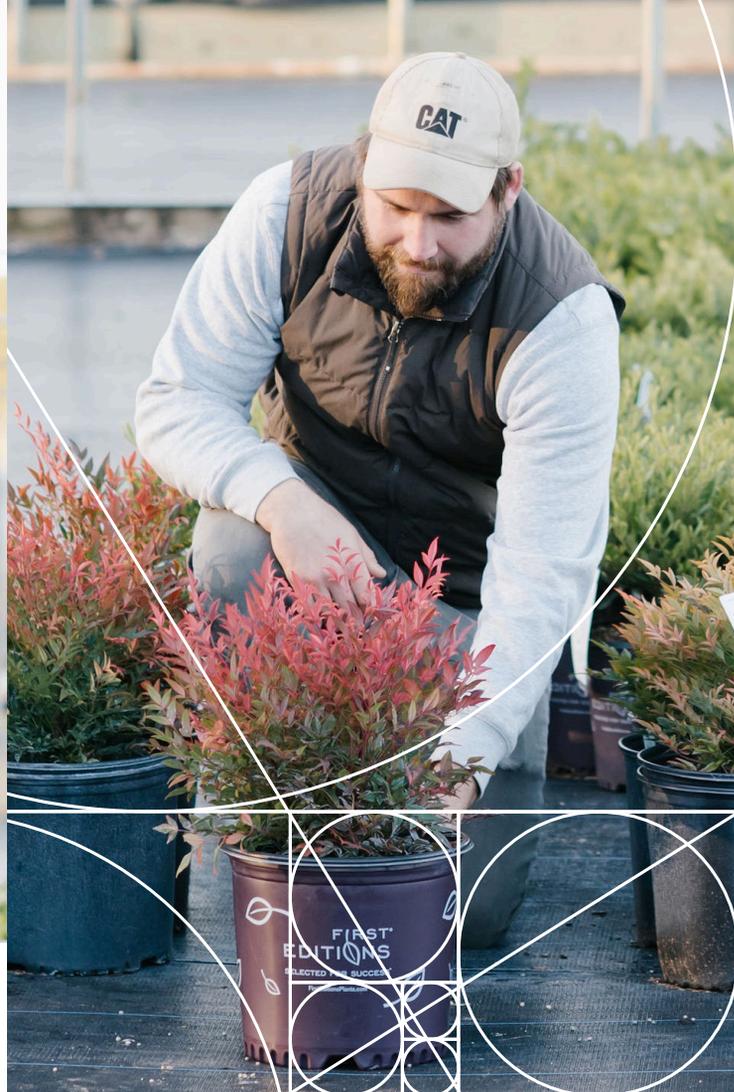




Growing minds

PART 2



The framework of the future

Industry-funded scholarships provide essential support for tomorrow's leaders

BY MITCH LIES

IT MIGHT NOT seem like much, but for **Justin Schulze**, plant breeder for Bailey Innovations, a division of **Bailey Nurseries**, the money he was able to cobble together through college scholarships was critical to launching his career.

“Those scholarships can allow us to go to something like Farwest [Show], meet up with other industry people, and that can make a big difference when you are trying to start a career,” Schulze said, “Making those connections is really important, and there is not always funding for grad students to go to trade shows.”

Schulze is one of numerous scholarship recipients from the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) now working in Oregon agriculture, including many working directly for Oregon nurseries. OAN has been awarding scholarships since the 1970s through the Oregon Nurseries Foundation.

Schulze, who is married with two children, said he was fortunate to have his tuition covered but found it a struggle to make ends meet while pursuing his master's degree in horticulture at **Oregon State University**.

“I was applying for every scholarship that I could find to just fill the gaps in our financial situation,” Schulze said. “Every

little thing makes a difference.”

He applied with Bailey Nurseries before obtaining his master's degree in horticulture and started with the company just weeks after graduation.

Today Schulze is involved in breeding small trees and shrubs and End-of-Summer® hydrangea for Bailey Innovations in Athens, Georgia.

“It feels good to be working in the field I got my degree in,” he said. “When I had my undergraduate degree, I worked jobs where I didn't feel like I was applying what I had learned. Now that I completed grad school and got the degree, I am working exactly at what I studied, and it feels good.”

A source of pride

Anne Marie Richards, who joined her family's business, **Motz & Son Nursery** in Portland, after graduating from OSU in 2016 with a degree in agriculture science, received a scholarship through the Oregon Nursery Foundation in 2015.

The money was helpful, she said. Equally rewarding was the pride the scholarship brought her family. “It made my family >>>

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Previous page: Justin Schulze inspects products at Bailey Innovations in Georgia.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY

Top: Anne Marie Richards currently works through many job duties at her family business, Motz & Son Nursery.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MOTZ & SON NURSERY



proud that the industry was recognizing my efforts to join the family business, that the industry was giving me an encouragement going into my new venture in life," Richards said.

Richards wears multiple hats at the nursery, including managing the business's spraying and integrated pest management, managing the company's human resources division, trucking, and performing inventory management and production scheduling.

Knowledge and insight she gained in soil science and nursery management classes have been particularly useful over the years.

"Probably one of the biggest lessons I learned while at OSU is how to work with people," she said. "I think in the ag science program, you do more of that than in other programs, just because there is more lab work and field work."

Richards today is enrolled in the masters of business administration program at the University of Portland and expects to have her graduate degree this month.

Signe Danler, a 2012 scholarship recipient, was in her 50s when she secured an Oregon Nursery Foundation scholarship to help fund a career change into the horticulture field.

Danler said she always had an interest in plants and eventually secured a master's degree in agriculture science that she

Justin Schulze earned a master's degree in horticulture, and now works with the breeding program at Bailey Innovations. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY

Bottom: Signe Danler was able to complete her education through the scholarship assistance. PHOTO COURTESY OF SIGNE DANLER



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used to land a position as instructor in the Master Gardener Online Program at OSU. The program, which had been dormant for two years before she revitalized it, has been hugely popular during the COVID-19 pandemic, at one time even crashing the OSU online system when a vegetable class went viral last year.

Danler, who had one son living at home while she was pursuing her degrees in horticulture, said obtaining scholarships was vital in her ability to pay for school.

"I am quite sure I wouldn't have been able to do it otherwise," she said.

Twenty scholarships a year

The OAN awards 20 scholarships a year, up from 19 a year ago after the Arthur

Spada family recently created a scholarship. Between 15 and 20 students are awarded each year, with some qualifying for multiple scholarships. Awards range from \$500 to \$1,500 per scholarship.



A mix of donations from OAN chapters and association funds fills the foundation's coffers.

Jennifer Satalino, director of The College Place-Oregon, an organization that helps match students to scholarships, said scholarships provide several benefits to students.

"First, there is the money, and anytime someone is giving you money to go to college, that is money that you don't have to save, you don't have to earn and you don't have to pay back," Satalino said.

"Second, there is that recogni-





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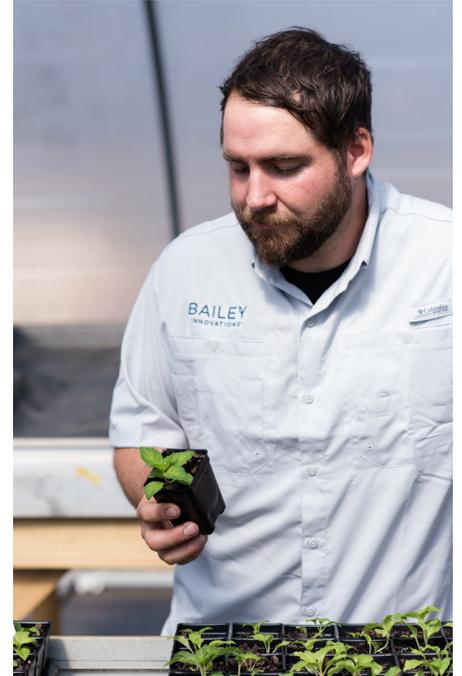


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tion. It gives you bragging rights and it makes you feel good that someone who is not related to you has recognized your value and your work, and that can be huge,” she said.

“And some scholarships, like the Ford Family Foundation, also have academic coaches and life coaches, and they do leadership conferences for the students that they are funding,” she said. “So, there can be a lot of other benefits.”

“But anything that keeps you from borrowing student loans is a fantastic thing,” Satalino said. “I think it is really important for every student to look for scholarships.”

Oregon is unique in that the state has a sort of clearing house for college scholarship applications. The Office of Student Access and Completion works to allow students to fill out one form that will enable them to apply for up to 40 scholarships.

“Most students won’t find 40 that are relevant to them,” Satalino said. “But if you can find five good scholarships to apply for on OSAC, that is great.”

Applying through OSAC also is a good primer for applying for other scholarships,” Satalino said. “After you get through that, everything else seems a lot easier.”

Also, a simple Google search for scholarships can bring up some viable options.

“I would just pull up the Google search engine and type in horticulture scholarships and open anything that catches my eye,” she said.



Previous page: Justin Schulze monitors new growth. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY

Top: Anne Marie Richards stands near heavy duty equipment at Motz & Son Nursery.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MOTZ & SON NURSERY

Typically, the most lucrative scholarships available to students come directly from a college or university.

“There are some really generous private scholarships out there,” she said, “especially here in Oregon. But they are

the outlier. Usually, you are going to get a lot of funding directly from the college or university. So, it really makes sense for students to check out the scholarships available to them at the institutions they are interested in, and to know the applica-

tion process and know the deadline.”

“Then you want to start looking at local scholarships,” she said.

Specialty scholarships provided by organizations like the OAN can be valuable, in part because application pools are smaller than general scholarships, which narrows the competition for the scholarships.

Variety of qualifications

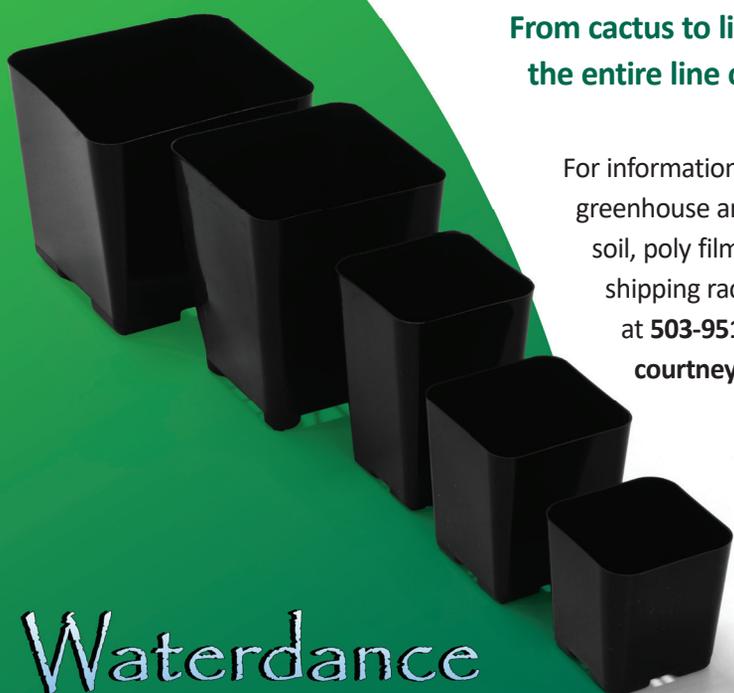
Scholarships have a variety of qualifications, Satalino said. Some are merit based, some need based. Some require high grade point averages. Some, like the Ford Family Foundation scholarships, don’t.

“The thing about scholarships is that their criteria vary by who is donating money,” Satalino said. “Kenneth Ford, who founded Roseburg Lumber Products, was not the valedictorian of his graduating class, and he wasn’t the lowest >>>

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scoring student. He was just in the middle. So, when he set up the scholarship program, it wasn't for overachievers or underachievers, it was just for good solid kids who are going to grow up and become leaders in their community."

Scholarships available through the Oregon Nursery Foundation have several different criteria, according to Stephanie Weihrauch, director of finance and administration for OAN, with one constant.

"Our goal is to provide scholarships for those who are going into the nursery industry," she said. "So, you have to be in a field related to horticulture. We have some in landscape design. We have some students majoring in business who are children of OAN members and plan to take over the family business. They qualify as well."

The foundation typically fields around 30 applicants, she said. Last year, 27 applied.

"These and other scholarships available to students interested in our industry are extremely important resources," Weihrauch said. "We in this industry want to nurture this interest in horticulture and nursery management and want to help them to be able to get that education."

People interested in donating to the scholarship program at the Oregon Nursery Foundation, can go to www.oan.org/page/onfdonate.

More information on The College Place-Oregon can be obtained by going to www.ecmc.org/students/tcp-oregon.html. Satalino can be reached at jsatalino@ecmc.org.

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