

MEET THE LEADER

The voices of Oregon's nursery industry

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

I am a first generation American. My parents, Martin and Helene, immigrated from the bulb fields of Northern Holland to the Pacific Northwest in 1979 in pursuit of the American Dream. They started the family cut flower farm, Oregon Flowers Inc., in 1985, forcing bulbs into cut flowers. Growing up, I spent my childhood within the flowers, often being found climbing and building forts on peat moss bags and “helping” around the greenhouse. My family routinely travelled to Holland, visiting in-laws and friends while staying connected to the European bulb and flower industry. I now live on the farm with my wife, Megan, and three kids, Kase (5), Beckham (3) and Vivian (9 months).

My education started at North Marion School and I later attended La Salle College Prep in Milwaukie. I enjoyed participating in high school athletics — specifically soccer — and was a member of 4H raising pigs in Canby. During my high school summer breaks, I would spend my time in Holland. I worked for my uncle's tulip bulb farm, supporting their tulip bulb harvest. Just before college, I spent 4 months working for Valdivia Lilies, a lily bulb grower in the southern part of Chile. This deepened my interest in the flower industry and introduced me to some prominent members of the flower industry. During my time in Valdivia, I made contacts with many Dutch bulb farmers and breeders who often visited during the Chilean bulb harvest in June. Soon after, I attended Oregon State University and earned a bachelor degree in agriculture business and management with a minor in horticulture. After college graduation, I spent a year working in Holland. I interned with a lily breeder, Gebr. Vletter den Haan, in Rijnsburg. When I returned to Oregon, I formally stepped into the family business. I currently spend my days running the family business and enjoying time with my family on the flower farm.

WHAT'S YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

My guiding principles are to stay positive, do the right thing, and keep the big picture in mind.



Tyler Meskers
Vice President
Oregon Flowers, Inc.

OAN member since 2009

OAN roles/positions:

- Board of Directors Greenhouse Grower Representative

WHAT'S A GOAL YOU HAVE YET TO ACHIEVE?

My goal for Oregon Flowers Inc. is to continue its growth with efficient labor-saving equipment and facilities, while keeping the current labor force.



HARDEST BUSINESS DECISION

The hardest business decision I have made was to stop buying bulb material from a family member in Holland. For years, our family purchased flower bulbs from my aunts and uncles in Holland. My family has a close relationship and regularly work together. We came to a point where buying from family simply did not work. This choice was very difficult, as it was the best choice for our business, but challenging from an emotional standpoint for our family.

WHO IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR?

My most significant mentors are two my past employers and my parents. The opportunity Alex Aalwyn of Valdivia Lilies and Rian Vletter of Gebr. Vletter den Haan provided me during my internships were paramount to my knowledge and growth within the floral industry. Also, my parents are important business mentors. Coming to this country with four suitcases and creating a successful company is something I really admire. They truly are an example of the American Dream and in my opinion, the hardest working people I know.

BEST BUSINESS ADVICE:

One thing COVID-19 has taught me is that you never know what tomorrow will bring. My best business advice is to look at every challenge as an opportunity.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE NURSERY INDUSTRY?

What I love most about the nursery industry are the people. Throughout the years, our family and business have created lifelong friends through working together. I feel that the nursery industry is very supportive of each other. It feels good to be a part of a community that shares a similar attitude.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE?

COVID-19 has been a rollercoaster. In April 2, 2020, our company lost 90% of our customers for 2–3 weeks. There was one day we were receiving calls every 10 minutes from our customers, canceling orders >>



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Tyler Meskers

and closing their businesses. We had greenhouses full of flowers and were still waiting on Valentine's Day payments. On top of that, we had to throw mountains of flowers away daily, as our customers were not ordering anything. The hardest task was to rally our family, crew and business providing confidence that we will get through this. The market recovered in May, and has been strong since. I am proud that we are now generating record sales, with plans of expansion. It has been a humbling experience to say the least.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

I am fortunate to work with a product that makes people happy. Flowers bring joy and make people smile.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I am proud of the journey I have taken to get to this point. Running the family business and raising my family on the farm is something I feel very proud of. I am excited about what opportunities are yet to come.

WHAT IS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE OAN?

I currently serve on the OAN Board of Directors as a greenhouse grower representative. Although being on a board is new to me, I will strive to do my best to provide for the families, farms, and nurseries involved. I look forward to doing my part in improving our industry.

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

I think the most critical challenge facing our nursery industry today is the increased regulations put on our families and businesses. My family came to the United States in pursuit of freedom, specifically the freedom to dream and the ability to think freely. I understand regulation is necessary, but should not be in place to limit opportunity for growth or dreams. I truly hope our politicians can stay focused on our nursery needs and provide support to better our industry and help our families and businesses thrive. ☺