

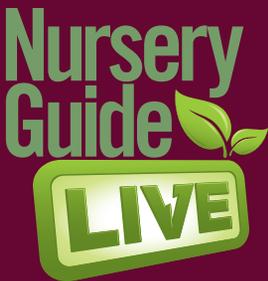
Digger

MARCH 2021

Cultivating the curious

The nursery industry reaches out to new gardeners

PAGE 19



Nursery Guide
LIVE set for
March 17-18

PAGE 8

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March 2021 Vol. 65 No. 3 Digger



19



23

19 Cultivating the curious

How retailers can engage with a flourishing generation of new gardeners

8 Nursery Guide LIVE now taking place March 17-18

Attend our virtual marketplace and meet face-to-face with growers.



17 Meet the Leader: Ben Verhoeven

After exploring a career in print design, Ben Verhoeven felt a calling to come back home and now runs Peoria Gardens.

23 Past, present and future

Flowering cherry trees remain popular, from old mainstays to new selections, with more on the way.

33 The cold shoulder season

Nursery growers effectively use cold storage to support sales of deciduous trees.

COLUMNS

- 7 President's Message
- 38 Director's Desk

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 Calendar
- 9 Northwest News
- 17 Meet the Leader
- 29 Classifieds
- 32 Subscription Info
- 32 Ad Index
- 33 Growing Knowledge
- 37 Digger Marketplace

On the cover: Shoppers explore the greenhouse attached to the Bauman Farms retail store in Gervis, Oregon. PHOTO BY BILL GOLOSKI

On this page: Left: Bauman Farms draws customers through enticing sales and engaging online content. PHOTO BY BILL GOLOSKI. Right: *Prunus serrulata* 'Amanogawa' is suitable for narrow spaces and best seller for some growers. PHOTO COURTESY OF J FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO.



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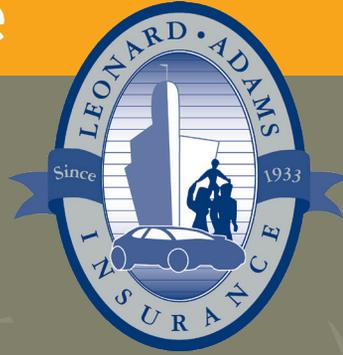


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Making every step count

Every family has traditions. In the Fessler family, we have one time-honored tradition that dates back long before my time.



Kyle Fessler

Each winter — typically on a cold, wet winter Saturday — our extended family gathers in Grandpa’s shop to make sausage.

It’s taken decades of practice, but the process has evolved over the years into a well-oiled machine. Advances in equipment have turned our small Saturday gathering into a massive production process. These days, we can knock out upward of 400 pounds in just a few hours, which is more than enough to stock the freezers of four generations of Fesslers through the following winter.

There are many jobs throughout our process that need to be done for us to be successful. Many of us have settled into a task that we naturally flock to each year. My favorite job was always “taste-tester,” but unfortunately for me, that task has been passed on to my children’s generation.

Each step in the process is just as important as the one that comes before or after it. The meat and seasoning for each batch need to be precisely measured, as well as properly hand mixed together to ensure consistent quality throughout. The task of stuffing and turning links is an art form that takes years to master, and improper time or temperature in the smoker can ruin a batch. Vacuum sealing mishaps can shorten the freezer life of the product from a few years to a few months. All of these elements need to come together to ensure quality sausage.

Just like our sausage making, we have to trust that we have right people performing the right tasks in our growing operations. There are so many steps along the path from plan to sale, and each one has a particular importance that can affect the others.

We all know how a properly mixed batch of soil can be the cornerstone of a successful crop, while a mis-mixed batch can result in plants that struggle to grow properly, as well as additional costs to fix the problem. Proper irrigation techniques can be a tool to maximize the quality of a crop, but poor techniques can lead to reduced quality, disease problems, or even crop loss altogether.

These are important roles that are often front and center of our operations.

It’s also important that we recognize the behind-the-scenes roles that make our businesses truly great. These are the people that come in early or stay late to sweep the floors, sanitize workspaces, and dump the trash. They pull the weeds, dig the plants,

and load the trucks. And as for our sausage crew, they are the ones that come in the night before to prep the shop and stay late to wash the dishes after the fun is over.

I’d like to thank all those working behind the curtain who put in a tremendous amount of effort on behalf of our membership. It’s not often seen by the public, but the quality work of our OAN staff and members serving on committees truly empowers us to be great, and it’s what helps to make us one of the premier associations in the nursery industry today. ©



Henry Fessler (age 8), head taste tester.



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*.

VARIOUS DATES

DISTRICTS OFFER SUCCESSION PLANNING WORKSHOP SERIES

Several soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) in Oregon will host a free, four-part online workshop series for agricultural business owners interested in creating a farm transition plan. The series will explore many topics, from estate planning to estate taxes. The virtual events started in February, but run from 1-4 p.m. through March 10. To register, go to emswcd.org or conservationdistrict.org. Series partners include East Multnomah SWCD, Clackamas SWCD, Tualatin SWCD, Clackamas Community College, and the Clackamas Small Business Development Center.

VARIOUS DATES

GARDENCOMM

Several online workshops will be held during GardenComm, presented by Garden Communicators International. Recordings for three sessions in February are also available to watch again. On March 24, GardenComm President Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp will present "How to Pair Spring Bulbs with Perennials for a Long-Lasting Show." On April 6, Brent and Becky Heath of Brent and Becky's Bulbs will present, "The Tropical Paradise Garden with Summer Bulbs." Award-winning writer Mary Kate Mackey will explain how to master the interview process on April 22. The third installment of the popular Hydrangea Happy Hour series, Growing Oakleaf and Climbing Hydrangeas, will be hosted by GardenLine radio creator C.L. Fornari on May 6. The cost for each session is \$20 for members, \$30 for non-members. Learn more at gardencomm.org

MARCH 2

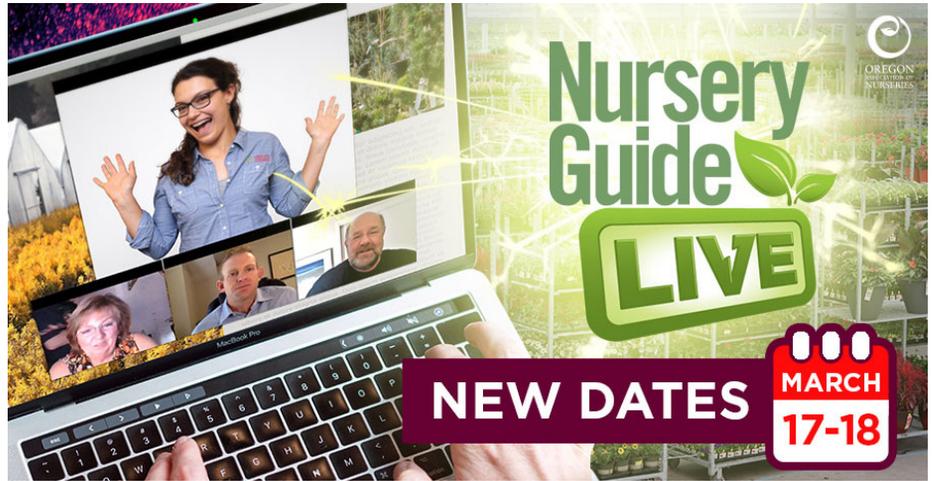
INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT FOR NURSERY CROPS WEBINARS (SPANISH)

The OAN is hosting two back-to-back live webinars for Spanish speakers about integrated pest management for nursery pathogens. Each 9-11 a.m. session will focus on a different disease-causing plant pathogen, and the best management practices for controlling it in the nursery or landscape. Applications have been submitted to the ODA and WSDA, and we are anticipating two pesticide continuing education units (CEU) from the organizations listed for each session. Registration is required; more information can be found at www.oan.org/event/ipmwebinars.

MARCH 4

2021 WASHINGTON BOTANICAL SYMPOSIUM HELD ONLINE

Co-hosted by the University of Washington Botanic Gardens and the University of Washington Herbarium, Burke Museum, the



MARCH 17-18

NURSERY GUIDE LIVE

Due to widespread power outages and winter storm damage, Nursery Guide LIVE will take place four weeks later. New dates are March 17-18. Booth reservations and attendee registration for the original dates will still be good for the rescheduled dates. If you haven't registered yet, please join the gathering of growers, retailers and suppliers who will be available to answer your questions and discuss availability for the best plants, products and services this spring season. Log in for a real-time video chat or product demonstration available to attendees and exhibitors. Visit www.NurseryGuideLive.com to sign up as an exhibitor or to attend. Attendance is FREE, but registration is required. Sponsorships are also available. Contact Allan Niemi for information at 503-582-2005 or aniemi@oan.org.

2021 Washington Botanical Symposium will be held online from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Thursday, March 4. The Zoom webinar will feature poster presentations by professional, academic, and amateur botanists who will discuss how to manage biodiversity, understand climate change, classify rare, common, and invasive plants, and more. Attendees are invited to present research posters and make announcements about related news and opportunities on the symposium website. The cost is \$30, with scholarships available for students, service corps members, or anyone in need. Learn more and register on bit.ly/wabotanicalsymposium.

MARCH 18

FIRST AID AND CPR CLASSES

One OAN-sponsored First Aid and Adult CPR training classes is available in March for OAN members only. Successful completion results in certification that is good for two years. This session will be conducted in English and will take place from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, March 18 at CPR Lifeline Training Center, 9320 S.W. Barbur Blvd., Suite 175, Portland, Oregon. Register online at www.oan.org/cprclass.

MARCH 19-21

GREAT GROW ALONG

Almost 16 million people took an active interest

in gardening in 2020, so a new three-day virtual festival has been organized to help the new hobbyists be successful for years to come. The Great Grow Along, hosted by City Grange Garden Center and Garden Media Group, will focus on teaching new gardeners how to develop their skills for edible gardening, urban gardening, pollinators and plants, DIY landscaping, houseplants, and other advanced topics. More than 30 sessions will be available in 6 tracks. The weekend's online activities will include workshops, expert Q&A sessions, and live interviews. For a list of speakers and to register, visit www.greatgrowalong.com.

APRIL 1

HORTICULTURAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE

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

Southern Nursery Association to close

The Southern Nursery Association (SNA) will cease operation after 121 years, according to a release from the association's board of directors.



The decision to close was made in a unanimous vote. Cancelling the SNA conference due to the pandemic has made running the nonprofit financially unreasonable. Low membership retention was also a factor.

The SNA was founded in 1899. The association produced a large trade show from 1950-2009, the SNA Research Conference from 1955-2020, and the SNA Plant Conference from 1991-2020. They published several editions of the Best Management Practices Guide, as well as the Proceedings of the SNA Research Conference, containing more than 12,500 pages of online information. Much of the SNA's publications will be transferred to the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI).

Additionally, the HRI-supported SNA Fund and the SNA Golf Classic Fund, valued at \$300,000 total, will be combined and renamed the Southern Nursery Association Legacy Fund. Donors may continue to contribute to the program to support horticultural research in the southeast region of the U.S.

National nonprofit AmericanHort created a SNA member group to preserve the legacy of the shuttered organization, and allow members to continue the mission of their state association. They are offering the basic level membership rate to current SNA members through June 30, 2021, if they're not already an AmericanHort member. Learn more at www.sna.org.



Agricultural science researchers at Oregon State University can improve their programming, thanks to a \$1.58 million donation from Northwest Farm Credit Services. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

NORTHWEST FARM CREDIT SERVICES DONATES \$1.58 MILLION TO OREGON STATE

Northwest Farm Credit Services (FCS) has donated \$1.58 million to **Oregon State University (OSU)**, according to a release from the university. The OSU College of Agricultural Sciences will use the funding to improve their existing programs, which benefit Oregon agricultural communities.

Alan Sams serves as dean of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences. "As the founding college of this land grant institution, it is our responsibility to serve the people of Oregon with teaching, research and outreach that can advance our communities and drive new opportunity for all people," he said. "Investments from partners like Northwest Farm Credit Services help us to live up to that responsibility."

Brent Fetsch serves as the Oregon president for Northwest Farm Credit Services. He said the donation was a way to support the future of

Oregon agriculture.

"We have the opportunity to work with the front line of Oregon's agricultural community every day," he said. "We've seen first-hand the impact our land-grant University has on these communities and when considering opportunities to invest, Oregon State is an excellent way to stretch the value of that investment."

The donation will allow critical facility enhancements to be made to the North Willamette Research and Extension Station (NWREC) and the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center.

The investment will also be used to develop a new dairy processing plant; expand the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences program; support the Educational Opportunities Program; and continue the nation's first urban agricultural experimental station, known as the Food Innovation Center in Portland. Read the full story at <https://tinyurl.com/52kpoerj>.



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.



NURSERY GUIDE LIVE NOW SET FOR MARCH 17-18

The Nursery Guide LIVE virtual marketplace event, produced by the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN), will now take place Wednesday and Thursday, March 17-18, 2021 at www.NurseryGuideLive.com.

The show — built to bring together nursery industry professionals for buying, selling and relationship building — was originally scheduled for February. Organizers made the call to postpone it a month due to the effects of a once-in-a-decade ice storm.

“Some of our nurseries were affected more than others, but many needed their team members in the field to assess damage and work on recovery,” show director Allan Niemi said in a statement. “We rescheduled Nursery Guide LIVE so everyone could fully

participate. An online event gave us the flexibility to do this, and we’re still excited to show what our online virtual event platform can do.”



The harsh weather wasn’t limited to Oregon. Storms across the United States reached as far south as Texas, compromising the ability of industry people to participate. That too was a factor in the decision to postpone.

Kyle Fessler works at **Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc.** and serves as the current president of OAN. He said that Nursery Guide LIVE will be ready to roll in March, and so will nursery professionals.

“We are excited about the multitude of business-to-business activity this new platform can generate for large and small nurseries alike,” he said.

Nursery Guide LIVE has several unique and powerful features. Powered by the Showmetry platform, it will allow users to:

- search plant, product and service listings,
- explore the virtual booths with many growers and vendors,
- chat with exhibitors LIVE without leaving their browser,
- watch live demonstrations and informative videos,
- save money with show specials,
- download order forms or sales flyers from vendors,
- network with LinkedIn or Facebook connections, and
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The event will be open 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

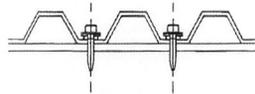
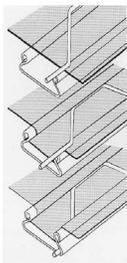


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Pacific time March 17–18. Register online at www.NurseryGuideLive.com.

Contact Allan Niemi at 503-582-2005 for information about exhibiting and sponsorship opportunities.

WINTER STORM DAMAGE AFFECTS GROWERS; IMPACT TO SHIPMENTS UNCLEAR

A mid-February snow event transformed unexpectedly into a rare ice storm in much of western Oregon, causing widespread power outages and resulting in significant damage to trees, nursery stock and structures. Filbert orchards, farms and urban treescapes also were affected.

The Oregon Association of Nurseries immediately set about gathering information on the damage, but at the same time, it urged customers and partners not to jump



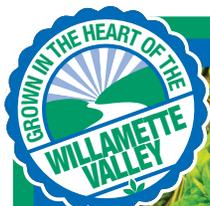
to conclusions on shipments, availability, or the condition of plant material. Rather, they should reach out to nurseries by phone or email to find out where things stand.

“The best source of information on nursery stock and shipments is going to be your grower,” OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone said. “Different operations were affected differently, depending on precise location, type of production and other factors.”

Almost a week after the storm, some nurseries were fine, even as others remained

without power, data and/or phone service. Customers were urged to be patient.

The OAN hoped to engage with available resources to help growers recover from the impacts, and immediately surveyed members about damage to nursery stock, equipment, hoop houses, greenhouses and other structures and property. The cost of the storm was also expected to be measured out in extra employee hours worked, as well as extra fuels burned to heat spaces and generate current to keep operations running. >>



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TWO KEYNOTE SPEECHES SET FOR NURSERY GUIDE LIVE

Although Nursery Guide LIVE was postponed, the event will still feature the same two keynote speeches as planned — one on supply chain logistics and the other on digital marketing.

The keynotes are sponsored by GrowerTalks and Green Profit magazine.

Monica Hemingway will kick off the show with her presentation, “Five Keys to Getting Your Green Industry Business Found Online in 2021,” from 8–9 a.m. PST on Wednesday, March 17. She will draw on her experience as a small business owner and certified arborist to provide simple, yet effective strategies that can be used to boost online marketing for businesses of any size.

“Nothing happens until your ideal customer knows you exist,” Hemingway said.

“But it’s not enough just to be ‘found’ — it’s about being found by the right people, in the right place, at the right time, with the right message. In essence, the ‘selling’ happens before you even talk to them, and in today’s world, that all happens online.”

Hemingway will discuss five tactics every green industry business should be using to distinguish themselves from the competition in a crowded market. The world of online marketing is rapidly shifting, and businesses that aren’t proactive in their digital strategy risk falling behind. Her presentation will provide tools that green industry companies of any size can implement to target their audience and help them grow their business online.

Dave Malenfant will deliver his keynote presentation, “Future Trends in Logistics: Partnering for Success,” 8–9 a.m. PST on Thursday, March 18.

Malenfant is the director of outreach and partnerships at the Center for Supply Chain Innovation at the Texas Christian University (TCU) Neely School of Business. He has more than 35 years of experience driving change and performance improvements across the supply chain.

The nursery industry faces unique challenges when it comes to logistics and the supply chain. Products are grown rather than manufactured, and they are perishable. These live products require specialized equipment to transport and distribute. The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated how supply chain logistics can be drastically disrupted by external factors practically overnight. Understanding these factors as they relate to the green industry will help nurseries thrive in 2021 and beyond.

Malenfant’s presentation will cover the trends he has observed in



D•Stake Mill

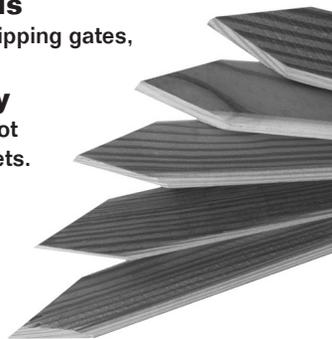
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three decades of studying supply chain logistics. He will give businesses in-depth insight on ways to prepare for the future. Complex factors such as advancements in technology, shifts in consumer behavior, and “the Amazon effect” are revolutionizing the industry. Businesses that aren’t considering the trends will be left behind. This shift — called the “transformational digital ecosystem change” — will drastically influence how we buy, sell, and transport products.

Each presentation will also be recorded and rewatchable by registered participants. Register online at www.NurseryGuideLIVE.com.

NEW RESEARCH MAKES THE CASE FOR MORE IMMIGRATION

A new study for the National

Immigration Forum, a group known for building consensus on a difficult issue, suggests that allowing more immigration to the United States will be a net policy benefit, *Forbes* magazine reported.

The study, called “Room to Grow: Setting Immigration Levels in a Changing America,” is authored by Ali Noorani and Danilo Zak. Noorani is a past keynote speaker at the OAN Farwest Show.

“The U.S. population is aging, dramatically,” the authors stated. “Fertility rates are falling, life expectancy is rising, baby boomers are reaching retirement age, and net immigration

levels are not high enough to keep pace. According to the U.S. Census, nearly one in every four Americans is projected to be 65 years or older by 2060. At that

Room to Grow:

Setting Immigration Levels in a Changing America

By Ali Noorani and Danilo Zak



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point, 94.7 million people over age 65 will be living in the country — close to twice the number today. At the same time, the overall population is growing at a slower rate than it has in almost a century, leaving unfilled openings in crucial industries such as health care, agriculture and information technology.”

“Immigrants are well-positioned to fill critical shortages, whether in the labor market or the country’s demographic composition” they further stated. “Only by intentionally recruiting and integrating immigrants will the U.S. be able to beat back socioeconomic malaise and continue to thrive well into the future.”

Read the full article at tinyurl.com/uzl26y7a. The full study can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/4qmklae3. (PDF)

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS GRANTED ACCESS TO VACCINE

The Department of Homeland Security has issued a statement to say that all individuals in the U.S., regardless of immigration status, will have access to the COVID-19 vaccine when they become eligible to receive the shots.

“It is a moral and public health imperative to ensure that all individuals residing in the United States have access to the vaccine,” the authors of the statement said.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection does not and will not be near health care facilities or vaccination sites, except in the most extraordinary of circumstances. Read the full story on tinyurl.com/wryaaam6.

NEW WALNUT VARIETY SET FOR CALIFORNIA GROWERS

Researchers at the University of California, Davis have created a new variety of walnut tree to meet the demand for earlier harvests, according to a university release.

Eighteen years in the making, ‘UC Wolfskill’ is a cross of Chandler and Solano walnut trees. It produces large, light-colored walnuts 12–14 days earlier than Chandler

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The newly released walnut variety, 'UC Wolfskill', is a cross of Chandler and Solano walnut trees by University of California, Davis.

PHOTO BY JANINE HASEY

and has the kernel fill of Solano.

Nearly all walnuts in the nation are produced in California, and more than half are late-harvest Chandler walnuts. The California Walnut Board funded the university's research to develop a tree that will expand the harvest season while efficiently working with existing harvesting, drying, and processing equipment. Nurseries interested in propagating and selling this cultivar may obtain a license from UC Davis InnovationAccess. Learn more about the variety and obtaining a license at www.ucdavis.edu/news.

HRI JOINS BOXWOOD BLIGHT RESEARCH GROUP

Boxwood Blight Insight Group (BBIG) — a confederation of researchers — was awarded a four-year grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) will be helping publish their findings, according to a release from the agency.

The NIFA funding will help BBIG learn more about boxwood blight and manage the disease. The group will specifically focus on several initiatives and generate data about the economic impact of the disease for state and federal policy makers. They also expect to expand nursery surveys for the disease; identify nursery production control points; study best management practices, biological controls, and products; and develop helpful training materials and videos. HRI will distribute newsletters, host online materials, and help present BBIG research information on their websites www.hriresearch.org and www.boxwoodhealth.org.

“Boxwood blight continues to threaten nursery production and land-

scapes, and much needs to be learned and understood,” Ken McVicker, president of HRI, said. “We at HRI are excited for this announcement both for the discovery of critical information that will help us manage this disease and also for the opportunity to grow HRI's outreach program. Working with BBIG is a wonderful opportunity for HRI to improve our efforts to connect research to industry.”

GARDEN CENTER CONFERENCE & EXPO OPENS IN SEPTEMBER

The Garden Center Conference & Expo, an evolution of the Garden Center Executive Summit, will take place online September 28–30.

The conference and expo will include high-level educational sessions and roundtable sessions for independent garden center executives and other supplier business leaders. There is also a track for management teams, plus online networking opportunities for the attendees. The two-and-half-day event will also feature an exhibit hall of new products entering the marketplace.

The event was developed by the Garden Center Conference & Expo Advisory Board and the *Garden Center* editorial team. Registration and other details can be found online at www.GardenCenterConference.com

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR CALIFORNIA SUMMER TRIALS

To stay in compliance with local ordinances and health official guidance to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, all guests must register to attend the individual sites of the 2021 California Summer Trials (formerly California Spring Trials) on June 23–27.

According to a release from the event organizers, more than 20 breeding companies are set to showcase their new genetics with unique location dates and times. Group sizes will be limited, and some companies may offer private appointments before or after the event time. For more information about the trials, please contact Oster and Associates at www.osterads.com.

Announcements BAILEY'S MCENANEY ELECTED TO MINNESOTA BOARD

Terri McEnaney has been elected to serve a two-year term on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MLNA), *Garden Center* magazine reported. MNLA represents more than 1,100 members of the green industry. She worked with the MNLA Government Affairs Committee and other volunteer roles.



McEnaney is the chief executive officer of **Bailey Nurseries**, and was previously appointed as the company's first female president in 2001. She's a fourth-generation leader of her family's wholesale nursery business, which is based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Bailey also has three major farms in Oregon and one in Washington, along with facilities in Illinois and Georgia. Log on to tinyurl.com/2sdtduwr to read more.

ROOTMAKER HIRES DIRECTOR OF SALES

Jim Duggan has been hired as the director of sales for **RootMaker Products Company**, according to a release from the company.



He joins the company with nearly 40 years of experience in sales with large and private companies, including high tech and aerospace distribution companies.

“We're very excited to have Jim on board. His depth of experience, >>

Northwest News



knowledge and management capabilities will complement our team of seasoned professionals,” said CEO Wayne Hinton. For more information call 256-882-3199 or visit www.rootmaker.com.

MCHUTCHISON AND VAUGHAN TO ESTABLISH CHICAGO OFFICE

McHutchison and **Vaughan's Horticulture** are consolidating each company's young plant division into a single Chicago office. The city was chosen because many of both brand's customers are located in the Midwest region and it has universities with strong horticulture programs.

Together, the companies employ 106 people, and will fill newly created management roles and other internal staff positions. Read more at www.mchutchison.com.

NUFARM AMERICAS REGISTERS MITICIDE WITH THE EPA

Engulf™ GHN Greenhouse and Ornamental Miticide has been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency and is waiting for individual state authorization, according to a release from **Nufarm Americas**. The mite control option is for greenhouses growers, conifer and Christmas tree growers and has the highest concentration of bifenazate than other programs. It can be safely used in combination with beneficial insects such as lacewing, predatory mites, spider mite destroyer, and others.

It is the third option the company provides to battle mites at all developmental stages. To learn more about Engulf GHN, view the label, or download a product information bulletin, visit nufarm.com/usturf/engulf-ghn.

JAPANESE GARDEN PROMOTES TWO LEADERS

The Portland Japanese Garden in Portland, Oregon has promoted two of its key leaders to new levels of responsibility.

Sadafumi (Sada) Uchiyama has been promoted to chief curator and director of the International Japanese Garden Training Center. He previously served as garden curator.

Hugo Torii will serve as garden curator. He was previously the director of grounds maintenance.

The garden has been continually overseen by a succession of Japan-trained garden craftsmen, and both will help the garden continue in that tradition of authenticity. The garden released an interview featuring both men, which you can read at tinyurl.com/3x93nhdr. ☺

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The voices of Oregon's nursery industry

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

As a second-generation nursery owner, I grew up on a farm my father, Tom Verhoeven, started in 1983. My first job was filling flats for pocket change. Agriculture was just one of my interests as a kid, and my art teacher at West Albany High School encouraged me to keep working on my talents in visual arts. I applied to the Rhode Island School of Design — one of the oldest and best-known American colleges of art and design, and soon earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in illustration. I worked at several print and design jobs in Wisconsin, Georgia, and finally Portland, Oregon.

I headed back to the family farm with the news that my mother had fallen very ill. Returning to the Willamette Valley just felt natural. It was a good time for me to see how I could be closer to my family and also fit into the business. The design business has a lot of similarities to agriculture — creative thinking, exchanging ideas and giving feedback — so it was not too difficult to find my place. Now, my wife and I have been living on the farm for the past 10 years. About five years ago, my father fully retired and I took ownership of **Peoria Gardens**. This area was a wonderful place to grow up and I feel very fortunate to be able to raise our two kids here. We have a tremendous crew, many of whom have been here for decades. They are like our extended family.

WHAT'S YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

Respect. My father was a great mentor for not only me, but the whole team at Peoria Gardens. We all make sure mutual respect is a central element of the place we work.

WHAT'S A GOAL YOU HAVE YET TO ACHIEVE?

I hope to develop a strong preference for people in the workforce to consider Peoria Gardens a valuable employer. The farm currently has eight employees with over 20 years of service, and six employees with more than 30 years of service. That says a lot about what we do.



Ben Verhoeven
President
Peoria Gardens Inc.

OAN member since 2012

OAN roles/positions:

- OAN Board of Directors Executive Committee – member at large

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

I'm glad we began learning about the Toyota Production System. We have been part of the Oregon Lean Consortium for a couple of years now, and we're getting everyone in the nursery involved. If there is any long-lasting mark I hope to leave on the business, it is to embed Lean into the DNA of our company.



HARDEST BUSINESS DECISION

We canceled a large greenhouse expansion at the last minute. We currently use five acres of greenhouse space in our operation, with another four acres of outdoor growing space. The plan was to add another greenhouse. Dropping out of the investment was both the hardest and the wisest choice. The project was well researched, but the motivation to build was just for the sake of expanding. That just wasn't good enough. It was a good lesson in pursuing growth for the right reasons.

WHO IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR?

While my father taught me many things, but he really engrained this idea that you will find your way into most spots in your life. He was a role model for how to find excitement and joy in almost any scenario, which opens the door to a world of great experiences.

BEST BUSINESS ADVICE:

"You are violating the rule of the span of control," my Small Business Development Center (SBDC) adviser once said to me. It changed everything and streamlined a lot of our business practices. If you have not reached out to the SBDC, I encourage you to do so. It is a federally funded program that will match you with an adviser at no cost.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE NURSERY INDUSTRY?

What other industry can say that their job is to increase the health, beauty and vitality of their communities?

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE?

Personally, my greatest challenge is patience. As a business, our greatest challenge is to bring the voice of the customer as close as possible to production. Compared to tree nurseries, our crop cycle times with seed-grown annuals are much shorter. That said, forecasting six months to a year out still leaves plenty of room for weather (or a pandemic!) to >>>

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disrupt that plan. We are working hard to find a better solution to adjust our production in response to customer demand.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

I spend my day collaborating with a great group of people, and I get up each morning with a desire to not let them down.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

How we have improved our selecting and shipping procedure an average of twice a year since 2015. It has taught us the value of teamwork and forward thinking. It has also been a lot of hard work and a lot of fun. The best and most lasting ideas have come from our team. I'm very proud of them.

INVOLVEMENT WITH OAN:

I joined the association in 2012. I was active in the Greenhouse Chapter (now the Retail and Greenhouse Chapter) and it's where I met a lot of great people in the industry. I was recently elected to serve on the OAN Board of Directors as a representative for the greenhouse sector, and I filled a vacancy of member-at-large on the Executive Committee.

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

Government regulations and labor issues are common pitfalls for many businesses, but I personally also have an eye on the science of climate change. Unusual weather patterns in spring and water supply issues will continue to impact our industry. We have taken several steps to change our business operation to reduce energy use and grow better. Our greenhouses are equipped with solar panels, advanced greenhouse covers and high-efficiency heating systems to reduce our energy use. We also have a Social and Environmental Responsibility statement on our website to make sure our customers know that we do not use neonicotinoids or GMO seeds in our plants. ©

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Cultivating the curious

How retailers can engage with a flourishing generation of new gardeners

BY KYM POKORNY

AS THE PANDEMIC GRIPPED the world in early spring 2020, toilet paper, yeast and canning supplies weren't the only products disappearing off shelves. Plants flew out of many garden centers at an unprecedented, or at least unexpected, pace.

All of a sudden, everyone in the country wanted to garden — and many in the nursery industry were caught by surprise.

Growers struggled to get plants to garden centers as the pandemic drug on and retailers scrambled to get them to the consumer. The garden centers that were allowed to stay open saw sales jump 25% to 30% in March and April. Sales for online companies went up a staggering 300% to 400%, according to Diane Blazek, executive director of the National Garden Bureau.

Edibles drove a lot of those sales. Not only do people want to pick high-quality fresh produce feet from their kitchen, they want to be sure they don't run out.

“Developing a green thumb is a way to pass the time for some people, but for others they are using it as a way to attempt to make sure they have access to fresh food after the panic buying that led to shortages in grocery stores,” said Suzy Hancock, general manager of **Portland Nursery** in Portland, Oregon.

The spike in edible gar-

dening reminds some people of the ‘victory gardens’ of World War I and II, a hugely successful campaign to get Americans to grow and donate fresh food that was scarce at the time.

James H. Burdett, founder of the National Garden Bureau, which is celebrating its centennial this year, wrote the Victory Garden Manual in 1943. As Blazek was sitting at her desk last March, she spied the book on a shelf and decided to bring it back to life.

Excerpts and tips from the manual now live on the National Garden Bureau website and give people an easy entrée into gardening. New gardeners love it and the organization’s social media accounts have blossomed. That success could be mirrored by others in the industry.

Hordes of young gardeners

About 20 million new gardeners joined the fold last year, adding to the 50 million people already engaged in the pursuit, according to Katie Dubow. She is the president of Garden Media Group, a nationwide marketing agency that conducts annual surveys for the green industry.

A majority of these new horticulture adherents are under 35 and find themselves with time on their hands, particularly on the weekends that were usually filled with kid events or social obligations.

“The biggest competition in the industry is outside activities,” Dubow said. “People are busy with weekend activities and all of a sudden they stopped. Now they have time to garden or to”



Cultivating the curious



learn to garden, and bring their kids into gardening, too.”

In her research, Bridget Behe, professor of horticultural marketing at Michigan State University, found that bored millennials turn online to find out more about gardening. Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram inspire them and blogs and other reliable sites show them how to turn that inspiration into reality.

Behe underscores the importance of driving customers to informative sites. If your website is one of those — and it should be — then it makes sense to have a business card to hand out to customers.

“Millennials are very social and they can’t be social while we’re in this pandemic,” Behe said. “But they can be social online and explore information. I know people on Instagram that have millions of followers.”

If you think you can go without social media, spend some time with Dubow. It can make the difference between a ho-hum business and a thriving one and will be an important factor in holding on to last year’s growth.

She used the example of influencer Timothy Hammond, the Big City Gardener, who uses social media and the internet to share gardening tips, teach growing techniques and chronicle his garden. His Instagram followers sat at about 2,000 for a year. Then, almost overnight, his followers rose to almost 70,000.

That’s just one example, she pointed out. There is a whole slew of potential Martha Stewarts out there. Hitch your star to one of them, and it could shine

pretty bright.

Social media influencers make a job out of spreading their — or many company’s — message through their many platforms. They often have blogs and make money or accept products in exchange for touting your business. Think of them as brand ambassadors.

Dubow encourages nurseries to work with these social media influencers.. They can be found by checking hashtags — #gardening, #pollinators, etc. — and taking note of who has the most followers. One can then message them directly to see if they’re interested in a working relationship.

“There are so many examples,” Dubow said. “People are on the internet and looking for education and inspiration. Companies are behind the scenes helping influencers grow, and vice versa. You can do that, too.”

Being ready for customers online

Facebook, which is where the customers are, should be part of your business plan. Yes, it takes time, but according to Dubow, it’s effective.

When using Facebook, she strongly suggests boosting posts, a practice that costs about \$25 or less a post. See which posts do the best and use that information to inform future decisions, not only about what to post, but also possibly about what to grow.

“Facebook is like a vacuum,” she said. “Boosting posts reaches much more people. Boost one post a week. Post, see what does best and boost that one.”

Brian Bauman, owner of **Bauman’s Farm & Garden** in Gervais, Oregon, was an early adherent to Facebook and finds the payback worth the effort.

“We stress to customers to go to our

Facebook page,” he said. “All of a sudden, you’re there and see beautiful photos and you can get your questions answered. The engagement is phenomenal.”

Even if you don’t want to go that route, you can up your online presence by producing a clean, attractive, easy-to-navigate website. It can be basic, but Dubow believes it’s necessary. Adding a blog or sections of tips, plant lists or garden calendars can be good driver for customers to come back to your website. Good photos are a must. People want to see what you have to offer, especially mail-order customers.

If education is key, Dubow recommends that the number one component going forward and the best way to offer education is through a newsletter. Start to capture emails at point of sale or have a sign-up on your website. Decorate your newsletter with beautiful photos and have customers share theirs. Reader-generated content gets a lot of eyes.

Capitalizing on ‘The Great Reset’

Dubow’s agency called this year’s survey *The Great Reset*, and it indicates big change in the industry.

“We were all tracking the rat race, going through the motions of life,” Dubow said. “I think COVID made us stop. We had to. It gave everyone the chance to reset. One big lesson the industry is learning is that change is a good thing. People are still hesitant about having a website or being on Facebook, but this has forced us to pivot and enter the new world. We should have done it a decade ago.”

More than 80% of those surveyed by Garden Media Group who had picked up gardening during the pandemic said they



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would continue to garden. That's a huge business opportunity.

"I really believe 2020 can be looked at as a foundation year," said Bauman, "The pandemic got people into gardening. We have a lot of opportunity for that growth to continue. Customers are given the opportunity to be successful because they have the time. We are trying any way and every way we can to feel better. Once you garden and feel better, it's been a success. They get their toe in and will keep doing it."

Catering to changing habits

The pandemic has also shifted people's shopping habits with an explosion of mail-order online plant shopping and curbside pickup. Bauman thinks those trends will continue. Blazek agrees.

"Garden centers were forced to recognize that they need a good online ordering system," she said. "More garden centers should also offer preordering to customers. I needed red and white flowers for my daughter's wedding and I couldn't go to the garden center and get them. Preordering took the chance out of it, and I got what I wanted. These are changes that are needed."

At Portland Nursery, sales were high even though doors had to close for two beautifully sunny weeks in March to prepare for proper distancing and other safety protocols and again during Oregon's summer wildfires. Parking spaces



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were lost when the lot was rearranged for curbside pickup. Still, profits equaled last year's bottom line, according to Hancock.

"For all that time being closed, we're ending up the same last year, which is absolutely phenomenal in my mind," she said. "We had a stupendous year."

So did Bauman's, where they modified the shop for personal distancing so that customers had to walk by every item. The idea was wildly successful, resulting in higher-than-average individual tickets sales, which offset fewer in-store shoppers because of COVID. Bauman saw vegetable plant and seed sales take off, as well as houseplants and containers.

"People who would have been saving up money for a trip are spending it on plants," Bauman said. "They're working from home, on Zoom calls and looking out the window and see a plant they need to water. It's possible for them to do that. Our customers are more successful gardeners because they have more time than in the past."

Sustaining the boom

Hancock and others worry about the supply chain for spring, but are planning ahead so that shortages don't occur. If there's ever a year to do careful buying, this is it, she said.

"We don't want shortages this spring," Hancock said. "We are going to buy in a way that we can back out and slow down if we need to."

Chances are she won't need to, though.

"If I had a crystal ball — although everyone's a little cracked right now — I'd say we definitely had a shift," professor Behe said. "Going into spring, people are still restricted. The stimulus was passed. Unless they're unemployed, people are going to keep gardening. Odds are in our favor that we could sustain this." ☺

Kym Pokorny is a garden writer with more than 20 years' experience writing for The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) and other publications. She is currently a communications specialist with Oregon State University Extension Service.

(Top) Akebono Yoshino (*Prunus × yedoensis* 'Akebono')

(Bottom) *Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan'

PHOTO COURTESY OF J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO.

Past, present, and future

Flowering cherry trees remain popular, from old mainstays to new selections, with more on the way

BY TRACY ILENE MILLER

IT'S MARCH, AND SOON showy displays of Japanese flowering cherry trees will trumpet their annual announcement that spring has arrived. Thus, consumers will be prompted to head to garden centers with hopes of adding the ephemeral beauty of these dramatically blooming trees to their own yards.

Once they do, there is a good chance that shoppers will encounter an Oregon-grown tree: Nearly one-fifth of all flowering cherry trees in the United States originate from Oregon.

Oregon is the nation's top grower of flowering trees overall, logging more than \$51 million in sales in 2019. Although sales in Oregon of flowering cherry are down by an estimated \$1.9 million from five years ago, at \$6.3 million, they are still a high-value plant.

The market has shifted away from urban street-side plantings, but regular use of flowering cherry in residential settings combined with sustained research into new cultivars that offer smaller footprints and growing improvements portend a bright future for this still in-demand tree.

New introductions vs. old favorites

Several introductions of flowering cherry trees in the past 15 years have become the better-performing challengers of older varieties. Nonetheless, two cultivars dating back to at least the 1800s, *Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan' and *P. serrulata* 'Mount Fuji', have been continuous top sellers for decades.

'Kwanzan' (25–30 feet tall by 25–30 feet wide, Zones 4a–8b) by far remains the most popular of flowering cherries nationwide. The hardiest of the double-flowering types, it bears deep pink blooms that hang in clusters. Its new leaves emerge bronze and then turn green in summer and orange-yellow in autumn.

'Mount Fuji' (15–20 feet tall by 20–25 feet wide, Zones 5–7) opens earlier in spring than 'Kwanzan', with slightly pink-tinged buds that turn into white, mildly fragrant and semi-double flowers that hang in pendulous clusters. Leaves on the flat-topped, horizontally branching tree emerge bronze, turn green in summer and then orange-red in fall.

Stephanie Mack, a yard buyer at **Portland Nursery** (Portland, Oregon) since 2003, believes sales of flowering cherry trees generally have gotten stronger in the last five years. "It has been one area of my department that has grown," she said. Those sales are helped each year by the pageantry of the spring season.

"A tree's bloom time is its main sales time," Mack said. Customers notice and seek those same plants out.

That includes the Portland, Oregon-based Hoyt Arboretum display of *P. serrulata* 'Shirofugen' (25–30 feet tall by 25–30 feet wide, Zone 5--8). It has pink buds that open to fragrant, large white pink-tinged double blooms, that hang on long pedicels in clusters. They then age to a deeper pink. Dating back to at least the 15th century and introduced to the West in the 19th cen- ➤



Past, present and future

(Top) Pink Flair® Cherry (*Prunus sargentii* 'JFSKW58')

(Bottom) Pink Cascade® (P. 'NCPH1')

PHOTO COURTESY OF J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO.

tury, 'Shirofugen' has blooms that open in late spring. The leaves on the vase-shaped, flat-topped tree emerge crimson-bronze, and then turn green in summer and bronze-red in fall.

"It gets taller than 'Mount Fuji' and is broader, and has more disease resistance," Kevin Beat of **Eugene Wholesale Nursery** (Eugene, Oregon) said. "I think it is spectacular, and not used as much as it should be, but it can be overpowering for some yards because of its width."

The springtime show of Akebono Yoshino (*Prunus × yedoensis* 'Akebono'), 25 feet tall 25 feet wide, Zones 4–8) also prompts garden center requests. "We have those growing on the Tom McCall Waterfront Park in Portland," Mack said. "When those are in bloom, then people want that tree."

'Akebono' was introduced in 1925 by the W.B. Clarke Nursery (San Jose, California) as a selection of Yoshino (*Prunus × yedoensis*), which is the most represented variety, at 70%, on the Tidal Basin in Washington D.C., seat of the original U.S. Cherry Blossom Festival in 1935. ('Kanzan' follows a distant second, at 13%.) Cherry festivals and flowering cherry tree-focused interpretative displays have expanded since to all parts of the nation, from Portland's few hundred trees to Macon, Georgia's annual celebration of the more than 300,000 'Yoshino' trees that bloom around the city in late March.

Because of that name recognition, 'Yoshino' is still a high-demand tree, even as stronger cultivars are introduced. 'Yoshino' has sentimental, historical and horticultural significance, given its presence for more than 100 years in DC; the trees' origins as a 1912 gift from Japan; and their later contribution to restoring the 'Yoshino' lineage to Tokyo, Japan, after World War II destruction there.

Typically, flowering cherry trees last between 25 and 50 years. To preserve the history of the germplasm of the capital's 'Yoshino', the J. Frank Schmidt Charitable Foundation funded propagation replac-

ments of the original trees, which included DNA fingerprinting by Margaret R. Pooler, geneticist at the National Arboretum. The foundation, established by wholesale grower **J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.**, (JFS) in Boring, Oregon, supports horticultural research and education nationwide.

'Akebono' is more disease resistant than its parent.

One of the drawbacks of flowering cherry in the Pacific Northwest is their susceptibility to brown rot (*Monilinia* spp.), according to Beat. It thrives in warmer, rainy winter

weather, and can lead to blighting of the blossoms and cankers on the woody tissue.

"When they get that, the petals turn brown and it kills the tip of the branch," Beat said.

New growth can help hide the rot, typically after the bloom.

Its appearance can be unsightly if the blossoms do not drop and leaves on the infected twigs turn brown, wither and remain attached.

Mechanical and chemical controls can be used to counter these effects.

Breeding for the future

Current breeding efforts are focusing on improvements. Meacham believes there is room for help, especially considering the age of many of the cultivars and the high percentage of flowering cherry nursery stock grown in the Pacific Northwest.

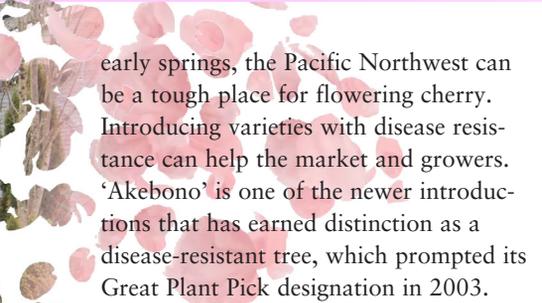
"We don't sell the bulk of our cherries in the Northwest, but we have to grow them here," Meacham said.

With the fairly warm and wet



'Akebono' is very similar to its parent 'Yoshino' (single flower with five petals), with a rounded, more moderate stature that spreads with age and supports masses of fragrant soft pink, semi-double blooms that Beat describes as cotton candy on a stick. Dark green leaves turn yellow with orange highlights in fall.

"The flower is pinker than 'Yoshino', and it does a little better in the Pacific Northwest," said Guy Meacham of JFS.



early springs, the Pacific Northwest can be a tough place for flowering cherry. Introducing varieties with disease resistance can help the market and growers. ‘Akebono’ is one of the newer introductions that has earned distinction as a disease-resistant tree, which prompted its Great Plant Pick designation in 2003.

As well, introduced by JFS in 2004, Pink Flair® Cherry (*P. sargentii* ‘JFSKW58’, 25 feet tall by 15 feet wide, Zones 3b–8) is disease resistant with an added bonus of exceptional cold hardiness, down to Zone 3b, as opposed to Zone 4 for other *P. sargentii* and Zone 5 for other flowering cherry varieties.

A narrow, upright grower, Pink Flair is a later bloomer, avoiding frost damage of the bright pink single flowers and deep green foliage that turns orange-red in fall. Although no flowering cherry are on the approved street tree list in Portland, at least eight are on the approved list of private property replacement trees under the Title 11 city code, including Pink Flair.

Upright trees are trending higher in the market over weeping varieties, especially with landscapers. JFS dropped *P. ‘Amanogawa’* (*P. serrulata* ‘Amanogawa’, 20 feet tall by 5-6 feet wide, Zones 5–8) in 2019.

“It was my biggest seller last year to landscapers,” Beat said. “A lot of them went to California.”

Landscapers have a renewed interest in ‘Amanogawa’ for its narrow footprint that fits shrinking lot sizes, he said. Clusters of soft pink double flowers dot the upright tree in early spring. The foliage emerges bronze-green, and turns green in summer and then bright orange-red in fall.

For its size, Beat thinks *P. serrulata* ‘Shogetsu’ is underused. Translating to “moon hanging low by a pine tree,” ‘Shogetsu’ (15–18 feet tall by 15–20 feet wide, Zones 5–8) is a tree of smaller stature with a rounded shape and a slightly flat top. Beat believes it fits today’s yards better than other trees. With light pink buds that turn into completely white double flowers, it blooms so profusely, it almost resembles a weeping cherry. >>

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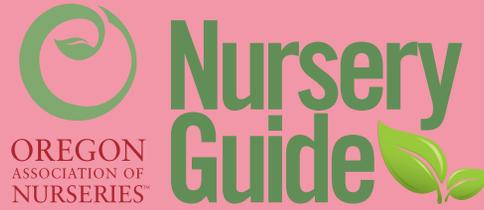
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Finding flowering cherry trees wholesale

There is no shortage of flowering cherry tree selections on the market. The OAN's Nursery Guide book and website is the resource that can help you find and obtain them quickly.



Simply log on to www.NurseryGuide.com and enter part or all of the plant's common or botanical name. You can make your search as wide (say, all of *Prunus*) or narrow (say, *Prunus yeodensis* 'Akebono') as you like. Enter your search, find out who is selling it, then call or email to connect with the grower. It's that simple!

All of the selections mentioned in this article are listed on the site, and you'll find others if you search:

Prunus serrulata 'Kwanzan'	25 listings
Prunus yeodensis 'Akebono'	19 listings
Prunus yeodensis (Yoshino Cherry)	16 listings
Prunus serrulata 'Mt. Fuji'	10 listings
Prunus serrulata 'Royal Burgundy'	8 listings
Prunus serrulata 'Amanogawa'	7 listings
Prunus 'Okame'	7 listings
Prunus 'Accolade'	6 listings
Prunus 'Shirofugen'	5 listings
Prunus sargentii 'JFSKW58' Pink Flair Cherry	4 listings
Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis'	3 listings
Prunus 'JFSZKW14' First Blush Cherry	1 listing
Prunus 'NCPH1' Pink Cascade	1 listing
Prunus sargentii 'KW21PS'	1 listing
Prunus serrulata	1 listing
Prunus serrulata 'Shogetsu'	1 listing

Reaching out to your market

If you grow any of these flowering cherries, or others, you can add your company to the listings and start getting calls. Just log on to www.NurseryGuide.com to get started. You must be an OAN member.

Help us build our database

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To meet the continued interest in narrower forms, JFS introduced in 2020 Pink Myst® (*P. sargentii* 'JFS KW21PS' PP 32619, 30 feet tall by 15 feet wide, Zones 4–8), a seedling of 'Pink Flair' selected for its upright, narrower stature. It has stand-out dark pink flowers and dark green foliage that turns orange and red in fall.

Even as new cultivars of *P. sargentii* are introduced, seedlings are still in demand and being produced — in places where a large 30 foot by 30 foot tree can fit — for their disease resistance, hardiness, adaptability and generally good fall color of reds and oranges. Size is usually the top consideration for buyers, Mack said, and then other features are flower color, flower volume, bloom time and four-season interest.

Autumn Flowering Cherry (*P. subhirtella* 'Autumnalis Rosea', 25 feet tall by 22 wide, Zones 5–8) earns the "early bloom" award, flowering as it does in November, then again in spring and often intermittently in regions with milder winters. It's an upright spreader with slender erect branches and whip-like twigs showcasing dark pink buds that open darker and fade to paler pink semi-double to double blooms.

And for its wintertime silhouette, customers choose birchbark cherry (*P. serrula*, 20 feet high by 20 feet wide, Zones 5a–9b) more for its exfoliating coppery red-brown bark than the nodding white blooms, which are sparse. It's not a big seller, but it's still of interest as a focal point for the shiny exposed bark, its upright, rounded habit and the added interest of cherry-red drupes that follow blooming.

At JFS, after 'Kanzan', Meacham said the nursery's top sellers are:

- First Blush® (*P. 'JFS-KW14'* P.A.F., 25 feet tall by 12 feet wide, Zones 5–8)
- Pink Cascade® (*P. 'NCPH1'* PP 27579, 12 feet tall by 12 feet wide, Zones 5–8)
- 'Yoshino'

Those three are followed by Royal Burgundy (*P. serrulata* 'Royal Burgundy', 20 feet tall by 15 feet wide, Zones 5–8), a slightly slower growing, smaller sport of 'Kanzan' discovered by Frank

(Top) First Blush® (Prunus 'JFS-KW14')

(Bottom) Pink Myst® (P. sargentii 'JFS-KW21PS')

PHOTO COURTESY OF J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SONS CO.



Parks of Speer & Sons Nursery in Woodburn, Oregon, and released commercially in 1990. With darkish pink double flowers and purple leaves that turn red in fall, 'Royal Burgundy' offers a nice replacement for flowering plum. Mack considers it an impressive bloomer without the prospect of fruit drop.

'First Blush', introduced in 2015, was selected from Keith Warren's breeding work at JFS of hybrid crosses of P. 'Okame,' which is itself a hybrid. 'Okame' was brought from England to the U.S. through the Morris Arboretum in the 1940s, following the work by Captain Collingwood Ingram crossing *P. incisa* and *P. campanulata*.

'Okame' has single pink flowers, and

'First Blush' is a full double. 'First Blush' exhibited a host of other desirable attributes to support it as an introduction, according to Meacham. It has a uniform, upright oval habit; good symmetry; disease resistance; fragrant, prolific blooms; and foliage that holds up with a dark green color in summer that turns orange to orange-red in fall.

Selections from North Carolina State

As an introduction, 'First Blush' actually followed a year after the 2014 release of 'Pink Cascade', which was bred by Tom Ranney, professor at the Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University (NCSU) in Mills River, North Carolina, and is licensed to JFS.

"It was one of those serendipitous >>>



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Past, present and future

(Top) Pink Flair® Cherry (*Prunus sargentii* 'JFSKW58')

(Bottom) Pink Cascade® (*P.* 'NCPH1')

PHOTO COURTESY OF J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO.

moments,” Meacham said. Although 10 years had passed since JFS’s last introduction of a Japanese flowering cherry tree — ‘Pink Flair’ in 2004 — two worthy introductions presented themselves in succession, the upright ‘First Blush’ and then the weeping ‘Pink Cascade.’

The NCSU flowering cherry breeding program, led by research specialist Nathan Lynch, has been active for more than 15 years, according to Ranney. ‘Pink Cascade’ was the program’s first introduction and what he called a “lucky” find: After crossing the parents, the two features the researchers were looking for — pink flower color and weeping habit — immediately appeared in the F1 hybrid.

“In a lot of cases, weeping habits can be recessive,” Ranney said. “You have to go multiple generations to draw out those phenotypes.” But not in this case. And ‘Pink Cascade’ had a third attractive characteristic: its size.

“There are other weeping cherries, but they tend to get big,” Ranney said. Reaching only 12 feet wide and tall at maturity, ‘Pink Cascade’ fits into moderate landscapes. It’s a great tree for small spaces.

As a group, flowering cherries are a significant commercial crop. The NCSU program will continue to look to introducing new varieties that offer substantial improvements on issues particular to the Southeast U.S. region: namely adaptability and pest resistance, but without overlooking novel or attractive ornamental traits.

Because of the vast genetic diversity *Prunus* and its various subgenera offer, there is immense potential for introductions to solve some of the problems flowering cherries have in the Southeast. Ranney believes there is the chance of the same benefit in other regions. So, the researchers at NCSU are creatively look-

ing at crosses with plants like the large *P.* ‘Accolade’ (20–25 feet tall by 20–25 feet wide, Zones 5–8), a hybrid of *P. sargentii* and *P. subhirtella*, with pink buds that open into soft pink, semi-double blooms and hang in clusters.

“They look like a cloud of cherry blossoms when in bloom,” Ranney said. “An allee of ‘Accolade’ in bloom is unforgettable.” The green leaves turn orange-yellow in fall, and in winter, the smooth red bark with horizontal lenticels adds winter season interest.

Ranney expects the next introduction from NCSU could be late 2021, but revealed only that it has “a unique combination of ornamental traits.” There’s no speculating whether the results will be from crosses with ‘Pink Cascade’, but Ranney

did say there will be future improvements of that cultivar as it is put into play as a parent for additional breeding.

“There is always room to improve, and some traits you need to grow out for a longer time,” Ranney said.

Looking to the future

In her role as yard buyer, Mack at Portland Nursery has at least two wishes for future flowering cherry introductions: variegation and dwarf characteristics. The three years it was available to her, Mack saw good sales of Lemon Splash® Weeping Cherry (*P. incisa* Lemon Splash® FPMSPPL PP# 23384), a variegated variety with white flowers. Likewise, Mack could always sell more of flowering cherry grafted to dwarf rootstock, but it is inconsistently available from growers.

“We have one grower, and we could sell a lot more if we had more availability,” she said.

For the future of tree sales, with house lots continuing to get smaller, it could be a sound idea. ☺

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

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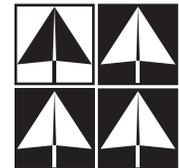
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AD INDEX

AAA Mercantile.....	37
Alpha Nursery Inc.....	14
Anderson Pots.....	2
Beaver Pumice LLC.....	5
Biringer Nursery.....	12
CwM-H2O LLC.....	21
D-Stake Mill.....	12
Dayton Bag & Burlap.....	11
F & L Lumber Inc.....	21
GK Machine.....	35
HC Companies.....	39
High Caliper Growing.....	18
Hostetler Farm Drainage.....	37
Lane Forest Products.....	14
Leonard Adams Insurance.....	6
Marion Ag Service Inc.....	22
Marr Bros.....	18
Meridian Young Plants.....	37
Motz & Son Nursery.....	37
Nutrien Ag Solutions.....	22
Obersinner Nursery.....	37
Oregon Valley Greenhouses.....	10
Pac West Transport Services.....	25
Reardon Nursery.....	25
Riceland Foods Inc.....	3
Rickel's Tree Farm.....	37
Schurter Nursery.....	37
Spring Meadow Nursery.....	40
Surface Nursery Inc.....	27
T&R Company.....	13
Weeks Berry Nursery.....	21
Willamette Nurseries Inc.....	11

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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



Figure 1: Various tree varieties were removed from cold storage and planted at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center for research. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

The cold shoulder season

Nursery growers effectively use cold storage to support sales of deciduous trees

BY REBECCA SHERIDAN AND LLOYD NACKLEY

PLANTS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST experience a wide range of temperatures, from hot, dry summers to cold, wet winters. Deciduous plants grow when conditions are favorable. They enter dormancy when environmental conditions are too cold, dark, or otherwise unsuitable for growth.

Deciduous trees, such as maples, crabapples, birches, elms, many oaks and others are some of the most valuable and most common types of trees grown in Oregon.

The Oregon nursery industry takes advantage of plant dormancy periods to dig, store, and ship trees. However, uprooting

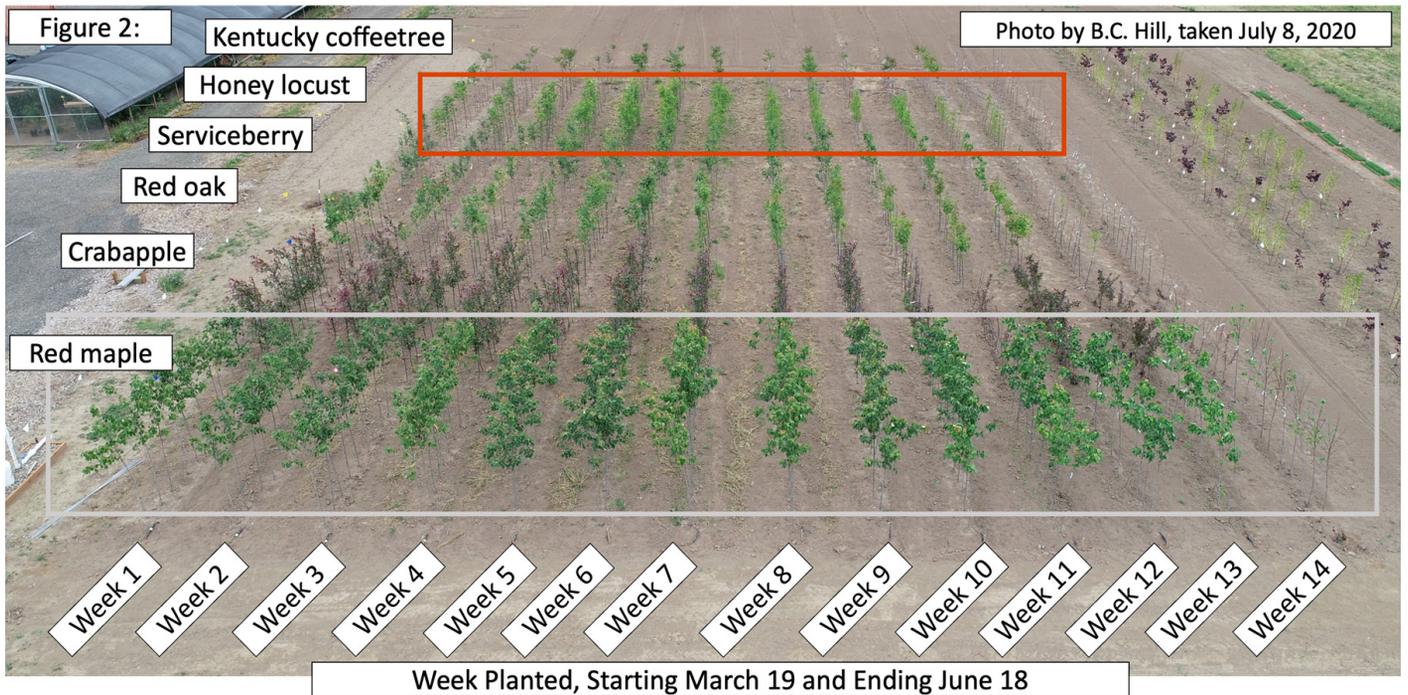
and moving a tree hundreds of miles from where it was growing the previous season is very unnatural.

For this reason, nursery growers have to care for the dormant trees in ways that will allow for the dormant trees to regrow where they are planted. The timing of storage and shipping can have a big impact on the viability of dormant trees.

Putting trees into cold storage

Large cold storage facilities give nursery growers some flexibility to ship trees only when the conditions on the con- ➤

The cold shoulder season



sumer's end are suitable for planting. For example, trees destined for the Midwest can be held until the region's colder, longer winter is over.

However, even dormant trees have limits to the length of time they can be kept in cold storage. We must understand

the limits to cold storage so that growers can ensure they are shipping healthy, high-quality trees to their customers.

Drying or desiccation is one change that can occur in plant tissues over time in storage. Drying can cause water stress to the plant so severe, it can limit growth

after planting or even kill the trees.

There are two ways to track water relations in plant tissues.

The first way, **water content**, describes the amount of water in the plant relative to the dry plant tissue. Water content can be measured on any plant tissue,

Quercus, April 23, 2020



including stems or roots.

A second way to quantify plant water relations is the plant's **water status**, which describes the energy gradient to move water through a plant. The xylem, the water vessels in a plant's stem, are like a series of tiny, pressurized pipes. If the plant gets too dry, the pressure change on the xylem can create cracks that will prevent water movement, which hinders plant function and growth.

By measuring both water content and water status, we can learn if the plants were losing bulk water, or if they were crossing thresholds in terms of water potential that would have long-term negative impacts. With this in mind, we wanted to know if tree stems and roots are drying out during the spring shipping window, so we can better understand the limits to cold storage.

Our study

We focused on the storage period from March through June, because this is the most likely period for when trees will be taken out of storage for planting. We established a collaborative project supported by **J. Frank Schmidt & Sons Co.** production team, including production horticulturist Sam Doane, farm manager Richard Lang, inventory supervisor Claudia Gomez, and the excellent crew at the storage facility in Barlow, Oregon.

Additional trees were donated or purchased from Bailey Nurseries, **Hans Nelson and Sons Nursery Inc.**, and **Willamette Nurseries Inc.** Beginning March 19, 2020, we removed trees from cold storage every week. In storage, the temperature was kept above freezing and the roots were loosely covered with a shredded, light-weight mulch. We studied

six varieties:

- Red Sunset® maple (*Acer rubrum* 'Franksred')
- Prairie fire crabapple (*Malus* 'Prairifire')
- Red oak (*Quercus rubra*)
- Autumn Brilliance® serviceberry (*Amelanchier* × *grandiflora*)
- Skyline® honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Skycole')
- Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*)

Each week, we measured stem water content, root water content, and stem water potential on seven trees. At the same time points, we planted 10 trees of each variety at **North Willamette Research and Extension Center** (Aurora, Oregon). We measured height three times: at planting (March–June), in late August, and in December, >>

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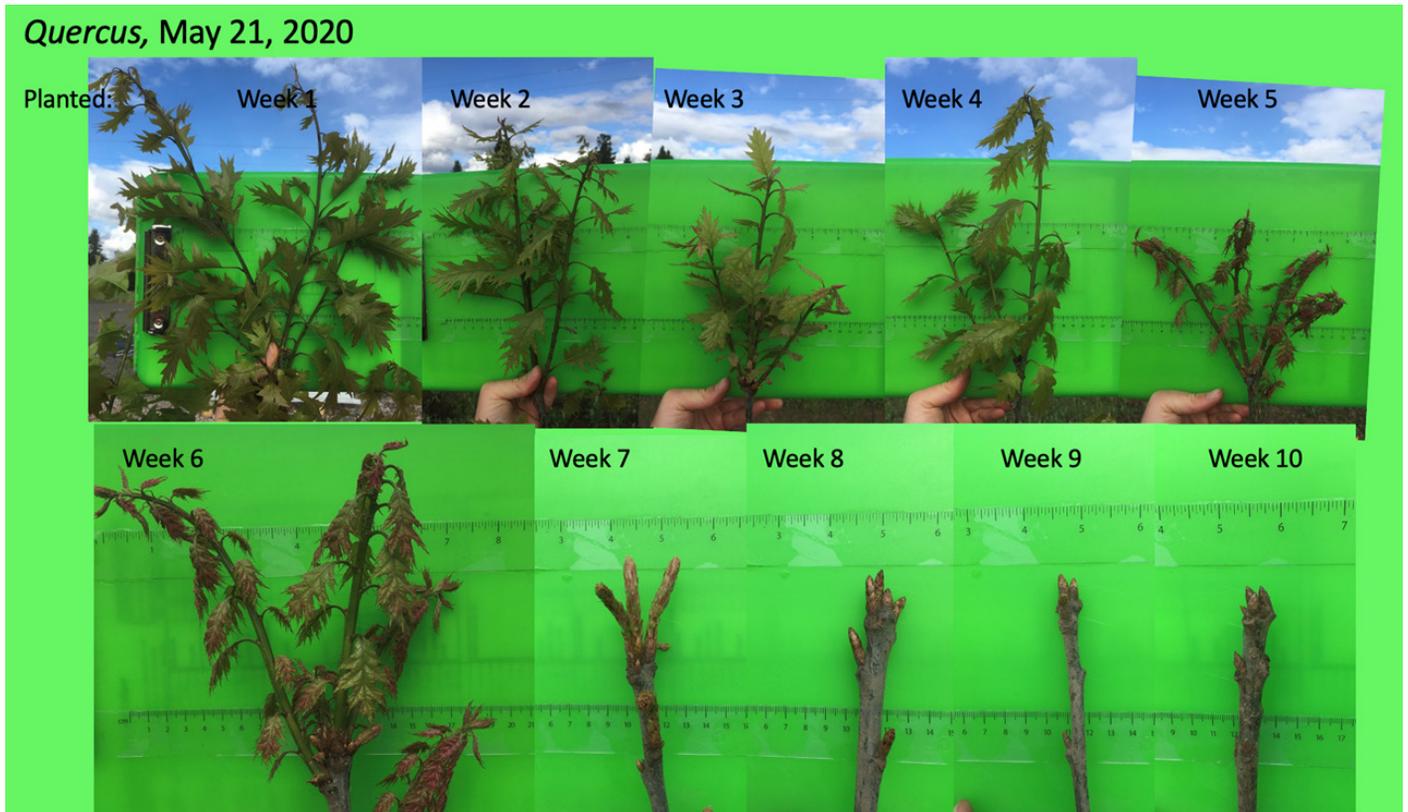
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The cold shoulder season



after the trees had dropped their leaves. We also tracked the trees for mortality.

We assumed that there would be a “must-plant-by-date” after which the trees would not re-grow. Contrary to our expectations, we did not see a drying trend in any of the varieties we tested over the 14 weeks we collected data. This was the case for both the stem water content and the root water content.

We also did not see any directional changes in the stem water potential, even as the trees sat for longer and longer in cold storage. This indicates that the cold storage environment we tested was not desiccating the trees. We saw high establishment rates for these varieties. At all 14 weeks of planting in this project, the trees broke bud and initiated growth. There was occasional mortality among the planted trees, but it did not appear to be related to the water status of the trees at planting or the timing of planting.

When spring and early summer 2020 are remembered in the North Willamette Valley, we most likely think back to the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial justice protests in Portland. Few

might remember the weather, except perhaps those of us whose business and livelihoods are connected to the seasons. Farmers may recall that it felt like winter was never here yet summer would never come.

Compared to weather data collected from the years 1895–2020, spring 2020 (April–June) was warm above historical averages and June was above average for wet. These are conditions that favor deciduous trees, and most plants for that matter. This meant that this was an above-average year to plant late. It wasn’t great for the experiment, but was great for the trees kept long in storage. We did not observe any changes within our experimental set-up.

We had one chance accident that allowed us to confirm that our methods were sound. We removed the *Amelanchier* from the storage facility four weeks before the end of the project. We kept the remaining samples covered by a tarp in a shed, without any temperature or humidity control. Over the last four weeks, both the stem water content and the stem water declined in the *Amelanchier* samples. This anecdote suggests that trees are vulnerable

to drying if the storage conditions are less than ideal.

Our research continues to pursue an understanding of the impacts of cold storage on tree performance. Our field observations captured an interaction between time in storage and planting date that has an effect on tree phenology and growth after planting. There was a sequential effect of bud break and flowering based on the time of planting. Although the differences in bud break from early-planted trees did not affect the height growth in the first year we expect the reduced growth time will become more evident in year two. ©

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Digger MARKETPLACE

Going halfway to understand the new buyer

In the nursery and greenhouse industry, we have always had to follow and understand consumer trends.

Otherwise, we will never be able to build business models capable of enduring countless shifts in behavior.

The changes in preferences and mores also influence a government that is tone deaf at times, more concerned with shaping behavior than fostering growth.

In Oregon, we're an income tax state. State revenues rise and fall based on the number of people working. It's in the state's interest to preserve jobs — one would think. Nevertheless, our legislature is often rife with bills that are just solutions in search of problems. Why?

It has a lot to do with how legislators see their jobs. Oregon voters elect people interested in the pursuit of justice. Why do they do this? I think it is generational. Younger people have been shaped by events well beyond their control. Now they have the voter to influence election outcomes.

It's a numbers game. People my age are now the outnumbered. My daughters — one a college senior, the other a frosh — are at the young end of the Millennial and Generation Z group that's taking power.

That's why it behooves our industry to take a peek into the psyche of the young consumer.

Shaping a new millennium

I had a great conversation recently with Dr. Eric Fruits, who holds a Ph.D. in economics. Our children and those in their age group are coming of age. We don't have simple answers for why they act the way they do, economically and politically.

We joke that as we get closer to assuming room temperature, our children will be the ones raising families, managing businesses, and running our government. We'd like to think that day is far off, but it's coming soon.

Millennials and Generation Z are comprised of people born after 1980. In about seven years, they will make up a majority of registered voters — and likely voters, too.

These groups have entirely different historical guideposts. Even the oldest among

them have no memory of Ronald Reagan. Most don't remember Bill Clinton, either.

Their first political memory was Bush vs. Gore. FDR and JFK are ancient history. Washington, Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt may as well have been medieval kings.

These generations are on track to be the most educated in history. But they also believe that college is too expensive and not worth the price.

Millennials, who are the children of Baby Boomers, were raised on Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings. These were stories of friends coming together to complete a quest. There was moral ambiguity in books and movies. The bad guys were bad, but they had backstories that made you think twice about what is good and what is evil.

It went a step further with Generation Z. They have been raised on dystopian fiction such as the Hunger Games, and superhero movies. So often the bad guy is a businessman or a faceless corporation out to destroy the environment just so they can line their pockets.

How did this generation get so dark? Easy. They've lived through dark times.

The oldest Millennials were born during the deep recession of the early 1980s. Although we think of them as youngsters, most Millennials and Gen Z have already lived through three big recessions. For many of our emerging purchasers, their earliest economic memory may be their parents losing a job or even the house.

My generation is comfortable with “pulling yourself up by the bootstraps.” Reagan's deregulation and Clinton's optimism and economic boom served us well. It built our belief in the system.

The next leaders, by contrast, may believe the economy failed them. Capitalism failed them. As they reach their peak economic earning years, we must realize the foundation that shaped their outlook. It will be important to go halfway and meet them where they are at.

A generational shift in our industry

As society is shifting generationally, the OAN is doing the same. We're in the middle of a very cool shift in leadership. Where titans of the industry once led, now their sons and daughters are at the wheel. They



Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

bring us broad perspectives, grounded in current mores and values, but with a strong connection to the earth and the industry.

The OAN knows it must provide members with tools no individual operation can provide for itself, so the association adds to what you can do each day. Our new generation of leaders guides how we do that.

The last 10 years of changes have been fast and furious, but the ag economy survived. We will make sure it does into the future.

Early in the last decade, the OAN launched the online Nursery Guide to help our members reach customers during the abyss of the Great Recession. Since that time the association has enhanced that tool with a cell-phone-friendly layout, and the emerging Nursery Guide LIVE virtual trade show coming on March 17–18.

In these times, we face a choice: “Evolve or fade away.” We'll take the first one. The OAN will provide a scalable avenue to capitalize on Nursery Guide listings and get to Nursery Guide 2.0.

The value of listening

For me, politics is life. One of the first principles I learned was, “God provided two ears and one mouth for a reason.”

In order to understand a different perspective, you need to listen twice as much as you talk. First, listen to understand what a “win” means to them. Then, find that pathway for mutual success.

Our emerging generation has been shaped in ways completely unlike their predecessors. If we apply that knowledge, we'll be up to the task of building that bridge into the future.



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