit, Northern Sentinel is storm resistant, with no observed snow, wind or ice damage to the parent tree over a period of many years. Nor has the parent been observed to produce seed, a feature that can be influenced by environmental factors, but a promising sign that its offspring may also be seedless.

“It’s a great addition to the Honeylocust cultivars, and a great fit for street tree plantings where branches must be pruned up for traffic clearance,” Bailey said.

For now, honeylocust is a tree in demand. Although sometimes it is hard to appreciate honeylocust as a small sapling growing in the nursery, it pays off in the end.

“When you see it as a big tree, that’s where it really shines,” Sester said

And with its ability to survive drought and extreme weather conditions, the need for honeylocust is expected to stay consistent as landscape projects continue to look to maintain diversity and to spec tough trees. ☺

Tracy Ilene Miller is a freelance writer and editor who covers several topics, including gardening. She can be reached at tracyilenemiller@gmail.com.



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(Continued next column)

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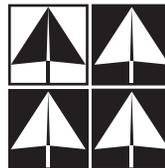
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GROWING KNOWLEDGE

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



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Silicon: the non-essential beneficial nutrient for plant defense?

BY KATERINA VELASCO-GRAHAM AND JANA C. LEE

RHODODENDRONS AND AZALEAS are the backbone of many ornamental landscapes in the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, since 2016, a beautiful little insect has been plaguing the genus *Rhododendron*, causing aesthetic and physiological damage, which may lead to plant death if left unchecked (Figure 1).

Preliminary studies suggest that cultivars vary in their tolerance to azalea lace bug (*Stephanitis pyrioides*), but in many, the molting and feeding activity of nymphs and adults leave a sticky mess on the leaves' underside (Figure 2). Landscape structure may also have an impact on the degree of damage due to the variable amounts of sun exposure and presence/absence of natural enemies which influence lace bug populations.

Presently landscape managers and homeowners have few tools at their disposal. Acephate effectively controls nymphs and adults and systemic neonicotinoids control all stages, but both are losing favor among the general public due to their hard chemistries and associated environmental and health effects. Insect growth regulators (IGRs) may offer a softer alternative but have the potential to impact other insects with similar physiologies.

Silicon and its role in enhanced resistance

Silicon is the second most abundant element on Earth. It is found in most terrestrial plants, but at different concentrations; monocots tend to accumulate more of it than dicots. Silicon accumulates in leaf and stem tissue as microscopic solid silicon, known as phytoliths, after traveling up from the root as dissolved silicic acid.

Supplementing plants with silicon has been suggested to improve plant health and, may have added benefits in negatively impacting plant-feeding pests. Yet, the use of silicon for enhanced resistance has had mixed results.

Feeding strategy is one of the factors at play. Most chewing insects that gnaw through leaf or stem cuticle are affected by silicon supplementation,

suggesting that phytoliths may be causing irreversible wear of the mandibles. For example, the caterpillars of the fall armyworm on corn, African pink stem borer on maize, and African sugarcane borer on sugarcane experienced either increased mortality, mandibular wear, reduced larval survival and growth rate, delayed penetration, or all the above.

Folivores which feed on soft tissues between the epidermal layers don't



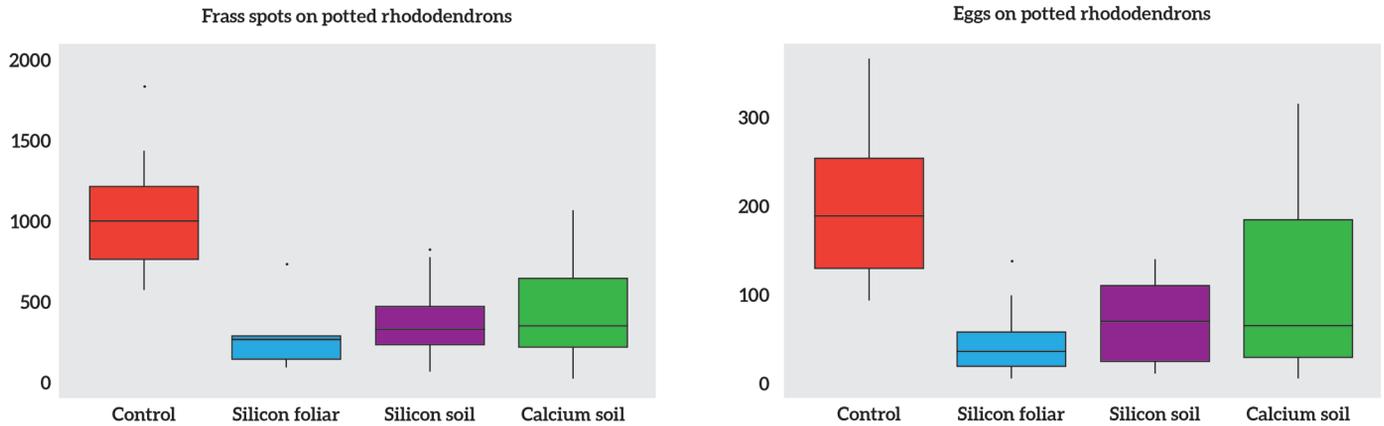
Figure 1. Dead azalea bush after two years of azalea lace bug infestation. PHOTO BY OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY.



Figure 2. Azalea lace bug nymphs (top leaf); their frass and exuviae (bottom leaves). PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Silicon

Top: Figure 4. Effects of four treatments on *S. pyroides* on mean \pm SEM of frass spots and eggs on potted rhododendrons. **Below:** Figure 3. Enclosures with azalea lace bugs and choice of rhododendrons (three treatments and control). IMAGES COURTESY OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY.



experience damage to their mouthparts, however their population may still be affected by silicon due to a decrease in oviposition as has been shown with the leaf miner American serpentine leaf miner on chrysanthemum and zinnia.

Sucking insects such as the phloem feeding English grain aphid, rose-grain aphid and greenbug on wheat and green peach aphid on zinnia experienced reduce infestation, lower longevity and fecundity, decreased probing time, increased frequen-

cy in stylet withdrawal or activation of the plant defense system.

Xylem feeders such as the white-backed planthopper and brown planthopper on rice experienced decreased food intake, inhibited sucking behavior, decreased adult longevity, fecundity and population growth.

The two-spotted spider mite also had significant population reductions.

In some cases, no effects have been reported: the caterpillars of dusky herpetogramma moth and black cutworm on

turfgrass had no visible feeding preference, mandibular wear, growth or survival.

In short, silicon supplemented as a soil drench can result in solid silicon, causing irreversible wear of the mandibles of chewing insects, interfering with feeding activities of sucking insects or lowering oviposition regardless of feeding type. As well, soil drenches could trigger changes in leaf chemistries due to the added dissolved silicon, leading to lower palatability and digestibility. Dissolved silicon may also help trigger

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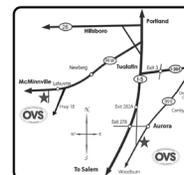
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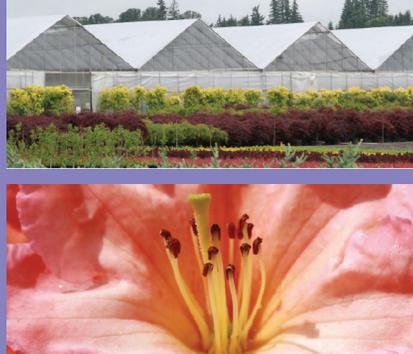
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Digger MARKETPLACE

induced defenses resulting in the release of herbivore induced plant volatiles as documented with the cotton bollworm and the predatory red and blue beetle.

In some instances, a foliar spray application may be more effective than a soil drench, suggesting either a topical effect or translaminar penetration. This was the case with the silverleaf whitefly on cucumber and the American serpentine leaf miner on *Gerbera jamesonii* which experienced significant reductions in oviposition and survival rate and significant reductions in tunneling respectively.

Silicon and the azalea lace bug

Our first-year study showed that silicon supplementation is promising for azalea lace bug control. Two varieties of rhododendron, 'Cunningham white' and 'Boule de Nieve', were supplemented with calcium silicate four times once a week.

Applications were delivered as a foliar spray or a soil drench. A calcium carbonate group was included to discard the possible effect of calcium. Frass spots and eggs were tallied for the three treatments and a control 30 days after releasing azalea lace bug into an enclosure with 4-inch pot rhododendrons (Figure 3).

Analysis of silicon content showed supplementation had not resulted in accumulation in leaf tissue. Frass spots, which indicate feeding activity, and egg counts were lower in all three treatments, with silicon foliar resulting in lower counts overall (Figure 4).

Further research is being conducted to confirm these preliminary findings and to determine the most effective dosage under greenhouse conditions; field tests will follow thereafter. Stay tuned! ☺

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The Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) remains, by its very definition and mission, a member-driven, service- and advocacy-oriented green industry force.

It seems like a decade ago back in March 2020 when the industry and country were tossed into the abyss of COVID-19. Now that the last chapter of 2020 is being written, we should count our blessings. As a student of history, I believe this year will define our lives much like the Great Depression and World War II did to those who preceded us.

These are trying times and not all of us made it through. We have lost family members, both personally and industry-wise. The cumulative impact of harm to the health of our bodies and the economy was just too much for valued and treasured people.

What should not be missed and celebrated is that this year significantly revealed our strength, determination and most of all — our character.

As your executive director, I had the genuine honor to have a front row seat to countless acts of kindness, faith and egoless assistance to fellow members and neighbors, and dedicated leadership by Jim Simnitt and the entire OAN Board of Directors. They acted with steady hands, steely eyes and stupendous vision during a year that had a caustic political campaign for president, a pandemic that separated loves ones and customers, and the specter of unnerving economic dynamics.

Industry members did what they do best — grow phenomenal plants, take care of employees, and bring a modicum of joy to yards and hearts throughout the state and country through investment in our living environment.

The metaphor of the fires

This fall, Oregon and its citizens absorbed a Mike Tyson right hook with a

series of fires that scorched over a million acres of land and caused \$600 million in damages. Coming on the heels of COVID-19, these were a biblical test of the industry's nerve.

First, they adjusted to a nefarious pandemic. Check. Then they pushed through uncertain market conditions and shutdowns on a daily and weekly basis. Done. Next, they watched neighbors verbally impale each other during one of the nastiest presidential campaigns since the Civil War Era Reconstruction.

And then, these fires. Some of our members even lost homes and possessions.

How did the industry respond? They helped neighbors who lost power keep their plants watered. They lent equipment and labor in a pinch. They stayed socially distant, ever focused on coronavirus

protocols, even as smoke choked the Willamette Valley so badly that Beaverton looked like Beijing. They gave each other their unflinching support.

The OAN helped here and there. We were an active voice

at the national, state and local level. All that is true. But the OAN staff knows what I know. YOU are the leaders that show a strong sense of purpose.

Magic 8-ball of 2021

As a total political dork, the thing that brings me to tears is not the success or failure of an election result. It's not some sense of confidence in the unmatched possibility of a fresh set of months ahead of us.

What brings me to tears is the peaceful transition of power of our presidency. It serves as a real-time demonstration, to the world of America's trust in the people — even if our process is messy and contentious.

Transitions are natural. They shape us. However, it is important that this notion rings true all across our beautiful nation. Former President Barack Obama spoke of it four years ago as he finished his second term, but it's not his notion alone:

"I have instructed my team to follow



Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

the example that President Bush's team set eight years ago, and work as hard as we can to make sure that this is a successful transition for the president-elect — because we are now all rooting for his success in uniting and leading the country. The peaceful transition of power is one of the hallmarks of our democracy. And over the next few months, we are going to show that to the world.

"Now, everybody is sad when their side loses an election. But the day after, we must remember that we're all on one team. This is an intramural scrimmage. We're not Democrats first. We're not Republicans first. We are Americans first. We're patriots first. We all want what's best for this country. So, this was a long and hard-fought campaign. A lot of our fellow Americans are exultant today. A lot of Americans are less so. But that's the nature of campaigns. That's the nature of democracy. It is hard, and sometimes contentious and noisy, and it's not always inspiring."

Moving forward together

All in all, as we close the chapter of a meme-rich year, I am proud of the nursery and greenhouse industry. We made peace and were forced to embrace that we cannot control everything that comes at us.

The great John Wooden once said, "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are ... the true test of a man's character is what he does when no one is watching."

Thank you all for your support, generosity to the industry and association. I look forward to working hard for you in 2021! ©

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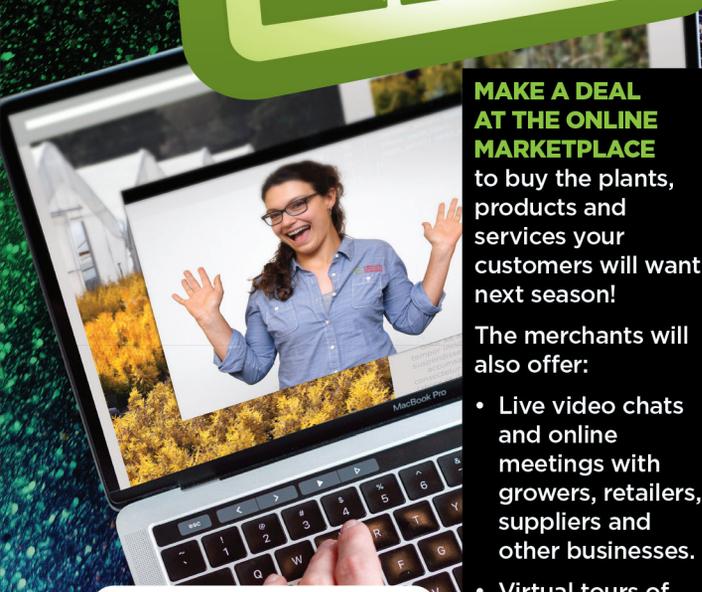
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