

# Digger<sup>🌿</sup>

NOVEMBER 2021

## The Transportation Issue

Searching for  
shipping options

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Keeping drivers  
in the loop

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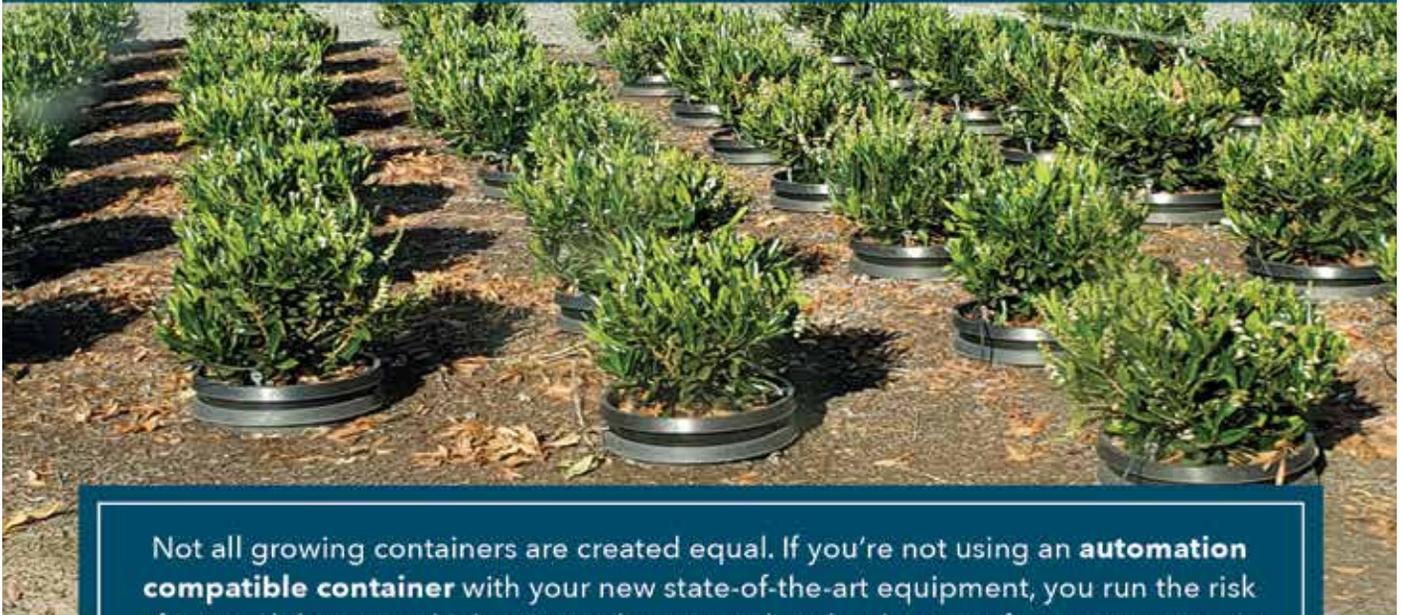
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## The Transportation Issue

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**On the cover:** These days, it feels like trucking options are hard to find. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY BILL GOLOSKI

**On this page:** Left: A refrigerated truck leaves J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. loading dock. CAPTURE COURTESY OF J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO. Right: Researchers trial different herbicides in a nursery setting. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY



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# The start of a beautiful journey

## Hello everyone.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Josh Robinson. Alongside my parents, Rick and Roxanne, and brother, Chris, I am a co-owner of Robinson Nursery in McMinnville, Oregon.

Mom and Dad started the business in 1984. I consider myself blessed to have been raised on the farm and as a part of the nursery community. My earliest memory is playing in the sawdust beds with Chris. We would stand at the top of the pile and pretend to be various employees, placing imaginary bundles of freshly dug, bare root plants in the sawdust to heal.

Even though Chris would occasionally convince me I was the bundle that needed to get "healed in," I can pinpoint that the joy from these childhood games was the beginning of our nursery journey together.

Chris and I would spend many summers working in propagation, learning where the life of the plants at our nursery began. From the moment our propagator showed me it is possible to take a stick with roots and graft a cultivar to it, I was hooked. This is where my love for the plants and our world-changing employees was born.

In 2004, I went to study business at Linfield College in McMinnville. I graduated in 2008 and had my sights set on starting my own business in the bubble tea and coffee industry. After a very trying year, with many valuable lessons learned, my path to becoming a nurseryman continued and I was back at the nursery in 2009.

I experienced all the jobs the nursery had to offer and found my place in a customer service role. Here, a co-worker wisely encouraged me to get involved with the OAN. My first experience was sitting on the OAN Marketing Committee. From there, I got involved with the Sunset Chapter's activities.

My deep appreciation for the OAN began at the chapter meetings. It blew my mind that I was invited to spend time with some of the best in the industry. The wealth of knowledge and everyone's willingness to share it is a true testament to the character of this industry and what makes us so successful.

Engaging and investing in the next generation of growers is a value I hold close to my heart. When the OAN began a networking platform for young nursery people at the Farwest Show, I knew I had found my home. I soon dove into the Government Relations Committee, the Membership Committee, and then the Board of Directors. Eventually, I was asked to join the Executive Committee. Through all these experiences, I have learned how fundamental this association is to the success of our industry. We have someone watching out for us when new rules and regulations are being formed by a distant government branch. We have a voice with significant influence when legislation is being drafted. The presence of the OAN allows each of us the ability to do what we do best in an environment that would simply not be possible without diligent advocacy.

I would have never got to this point without the full support of my family, most importantly my wife Ashley. I am excited to be an advocate for you and to be a part of the impact the OAN generates. I am looking forward to the challenges this year will bring, and I am grateful to you for allowing me to be your president.

I would like to give a special thank you to our outgoing president, Kyle Fessler of Woodburn Nursery and Azaleas Inc., and his wife, Molly.

Kyle, your ability to be efficient, incredibly thoughtful, and thorough while representing all our members is something I admire and will strive to do. Molly, thank you for your support and putting Kyle in a position to allow our industry to benefit from his leadership. ©



Josh Robinson



# Calendar

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

## NOVEMBER - VARIOUS DATES

### FIRST AID AND CPR CLASSES

OAN-sponsored First Aid and Adult CPR training classes started this fall. Sign up early to guarantee your seat in the course, as registrations will only be accepted up until two days before the class is scheduled to take place. Successful completion results in certification that is good for two years. Two classes will be held at the CPR Lifeline facility, 9320 S.W. Barbur Blvd #175, Portland, Oregon. The session on November 11 will be conducted in English, and the class on November 15 will be in Spanish. One class will be held at the OAN office, 29751 S.W. Town Center Loop West, Wilsonville, Oregon on December 7. Register online at [www.oan.org/cprclass](http://www.oan.org/cprclass)

## NOVEMBER 2-4

### OAN ANNUAL CONVENTION

The annual Oregon Association of Nurseries Convention will take place Tuesday-Thursday at the Grand Wailea, a luxury oceanfront resort on Maui, Hawaii. The agenda includes hospitality suites reception, Annual Membership Business Meeting and General Session, and President's Awards Banquet. Go to [www.oan.org/convention](http://www.oan.org/convention) for details.

## DECEMBER 6-10

### IRRIGATION SHOW & EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The world's largest in-person trade show dedicated to irrigation will take place in San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California, following the latest protocols set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Attendees can make plans to see technical session and seminars, view new products and technologies, and find solutions to all issues in agriculture, landscape, lighting, golf, turf irrigation and specialty solutions. Visit [www.irrigation.org/2021Show](http://www.irrigation.org/2021Show) for more information.

## JANUARY 5-7, 2022

### MANTS

The Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center (One West Pratt St., Baltimore, Maryland). The trade show is anticipated to have nearly 1,000 exhibitors and 12,000 attendees. Early-bird registration is \$20 for attendees for all three days of the show. The discount rate expires on December 1, when the cost to attend raises to \$30. All exhibitors and attendees are required to follow state and local health guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For more information, log on to [www.mants.com](http://www.mants.com).

## JANUARY 12-14, 2022

### NORTHWEST AG SHOW

The 52th edition of the Northwest Ag Show



## NOVEMBER 14-15

### OREGON WATER LAW CONFERENCE

The 28th annual Water Law Conference will be held in the Two World Trade Center Building, 121 S.W. Salmon St., Portland, Oregon. Meta Loftsgaarden, executive director of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board has been invited to present the keynote speaker. General and ethics credits may apply for those who attend. To register, log on to [www.theseminargroup.net](http://www.theseminargroup.net).

will be held at the Oregon State Fair & Exhibition Center, 2330 17th St. N.E., Salem. The annual event focuses on the emerging trends in the ag industry such as small farming, technology and education. The show coincides with the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce's SAIF Agri-Business Banquet on Friday, January 17 at the Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St. S.E., Salem ([tinyurl.com/y5vba3gp](http://tinyurl.com/y5vba3gp)). Both events contribute to Ag Week celebrations for the Salem area. For more information, log on to [northwestagshow.com](http://northwestagshow.com).

## JANUARY 25-26, 2022

### UTAH GREEN

Presented by the Utah Nursery & Landscape Association, the event will be held at the Mountain America Expo Center, 9575 State St., Sandy, Utah. The show features green industry vendors from across the nation and offers seminars on topics such as business management, landscape design, plant material, irrigation, and many others. Full details are available on [www.utahgreen.org](http://www.utahgreen.org).

## FEBRUARY 1-4, 2022

### PROGREEN EXPO

An educational green industry conference, the ProGreen EXPO features seminars and exhibits on the latest in green technology products, new business efficiency methods, and opportunities for continuing education exams and certifications. More than 4,000 professionals attend the event held at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. Visit [www.progreenexpo.com](http://www.progreenexpo.com) for more information.

## FEBRUARY 14

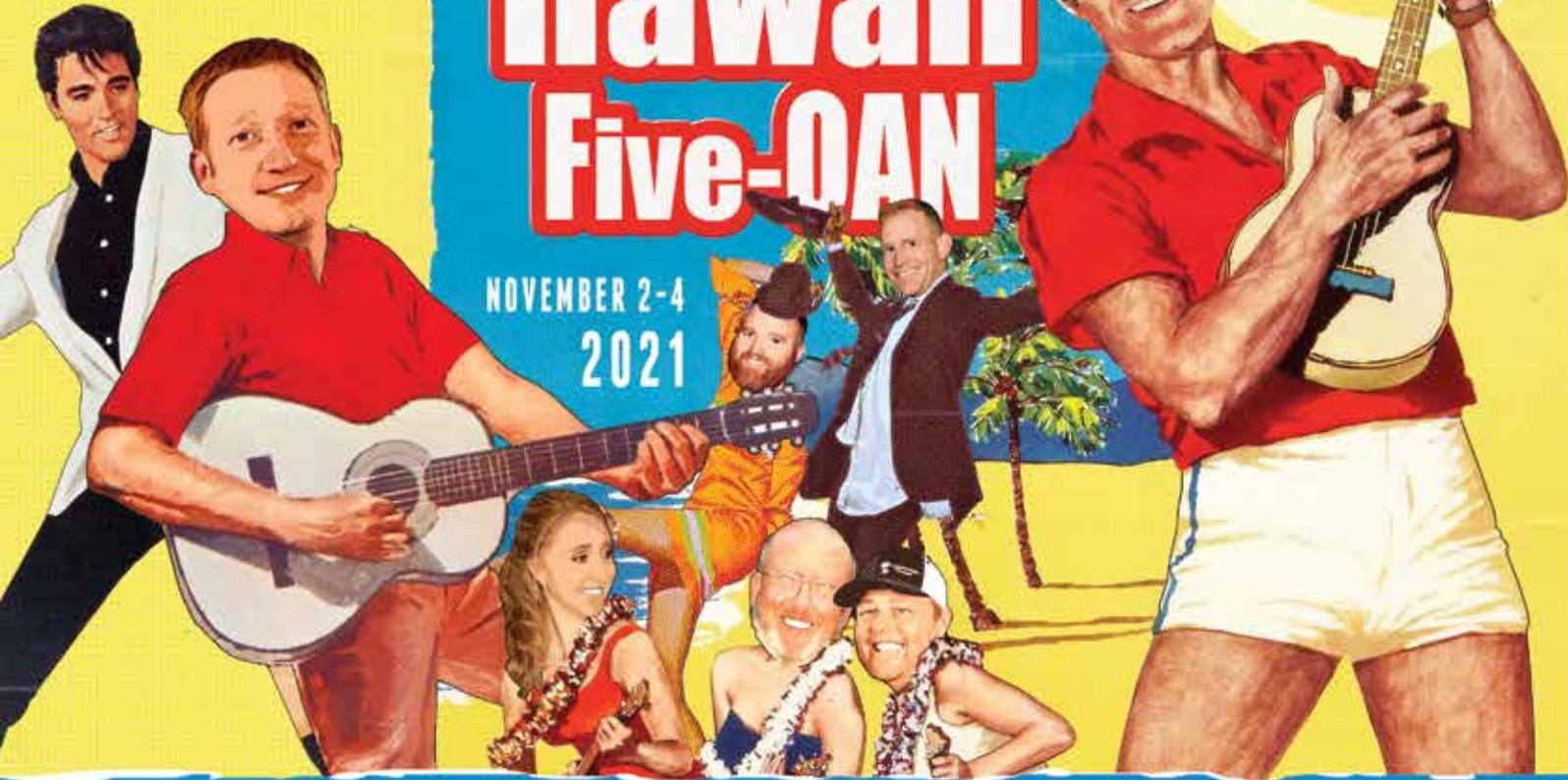
### NOR CAL LANDSCAPE & NURSERY SHOW

The Nor Cal Landscape & Nursery Trade Show is a one-day professional collaboration between California's horticulture and landscape industries. It features more than 250 exhibits and nine educational seminars. Revenues raised by the Nor Cal Show are reinvested in the industry through education, research and philanthropy. The event takes place at the San Mateo Expo Center, 1346 Saratoga Drive, San Mateo, California. Register online at [www.norcaltradeshow.org](http://www.norcaltradeshow.org) 

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## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

The OAN would like to thank all of the sponsors for their generous support of the 2021 Convention!

It was a landmark return to the Hawaiian islands. More than 80 OAN members and guests had a wonderful time at the luxury oceanfront hotel with acres of tropical gardens. Members gathered to discuss the tests and trials the industry faces over the last growing season, and recognize the leaders who contributed to the success of the association. Congratulations to everyone.

The OAN is looking forward to another great annual Convention next year! Stay tuned for details.

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# Northwest News

OAN members and chapters are encouraged to send in relevant news items, such as new hires, new products, acquisitions, honors received and past or upcoming events. Email [news@oan.org](mailto:news@oan.org).

## Nurseries continue to be profitable

There's been little change this past quarter in the market outlook for nurseries and greenhouses, according to the most recent Nursery Greenhouse Market Snapshot issued by Northwest Farm Credit Services (NWFC). Forecasts still call for profitable operations over the next 12 months, thanks to strong demand and a strong housing market that drives plant sales, even as increasing labor and trucking costs cut into producers' margins. The snapshot report can be downloaded at [tinyurl.com/23s7kd4w](http://tinyurl.com/23s7kd4w) (PDF).

Straw poll results support the idea that the industry continues to be on a roll. This past spring, producers reported a 14.6% increase in year-over-year demand, following 15.5% growth in 2020 and 24.2% in 2019. This year's increase within the shade tree sector was a whopping 30.4% over 2020.

NWFC stated in its Crop Inputs Market Snapshot that agricultural producers across the spectrum will face higher costs for crop inputs due to manufacturing disruptions, increasing prices and shipping disruptions. Equipment and machinery are harder to come by due to computer chip shortages. This report can be downloaded at [tinyurl.com/7xt8evcw](http://tinyurl.com/7xt8evcw) (PDF).

In its Land Values Market Snapshot, values were reported to be stable to increasing. There is strong demand for good quality agricultural properties. Prices are up, but the number of properties changing hands has plummeted — 1200 sales in 2020, but fewer than 400 in 2021 to date. The latter trend surely affects the outlook for those looking to add to their holdings so they can increase production, as well as those looking to sell, scale down or retire. Go to [tinyurl.com/6jmtuupb](http://tinyurl.com/6jmtuupb) (PDF) to download that report.



Growers and retailers like Farmington Gardens in Beaverton contributed to the overall excellence that led to the nursery and green house industry reaching nearly \$1.2 billion in sales. PHOTO BY BILL GOLOSKI

## OREGON SETS RECORD WITH \$1.19 BILLION IN NURSERY SALES

The nursery and greenhouse industry remained the top segment in all of Oregon agriculture in 2020 with \$1.19 billion in sales, the Oregon Department of Agriculture reported in its new Oregon Agricultural Statistics brochure.

“Oregon’s greenhouse and nursery industry experienced a COVID-19 boon in 2020, with the value of production topping \$1 billion for a second year in a row,” OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone said. “The ‘stay home’ orders last spring and summer boosted nursery sales nationwide, as more people took up gardening and landscaping.”

Stone noted that Oregon has 37,200 farms and ranches growing more than 225 different commodities across the state. “We’re proud of the agricultural industry, and the fact that the nursery and greenhouse industry leads the way,” he said.

Oregon’s \$1.19 billion sales figure for 2020 represents an all-time high, exceeding the previous

record of \$1.039 billion set in 2007, prior to the Great Recession.

It was also more than double the second-ranked commodity for 2020, which was cattle and calves with \$587.8 million in sales. The nursery figure does not include Christmas trees, which are Oregon’s 13th-ranked commodity for 2020 with \$106.9 million in sales.

According to USDA statistics, Oregon is third in the nation for nursery stock overall, growing 11 percent of the material sold nationwide. The state is #1 nationally in sales of bareroot stock (\$134.6 million) and B&B stock (\$92.9 million). It’s tops in coniferous evergreens (\$121.4 million), deciduous shade trees (\$118 million) and deciduous flowering trees (\$51 million), while ranking third in broadleaf evergreens (\$91 million) and deciduous shrubs (\$73.7 million).

Oregon’s reported nursery and greenhouse sales for 2019 were initially reported as \$955 million, but the figure was later corrected to \$1.06

### 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](http://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.



**Oregon nursery and greenhouse sales by years**

YEAR	TOTAL SALES	RANK
2020	\$1,188,911,000	1
2019	\$1,064,430,000	1
2018	\$996,000,000	1
2017	\$947,727,000	1
2016	\$909,493,000	1
2015	\$894,833,000	2
2014	\$829,909,000	2
2013	\$745,162,000	1
2012	\$745,162,000	1
2011	\$742,487,000	1
2010	\$667,040,000	1
2009	\$732,570,000	1
2008	\$880,061,000	1
2007	\$1,039,180,000	1
2006	\$877,000,000	
2005	\$867,831,000	1
2004	\$844,000,000	
2003	\$778,000,000	
2002	\$727,000,000	

DATA COURTESY OF OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY AND USDA NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE.

billion. The state's nursery and greenhouse sales have continuously grown since the Great Recession, after bottoming out at \$676 million in 2010.

The ranking of Oregon's Top 20 agricultural commodities for 2020 is as follows:

1. Greenhouse & nursery.. \$1,188,911,000
2. Cattle & calves ..... \$587,848,000
3. Hay ..... \$569,160,000
4. Milk ..... \$557,348,000
5. Grass seed ..... \$458,367,000
6. Wheat..... \$273,760,000
7. Potatoes..... \$216,810,000
8. Grapes for wine ..... \$157,900,000
9. Cherries..... \$133,826,000
10. Hazelnuts ..... \$132,300,000
11. Blueberries..... \$119,648,000
12. Onions ..... \$118,665,000
13. Christmas trees ..... \$106,912,000
14. Pears..... \$97,552,000

15. Corn, grain..... \$77,542,000
16. Hops..... \$74,812,000
17. Eggs..... \$72,999,000
18. Dungeness crab..... \$72,643,709
19. Sweet corn..... \$41,034,000
20. Apples ..... \$39,208,000

**OREGON AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FIBER REPORT RELEASED**

Oregon State University (OSU) College of Agricultural Sciences and Extension Service, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, has compiled an economic analysis *Oregon Agriculture, Food and Fiber*. The report is published every 5-6 years.

Broadly speaking, it shows that the ag sector supports 371,300 jobs, makes up 9.1% of the entire Oregon economy, and is valued at \$42 billion. Some ➤




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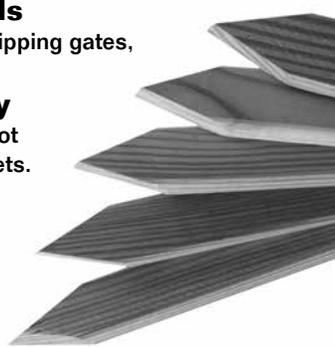


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Contemporary issues such as new developments in hemp and recreational marijuana, wildfire disasters and the COVID-19 disruptions are addressed in the findings. More than 2,000 new farms were established, but the state saw a shift in operation sizes. There were 3,417 new one- to nine-acre farms, 21 new 2,000-plus-acre farms, but a loss of 1,217 farms in the 50-to-999-acre range.

“The report provides a snapshot of where the Oregon agriculture, food and fiber sector stands,” said Jeff Reimer, a professor of applied economics and one of the authors of the report. “We’re able to do this analysis that shows linkages that wouldn’t be apparent if you were just looking at statistics about the economy.” Download the PDF at [tinyurl.com/y6wxyff8](http://tinyurl.com/y6wxyff8)

### GROWERS SEE GAPS IN USDA DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAMS

Given recent weather-related disasters, nursery stock growers are raising concerns that federal disaster relief programs aren’t suited to help specialty crops, according to a report from *Capital Press* (Salem, Oregon). Blueberries, winegrapes and other products suffered greatly under the heat dome in June, but many growers don’t purchase crop insurance provided by USDA because it seems to be designed to help major commodity crops. Damage assessment of a soybean field is pretty cut and dried, but calculating tree damage is not measured so quickly. The crop must be dead to be considered a failed crop qualifying for federal assistance. A tree or shrub can suffer severe ice and heat damage without dying.

“The trees are technically not dead, but

they’re not salable,” said Jeff Stone, executive director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries. “You can try to rehabilitate a tree or a plant, but it’s not ready for a customer.”

Advocacy groups are urging Oregon lawmakers to make financial assistance available to farmers and ranchers with the \$150 million allocated for disaster prevention and response during the most recent legislative session. Read the full article at [tinyurl.com/yas3k9mc](http://tinyurl.com/yas3k9mc)

### EOU LAUNCHES AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP MAJOR

Eastern Oregon University (EOU) in La Grande, Oregon, has developed a new major for the next generation of farming professionals, according to a report from *Capital Press* (Salem, Oregon). The program, agricultural entrepreneurship, is a

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new four-year course of study that combines agricultural science and business topics.

“The reality is that in agriculture, you need to have both the business know-how and fundamental science background,” Chad Mueller, program coordinator and head advisor in the EOU Crop and Soil Science Department, said. He will be responsible for recruiting students for the major and also reaching out to businesses willing to offer internship opportunities.

Companies such as **J.R. Simplot Co.** and Beef Northwest have explained to university representatives that the agricultural industry needs innovative thinkers with farm-focused problem-solving skills in their workforce. Graduates of the program will be a good fit for making smart financial decisions in a competitive ag-based marketplace. The university expects at least 20 students to participate in the

inaugural launch of the program. Log on to [tinyurl.com/f4cfhuty](http://tinyurl.com/f4cfhuty) to read more.

## WATER FILTRATION FACILITY ON FARMLAND MEETS OPPOSITION

Growers and farm advocacy groups are pushing back against a proposal to build a 95-acre public utility structure outside on farmland that’s supposed to be protected by Oregon land use law. They’re concerned that adding a \$1 billion water filtration facility for the Portland metropolitan area in rural Multnomah County would set a bad precedent for other Oregon municipalities needing new infrastructure.

Rod Park of **Park’s Nursery** (Gresham, Oregon) told reporters that if the proposal goes through, decision-makers will realize it’s easier to build every future facility on agricultural land, where the dirt is cheaper and

there are fewer zoning laws.

The Oregon Association of Nurseries, Oregon Farm Bureau, and the 1,000 Friends of Oregon have urged the Oregon Department of Agriculture to ensure the facility meets land use criteria. They’re concerned the move would displace agricultural use land and disrupt businesses. Pipelines and easements could divide growing operations and make the land more difficult to manage. There are also concerns about the noise, air quality, traffic safety, and urbanization issues that may come with the project.

Bonita Oswald, Portland’s Bull Run treatment communications manager, stated that the city’s Water Bureau already has drinking water facilities in the area that do not affect agricultural operations and it will work to make sure the filtration facility follows suit. >>

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The *Capital Press* agricultural newspaper (Salem, Oregon) published an article on the proposal, which can be read at [tinyurl.com/2u5hsrvh](http://tinyurl.com/2u5hsrvh).

### HIRING SCREENING SHOWS THE DEPTH OF LABOR SHORTAGE

The Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) didn't receive any viable U.S. candidates when they tried to solicit applications for farm jobs, according to a report from *Capital Press* (Salem, Oregon).

Critics of H-2A labor programs believe that foreign workers are displacing jobs for local Americans. However, from the 112 resumes that were submitted, none of them were from U.S. candidates who met the minimum job requirements. Instead, most came from international guestworkers.

Employment offices have been closed

due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have skewed the response rate. However, ESD also announced the jobs through radio ads, flyers, and posters.

WAFLA Executive Director Dan Fazio and Washington Growers League Executive Director Mike Gempler were not surprised by the results. The data shows that agricultural businesses face a narrow labor market and the assumptions about negative assumptions about the role the H-2A program are unfounded. Visit [tinyurl.com/a6r4kyhz](http://tinyurl.com/a6r4kyhz) to read the full story.

### WASHINGTON STATE RAISES MINIMUM WAGE TO \$14.49

A near 6% rise in the minimum wage will come into effect next calendar year, according to the Washington Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). The rate will be

\$14.49 per hour starting January 1, 2022.

It will be in effect statewide, but cities are permitted to set a higher minimum wage at their discretion. The cities of Seattle and Sea Tac are two that do this. Oregon, by contrast, has a statewide minimum wage that varies based on region.

Furthermore, agricultural workers will be eligible to earn overtime pay after working 55 hours or more a week next year.

The salary threshold for overtime-exempt employees also increases through the Minimum Wage Act. L&I also created an implementation schedule for small and large businesses using the newly updated minimum wage baseline. Download the schedule at [tinyurl.com/yrk6za7c](http://tinyurl.com/yrk6za7c).

Agriculture jobs meet most minimum wage standards. Workers who are 16 years old and older earn the minimum wage rate. Younger workers must be paid



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An aerial view of the new Marion Ag Services facilities.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARION AG SERVICES



85% of that, or \$12.32 per hour. Read more at [tinyurl.com/pamyzuuz](http://tinyurl.com/pamyzuuz).

## HARRELL'S EXPANDS PARTNERSHIP WITH MARION AG

Marion Ag Service has joined into a distribution and blending agreement with Harrell's LLC, and will help them with formulating, blending, and packaging parts of POLYON® controlled-release fertilizer. The two companies have been partners since 1996 and Marion has made several updates to onboard POLYON formulation. The company recently finished building a 75,000 square foot bulk storage facility, 150,000 square foot finished product storage facility, and set up two Precision Formulated soft handling blending lines. Marion Ag also received an ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Certification.

Harrell's is the sole world distributor of POLYON, but also produces and distributes custom-blended fertilizers, specialty liquids, and wetting agents.

## SUMMER TREE DAMAGE FROM DROUGHT, HEAT STILL UNCLEAR

Tree failure due to drought is not usually immediate, and their mortality rate after this summer's intense heat events is yet to be known, KTVZ (Portland, Oregon) reported.

Dave Shaw, Oregon State University

professor and forest health specialist, says citizens won't know the full extent of the damage caused by the heat dome at the end of June 2021 and ongoing drought until next spring.

To date, observers have seen leaves turning brown instead of changing to their traditional fall colors before falling to the ground. Andrew Craig, a certified arborist at Springwater Arboriculture in Milwaukie, Oregon, noted that when trees lose too many leaves, they can't collect the energy they need to grow and fight off diseases.

Big leaf maples and hemlocks are succumbing to year after year of drought and pest infestations. Craig specifically noted that the Western red cedar will disappear over the next 20 years unless there are protected. Log on to [tinyurl.com/4ytn4m4m](http://tinyurl.com/4ytn4m4m) to read more.

## CONGRESSIONAL PACKAGE INCLUDES \$10 BILLION FOR AG

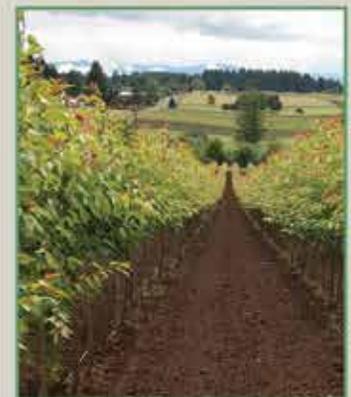
Some \$10 billion in disaster assistance for agricultural producers was included in a continuing resolution that would keep the federal government running through December, the *Capital Press* (Salem, Oregon) reported. The resolution contains an expansion of the USDA's Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Plus Program, or WHIP+, and \$275 million for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

A series of severe weather events in >>



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## Northwest News

2020 and 2021 — including fires, droughts, floods, hurricanes, and ice storms — have taken a toll on all producers, including the ornamental plant industry.

Oregon Association of Nurseries Executive Director Jeff Stone estimated that the June heat dome alone caused \$50 million in damage to nursery products. “I don’t care what you grow, 117 degrees is not good for any of it,” he said. “Those types of events like the heat dome are not normal.”

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon) told the newspaper he met with a number of producers over the summer and has pushed for more disaster assistance to be included. Visit [tinyurl.com/4p9kejre](http://tinyurl.com/4p9kejre) to learn more.

### DENNIS' 7 DEES NAMED TOP WORKPLACE BY OREGONIAN

Dennis' 7 Dees has ranked 36 on *The Oregonian*/OregonLive Top Workplaces competition for midsize employers (100 to 499 employees in Oregon and/or southwest Washington). The news organization published the results based on an employee survey that asked participants to rate their employers on workplace culture, pay rate, benefits, productivity, leadership, corporate values and more.

The company is noted for having a robust family-oriented approach to staff management, and growth opportunities let people work their way into new positions. In addition, employees receive plenty of great benefits, including affordable health, dental, vision, and life insurance coverage, plus paid time off, employee discounts, employer matching 401(k) plan, tuition reimbursement, career development opportunities, and more.

The retail/landscaping firm employs nearly 300 people today, and is projected to earn more than \$39 million in revenue in 2021. The company was established by Merle and Robert Snodgrass in 1956. The company was renamed by sons Dennis and Drake Snodgrass in 1975, and is currently owned and operated by brothers David, Dean, and Drew Snodgrass. The full rankings are available on [tinyurl.com/y6zjfy3c](http://tinyurl.com/y6zjfy3c). ©

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# Uncharted territory

Providing leadership through turbulent changes is a challenge

BY JERRY OLSON

**T**HE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has affected each of us differently, but one thing we can all agree on is that business as we knew it has forever changed.

As leaders, we must be flexible to these changes. Does your leadership style allow for that? Are your skills keeping up? Keep those questions in mind as we look at just a few of the ways business has changed in the last year.

## Workspace

Workspaces have changed significantly. “Work from home” (WFH) and “work from anywhere” (WFA) are the norm, not the exception. Even businesses that work primarily in the field and at clients’ sites have seen changes.

Cramming 20 people into your office lobby for the morning circus no longer works. Meetings with clients and prospects at their kitchen table is no longer the accepted norm.

Thankfully, great video tools are now readily available to make client meetings still possible. One-on-one meetings with your team members can happen on video calls. And, after a few frustrating months, it seems as if most of us are getting close to becoming adept at using those tools. Though it’s definitely not what the majority of us would prefer, it certainly has helped keep many companies moving forward with business as usual.

We’ll never go back to the way things were in 2019. The top business leaders are incorporating these new ideas about the

workspace into their long-term plans. Are you?

## Employee-employer relationships

With tens of millions of people in our country and hundreds of millions worldwide having experienced layoffs, furloughs, pay cuts and other less dramatic disruptions, the foundations of trust in the employee-employer relationship were shaken, if not destroyed. What does this mean for us as leaders? How can we rebuild and strengthen relationships with our people?

Having clear strategies for engaging and empowering people are more important than ever in the current chaos. This is especially true for the green industry and the numerous businesses dependent on flexible seasonal staffing.

## Business planning

We learned quickly that traditional business planning and management is no match for a pandemic. How were any of us to know what was coming down the pike as we set our goals way back in the fourth quarter of 2019?

Though we had great plans and big ideas, a lot of that work went to waste as those goals had nothing to do with re-shifting entire business models to adhere to new guidelines and regulations. How can we think differently about how we plan for the next month, quarter or year?

Thousands of businesses in our country have already



closed and many more are on the brink. However, many businesses will survive and move forward in this new reality. To lead the pack, companies will need strong, flexible leaders who are excited to face the challenges head, have a compelling vision communicated clearly and often to an aligned team, and will run on meaningful, timely data.

How do you get there? We have a few suggestions.

### 1. Create and communicate a compelling vision

A foundation of business success begins with a clear plan for the future that makes a difference in the lives of those served. This vision must include both a long-term view of a future better than today, as well as plans for short-term tactics that move the business forward in meaningful ways.

It must also include plans for building and maintaining a desired culture based on shared values. And it must be flexible enough to adjust to our fast-changing society and economy.

To make the vision compelling, effective leaders, now more than ever, must be skilled and practiced at clearly communicating the vision.

Some of our clients who really excel at this communicate their company's vision through banners, posters, or words painted on the walls of their buildings. Others include it on their business cards and in their email signatures. We even have one owner who has it tattooed on his arm!

Just joking about that last one — but

you get the point. Your company's vision cannot sit on a piece of paper in the owner's office. In order to get your team fully aligned around where you're going, they have to be privy to the plan, engaged in the business, and ready to adjust when things change.

### 2. Align your team

Great leaders successfully navigate turbulent times by making sure their team is aligned with the vision for the future, the values on which the culture is built, and a clear, prioritized action plan broken into weekly increments. There needs to be a rhythm of weekly tracking and check-ins that focus on adjusting to what's happening in real time.

So, how do you align your team around a single goal? Better yet, how do you optimize your team members' skills and strengths to come up with and make that next great idea a reality? We truly believe a team of people aligned with a compelling vision all working in harmony can bring to life great ideas an individual can only dream of.

In order to overcome the eroding employer-employee relationship, this alignment must exist throughout the organization. Successful business leaders execute tactics that drive this alignment throughout the company, embedding it in all areas including the recruiting, selection, and performance management processes.

This includes setting clear expectations for how the alignment comes to life in the direction of the company as well as the

behaviors of the people and the results of their work. It also includes regular one-on-one meetings with your team members with meaningful feedback on how they measure up to the expectations.

This is important in every business in the current upheaval and even more so for every business with people who are remote and spend their days out in the field.

### 3. Identify and track meaningful data

Especially in a time of chaos, measuring progress toward a compelling vision with meaningful, actionable, and timely data is critical. Using real-time data tracked on a weekly cadence to manage a business can accelerate the business quickly past your competitors. This is especially true in the green industry with diverse projects across a large geography with a work force that leaders might seldom see.

Many business systems collect all sorts of data and really, most business leaders and managers actually have more data than they know how to use.

The secret to success is to identify the few metrics that are most meaningful. We recommend a mix of forward-looking, activity-based metrics, as well as backward-looking data to confirm the results. With meaningful and timely data, an aligned team can make decisions to adjust the business responsively to a quickly changing environment.

We've seen success in businesses with leaders who consistently communicate a compelling vision, gather an aligned team, and empower them to manage the business, all while keeping their finger on the pulse of meaningful, timely data. ☺

*Jerry Olson is a business adviser with The Resultants, a business advisory team that advocates for the best interest of clients, using a process that has proven time and time again to help companies build value and achieve personal and professional success. To learn more, visit [www.theResultants.com](http://www.theResultants.com). This article originally appeared in Scoop magazine, and is reprinted with the permission of the author and of the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association.*



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# MEET THE LEADER

The voices of Oregon's nursery industry

## TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

I am part of the third generation to run a family-owned-and-operated business that began back in 1948. My grandfather, Al Bigej, first set up his roadside fruit stand in Woodburn to serve people traveling Highway 99E. In the late 1950s, my father Jack jumped in to add plants into the mix. Today, Al's Garden & Home is a full-service garden center with a growing operation to support it.

I grew up in the business, working on weekends and during school breaks. Some of my earliest memories include a trip to Hawaii for the OAN Convention — and I also loved competing in the Nursery Olympics. After graduating from Canby High School, I was lucky enough to receive scholarships from the Oregon Nurseries Foundation four years in a row. 1994 was a big year for me: I graduated with a horticulture degree from Oregon State University, joined the family business full time, and married the love of my life, Amy.

I have two sisters who also came back to the family business and are co-owners with myself as well as my dad. The four of us have expanded Al's into one of the largest grower-retailers in Oregon with four retail locations in Woodburn, Sherwood, Wilsonville and Gresham and growing operations in Hubbard, Mt. Angel and Gresham. I currently oversee the retail portion of the business.

## WHAT'S YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

When I think of guiding principles, two come to my mind. The first is no matter what the situation is, always try to do what's right. The second would be never to take myself too seriously. Life is too short. If you can't laugh at yourself, who are you going to laugh at?

## WHAT'S A GOAL YOU HAVE YET TO ACHIEVE?

My biggest goal is to turn Jeff Stone into a true Beaver Believer. I have seen him wear black and orange (yes, he looked good) and have even heard him utter the words "Go Beavs" — alcohol may or may not have been involved. I consider these things progress and I am hopeful to achieve my lifelong goal.



## Mark Bigej Co-owner, chief operating officer

*Al's Garden & Home*  
OAN member since 2009

### OAN roles/positions:

- Government Relations Committee Chair (2021, 2022)
- Political Awareness Award (2019)
- Past President (2017)
- OAN Executive Committee (2011–2017)
- Young Nursery Person of the Year (2002)
- Yard, Garden & Patio Show Chair, Committee (2000)

## BEST BUSINESS DECISION

Our best business decision was to take a chance and build our Sherwood retail store in 2005. We located the store on what was then a newly opened road out in the country between Sherwood, Tigard and Beaverton. That was a decision we do not regret!

## HARDEST BUSINESS DECISION

The most challenging and stressful business decisions I have made were around navigating the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Every week, I helped make decisions that greatly impacted our employees, our customers, and our ability to stay in business.

## WHO IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR?

My most significant mentors would be, first, my dad: who has taught me everything I know about hard work and treating people fairly. Second, a professor and friend from my tenure at Iowa State University, Dr. David Koranski. He challenged me intellectually like I had never been challenged before. He made learning and critical thinking fun. He was also an outstanding example of following your guiding principles and always doing what you think is right, no matter the cost.

## BEST BUSINESS ADVICE:

The best business advice I have ever heard came from my dad. I quote it often: "The only way to coast is downhill." This philosophy speaks volumes as to how this business has been built over the past 73 years.

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

I have said often that what I love most about the nursery industry is the people. People in this industry, by and large, truly care about one another. The industry is just filled with great men and women. No matter where I go, people are willing to help each other learn and grow — it doesn't matter if you are in direct competition down the street from one another or across the country. It is truly a sharing and caring industry.

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE?

My greatest challenge is continuing to learn and develop as a leader. I am blessed to be surrounded by amazing people in both our business and in the OAN. I am forever trying to learn how to encourage people, let them do what they do best, and stay out of their way as they take things to new heights.

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

I would say my biggest motivating factor to go to work every day is my wife. Every morning she puts two feet squarely in my back, pushes me out of bed, and says, "Get to work!"

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## Meet the Leader

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Without hesitation, I would say I am most proud of my immediate family — my amazing wife and kids. I have been blessed beyond belief with my wife of 27 years and our five children. Amy and I couldn't be prouder of the good-hearted, independent, caring and hardworking young adults and teenagers they have each turned into.

### INVOLVEMENT WITH OAN

I have been going to OAN functions for as long back as I can remember. On a chapter level, I worked the Retail Chapter plant auctions to support that ONF for years. My wife and I helped with the kids' program at a couple of OAN conventions, where my most outstanding memory is babysitting a then-rebellious teenager named Kyle Fessler (an OAN president). I started sitting on the Yard, Garden and Patio Show Committee in 1994 and eventually served as chair in 2000. I was asked to join the Executive Committee as Member at Large by Jerry Simnitt in 2011, working my way through the various positions until serving as president in 2016. I have enjoyed sitting on the Government Relations Committee since 2012 and am currently serving as the committee chair.

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

I believe the most critical challenge facing the nursery industry is remaining relevant in the eyes of the younger generations and new gardeners. While the COVID-19 pandemic has had many negative impacts, it has also made a positive change for our industry. More people have turned to plants to improve both their indoor and outdoor spaces than ever before. I believe our next challenge is to retain those gardeners. We have been given the gift of the attention of a whole new generation — the key to our future. We need to be in tune with all those new to gardening and find a way to keep them engaged and visiting our stores and buying our products for years to come. ©



## Keep on trucking

The booming nursery industry has put big demands on the shipping sector

BY JON BELL

**A**BOUT A YEAR AGO, Gary “Bert” Bertelson was lamenting a lost summer. Before last year, Bertelson, head of nursery over-the-road sales for Wilsonville shipping broker **Integrity Logistics**, would take a month off every summer during the seasonal slowdown of the nursery shipping business.

But the explosive demand for plants and nursery materials, spawned by the COVID-19 pandemic and folks rediscovering their love of landscaping during the lockdowns, meant that the season never slowed – and Bertelson never got his month off.

In 2021, thanks to the continued boom in demand — and an array of other factors impacting the freight industry — his chances at a summer respite were even dimmer.

“It’s getting worse,” Bertelson said. “It’s as busy as springtime. It’s tough to keep up. It’s almost identical to last year, only probably 20% more. I don’t understand. People who never ship this time a year are ordering truckload upon truckload.”

Well into year two of the pandemic, the nursery industry continues to ride a wave of unprecedented demand. The early days of spring 2020 found people stuck at home, not traveling and instead dabbling in new pastimes like baking sourdough bread and, yes, landscaping. Nurseries, big box stores and garden centers sold out of plants in a hurry. The same thing happened this year, to the point that some nurseries are even selling next year’s inventory even though the year’s barely halfway over.

That’s all been good for nurseries, but it’s also put the squeeze on the freight and shipping end of the business. Trucks

and drivers are hard to come by, rates are sky-high and timelines are fluid at best.

In early September, wildfires had ramped up out West and Hurricane Ida and its rainy fallout inundated the East Coast — all of which added yet another layer of complexity to the business. In short: It’s been a busy but bumpy road for nursery shipping. And with no end to the new demand in site, it could be like that for the foreseeable future.

“I haven’t seen it slow down any,” Bertelson said. “I just don’t know what’s going to happen.”

### A promising year

No one could have foreseen the impact that COVID-19 pandemic was going to have on the nursery industry when it first materialized in 2020. Something else that no one really expected? That 2021 would be an even stronger year.

“It’s felt a little like a hurricane over here,” said Grace Dinsdale, whose **Blooming Nursery Inc.** saw a massive spike in sales in 2020 and then sold more plants in the first five months of 2021 than it had in the entire year prior.

That leap in business has had significant impacts on nursery freight and shipping. Matt Frederick, logistics coordinator and owner at **K&M Distribution Inc.**, a transportation broker headquartered in Rogue River, Oregon, said 2021 has so far been a promising year, but one that’s required a lot of flexibility.

“It’s been a year of constant adjustments, but it’s been



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## Keep on trucking

a great year,” he said. “I think the spring ran six weeks longer than normal, but even through the summer it hasn’t completely slowed down. There have been consistent shipments.”

### Boom and . . .

The boom has been good, but there have been some challenges, too.

“The huge increase in demand for goods of nearly every type drove a massive surge in transportation demand, and the supply chain was not able to keep up,” said Matt Nease, general manager at **Northland Express Transport**, a nursery-focused shipping company with offices in Oregon and Michigan. “That dramatic increase in shipping volume put incredible pressure on every link of the chain and revealed some major weaknesses: not enough drivers or trucking capacity, not enough cargo containers or in the right places. Rail lines, maritime shippers and ports all stretched to the breaking point.”

Despite a slight dip at the beginning of the year, the high demand has pushed rates up to record highs — and there’s likely no relief coming anytime soon. The continued driver shortage has compounded the difficulties in finding shipping options for growers. It, along with the huge demand, has made on-time shipping and delivery much harder to come by.

A labor shortage has contributed to timing delays, as well. Whereas a truck used to arrive, say, on a Saturday and be unloaded and ready for a pickup at 8 a.m. Monday morning, now the truck might pull in on Saturday and be standing by till it could be unloaded Monday night and on the road again by Tuesday.

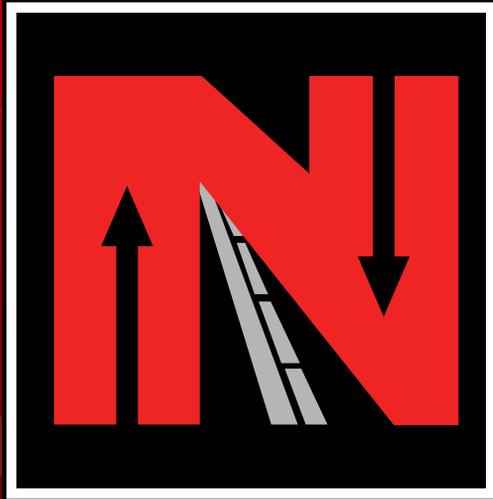
Those kinds of delays have ripple effects across the industry.

“Plants can’t just sit on the docks for days because trucks are scarce,” Nease said. “That costs everyone more money in the long run as growers can’t invoice for their products until they ship and their customers can’t sell what they don’t have.”

Throw in natural disasters or other anomalies, and the situation worsens.

“It’s like with this hurricane that’s





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going through New Orleans, FEMA's grabbing any and every refrigerator truck they can find," Bertelson said late in the summer. "That makes it even tighter."

**The great unknown**

As early 2020 showed everyone, it's incredibly difficult to predict just what's on the horizon. The same goes for the nursery industry and the shipping sector that gets plants where they need to be. At this point, there are no real signs that the industry will be cooling off at all in the near term. The pandemic continues to drag on, keeping people at home and in their gardens — and in garden centers buying plants.

"That might be the new normal," said Todd Watts, sales manager at Rosewoods Transportation Inc., a freight broker that specializes in nursery stock.

He also said he's hopeful that business

stays strong but he hopes there's a chance for everything to catch up a bit. In past cycles where shipping rates have risen, more drivers come back into the market, which even things out. Watts said that would help ease up the current situation.

"I'm hoping there are more trucks on the road by next spring," he said. "That's what it's going to take to help out."

In the meantime, nurseries can help loosen the tension by trying to be more flexible with their schedules rather than expecting trucks to arrive at a set-in-stone-time. Some shippers have turned to rail to help fill in the gaps and keep their customers happy.

Transparency and honesty all-around can also be key in managing customers' expectations when it comes to shipping rates, schedules and other factors.

"We just try to use honesty. That's

what everyone wants," Watts said. "We've always prided ourselves on that. We deliver the hard truths when we have to and hope that customers trust that we have their best interests in mind."

And no matter how the coming year unfolds, it will be important to learn from what has worked — and what hasn't — over the past year-a-half to keep the entire nursery industry moving forward.

"Challenging times and circumstances like we're experiencing inevitably lead to new methods and underscore those strategies that are truly critical when transportation capacity is so tight," Nease said. "Relationships really do matter." ☺

*Jon Bell is an Oregon freelance journalist who writes about everything from Mt. Hood and craft beer to real estate and the great outdoors. His website is [www.jbellink.com](http://www.jbellink.com).*



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# Keeping drivers in the loop

Communication is key to treating truckers well during driver shortage

BY MITCH LIES

**J**ACKIE WEISENBERGER OF **Oregon Pride Nurseries Inc.** rarely hears that a driver has backed out of picking up a load from her McMinnville nursery.

“Earlier this spring, we had that happen, but that was happening everywhere,” she said. “As things died down, as we got more into June and July, that has been very rare.”

Weisenberger can’t pinpoint exactly why she has a good record of getting drivers to show up at her nursery when they say they will. But she believes one key is because she treats drivers well.

“We offer things like a bathroom and a shower. We let them overnight here, if need be,” she said. “We have an employee break-room that they are welcome to use. I show them where the vending machine is. We will fill up their coffee for them in the morning.”

Weisenberger said she also encourages drivers to take advantage of a food truck that comes by every morning about 10

o’clock. “I will mention to the driver that ‘You are more than welcome to purchase something from the chuck wagon,’ which is what I call it,” she said. “And if they are here later in the day, I tell them there is a local pizza joint that will deliver, and I will hand them a menu.”

“We try to treat them very well. They do a lot,” she said. “That is how our product gets out there.”

Treating truck drivers well is one of several keys for nursery managers to ensure they get a good reputation among truckers. And, in the midst of a historical driver shortage that according to the American Trucking Association is expected to reach 100,000 by 2023, a good reputation may be the difference between a driver backing out of a load in favor of a better paying job or showing up.

Drivers have more chances to say no than they did



## Keeping drivers in the loop

before, according to Dale Parra, sales manager at **Truck Transportation Services** in Wilsonville. “They can turn down loads. There are so many loads available,” he said.

“You want to get a good reputation where you are a driver-friendly nursery, because there are a few businesses that don’t have that, and the driver will be like, ‘Well, I’m not going to go there to pick up,’” Parra said. “And once you get a bad reputation, it is tough to get drivers to go there.”

### Honesty the best policy

Among several steps Parra recommended nurseries take to pad their reputation among truckers, being honest is maybe the most important, he said.

“The first thing I would tell a nursery is to make sure they are honest with the drivers,” Parra said. “If it is going to take four

hours to load, you need to tell them that. Don’t tell them, ‘Yeah, we will get you out of here in two to four hours,’ either, because whatever the lower number you use is what the driver hears. So, when that two-hour mark hits, they are going to ask, ‘Why am I not loaded? What is going on?’”

Brad Hockersmith, shipping supervisor of **Eshraghi Nursery**, said he, too, believes that honesty is the best policy when dealing with truck drivers.

“Typically, where you will see the biggest problem with drivers is when they don’t know what is going on,” Hockersmith said. “That is when they start getting stressed out, when they don’t know how long they are going to be there, or what is going on, or why haven’t you started loading them. And I stay in com-

munication with them. That way it keeps them from getting too frustrated. And I try to be as accurate and as upfront as possible with them.

“I will say, ‘Hey, just so you know, you are going to be sitting here a little while, but we will try to get you out of here as quickly as we can,’” he said. “And I will go down and check with them. Especially on busy days, when they see other trucks that got

**“We try to treat [drivers] very well. They do a lot. That is how our product gets out there.”**

— Jackie Weisenberger, Oregon Pride Nurseries

here after them leaving before them, I will let them know that that guy was only getting three feet, so we loaded him up really quick. But we are going to get you out of here as fast as we can.”



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Another key to driver relations, sources said, is doing everything you can to get trucks loaded as quickly as possible.

“If we have a parking lot full of trucks, we take all of our employees and

put them on a truck to load,” said Jennie Hummel of **Hochstein Nursery LLC** in Cornelius. “We will take them off the potting crew, the weeding crew, and everybody will load trucks if we are backed up.”

Hockersmith said Eshraghi has a similar policy. “If I have a truck pull up, and all of the product is there, or enough to get the truck started, I will call for another crew, have them come up and start >>

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## Keeping drivers in the loop



loading that truck,” Hockersmith said. “That way, that driver is not sitting there for an hour before anything happens.

“The other thing I try to do is to go down and personally talk to the drivers if there is a problem or if something is get-

**“We will take [workers] off the potting crew, the weeding crew, and everybody will load trucks if we are backed up.”**

— Jennie Hummel, Hochstein Nursery

ting delayed, and I will be upfront and honest with them and let them know what is going on. So, if there happens to be something going on that is going to cause them to sit there for a little while, I will let them know that right away when they get into the driveway.”

### Signage important

Clearly marking entrances and exits is another key to driver relations, Parra said. “Good signage for where to pull in, for where to park is always important,” he said.

Hummel agreed, noting: “We don’t want them coming in the exit. We want them coming in the entrance, and we make that real clear.”

Hummel said she also encourages dispatchers to have a driver call when their

truck is approaching, both because GPS isn’t always reliable where the nursery is located and to coordinate traffic on what she characterized as a “pretty narrow road” leading to the nursery.

“I’ll ask the dispatch to have the truck call me, because then I can tell them, ‘Hey, I have a truck coming down our hill. Wait until you see that truck, because we are a pretty

narrow road and if we have two trucks meet on the road, it can get a little dicey.’

“I try to make it as easy as possible on truck drivers to get to our location,” Hummel said.

Hummel said she tries to stagger how many trucks the nursery gets in a day to avoid back up. “But in the spring, you can’t always control that,” she said.

Hockersmith said he also likes to go out and greet drivers as they show up to let them know both where to park and keep them informed of the nursery’s policies on getting out of the truck while on site.

“I have cameras set up in the shipping office, so, If I am inside the office doing paperwork, I can see whenever a truck rolls in, and we have pretty good communication, so if I don’t see a truck

pull in, somebody will let me know there is another driver here, and I will run out immediately and catch them in their truck before they have a chance to park,” Hockersmith said.

“That way, they don’t have to get out. They don’t have to wander around and I will get them signed in right there and tell them where to park so there is no confusion on their part,” he said.

Different nurseries have had different policies during the pandemic. Some have opened their break rooms and other areas to truckers, others have asked drivers to stay in their cabs. Most, according to Parra, are not letting drivers roam around like they used to. “Now, most places are like, ‘You need to stay in your tractor,’” Parra said.

Regardless of your COVID-19 policy, Parra said the bottom line for getting and keeping a good reputation among drivers is honest communication.

“Tell them that either we can get you loaded today, or we are not going to get you loaded,” he said. “What they want more than anything is truth, because time is money for them, and they don’t get any money just sitting around waiting.” ©

*Mitch Lies is a freelance writer covering agricultural issues based in Salem Oregon. He can be reached at mitchlies@comcast.net.*

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## EMPLOYMENT

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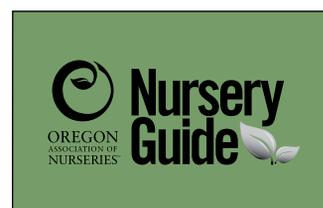
1. Manage Herbaceous program: The herbaceous plant grower works with area crew leaders and crew members to lead, manage, produce and maintain overall plant quality according to the production plan.
2. Inventory Control: Ensure the herbaceous growing area maintains an accurate inventory through cycle counts and inventory audits, as necessary. Train area crew leaders to use growing space appropriately based on the production plan and plant cultural needs.
3. Plant Health: Work closely with the IPM manager and production manager to ensure the best pest and disease control plan is in place.
4. Production Plan: Work closely with herbaceous planning coordinator and production manager to implement production plan according to sales plan and production schedules.
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**Minimum Qualifications:**

- One year of Green Industry Operation related experience.
- One year of management experience
- Advance knowledge of herbaceous plant production methods and techniques

**Application requirements:**

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- Have a good working knowledge of northwest nursery stock.
- Computer skills including Microsoft Word and Excel.
- Highly organized and accurate
- Able to work in a fast-paced high volume work environment
- Skilled at establishing schedules based on needs from various internal customers.
- Excel in team building and communication.
- Present opportunities for improvements in efficiency and accuracy within the Plant Buying office.
- Monitor shipments to ensure that goods come in on time, and resolve problems related to undelivered or poor-quality goods.
- Demonstrate leadership and team building skills by listening to the team members and internal customers and adjusting processes to maximize efficiency, timeliness, and quality of our work. This position plays a key role in purchasing quality plant material for our landscape operations. Qualifications and Skills
- Minimum of 5 years of plant purchasing, nursery, landscape, and/or office administration experience
- Professional, verbal and written a skills
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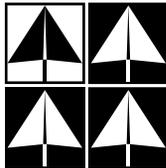
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# GROWING KNOWLEDGE

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



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Figure 1: Layout of a demonstration study in a commercial nursery near Corvallis, OR during the spring of 2021. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

## Testing tolerance with Marengo

Herbicide's label allows growers to experiment with various plants and levels

BY MARCELO L. MORETTI AND DAVID KING

**H**ERBICIDES ARE AN IMPORTANT weed control method in container-grown ornamental plants. Knowledge of crop tolerance to herbicides is essential for a safe and effective weed control program.

Tolerance to a specific herbicide application method depends on the crop species and the cultivar. Thus, developing labels for herbicide products for ornamental crops requires extensive testing. For example, the label of the herbicide Marengo® (indaziflam) lists the species and cultivars known to be tolerant to Marengo. Although many species are listed on the label, there are commercially grown plants whose tolerance status is not known.

For plant species not yet listed, the label suggests testing multiple plants at the highest rate (9 fl. oz./acre) followed by 1–2 months of evaluation.

### How to test for herbicide tolerance

In this article, I will layout my suggestions for how to do such testing.

Select rates to be tested. I suggest at least three rates – unsprayed check, highest label rate (9 fl oz), and twice the field rate (18 fl. oz./acre).

Test at least three individuals of each of each species at each herbicide rate. For the rates suggested, a minimum of nine plants for each species and cultivar would be required.

Include a tolerant species listed on the label as an additional check subject.

Apply the herbicide in early spring. Herbicide injury is easier to observe in fast-growing plants.

Irrigate within one hour after application.



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**Figure 2:** *Aronia melanocarpa* 'Autumn Magic' chokeberry response to Marengo at four (left picture 2a) and 12 weeks (right image 2b) after treatments. Within each picture, plants on the left are nontreated and on the right and treated with Marengo. PHOTOS COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Watch for injury symptoms every two weeks for the first two months. Some injuries may be temporary and less visible as time after the application passes.

Compare plant growth. Herbicide injury may sometimes be mild and only detected through careful side-by-side comparison. Growth stunting reduces productivity and increases costs.

Following these steps, we conducted a crop tolerance study in a commercial nursery during the spring of 2021. Twelve species plus an indicator species (boxwood) were selected for the study. See Table 1.

In our study, Marengo was applied over the tops of the plants at three rates: 6, 9, and 18 fl. oz./acre. The nontreated



check was not sprayed (Figure 1). Crop damage was monitored every two weeks for the following two months.

Most of the tested species were not affected by Marengo application up to 18 fl. oz./acre during the two months of evaluation; these were classified as 'Tolerant.' The tolerant species include boxwood, plum yew, cotoneaster, honeysucker, and others (Table 1).

The susceptible species were 'Autumn

Magic' chokeberry, 'Munchkin' oak-leaf hydrangea, and 'Minnesota Snowflake' mock-orange (Table 1). Damage to 'Autumn Magic' chokeberry was most visible two weeks after the application. This was followed by a near-complete recovery over the course of the study. However, after two months, some plants were smaller than the unsprayed plants (Figure 2).

By contrast, 'Munchkin' oak-leaf hydrangea and 'Minnesota Snowflake' ➤

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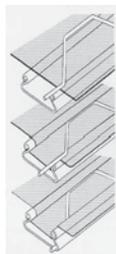
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## Testing tolerance with Marengo

**Table 1.** Tolerance to Marengo observed by plant species and cultivar.

	Species	Variety and common name	Tolerance group
1	<i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i>	'Duke Gardens', plum yew	Tolerant
2	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> 'Suffruticosa' × <i>B. sinica</i> var. <i>insularis</i>	'Green Mountain', boxwood	Tolerant
3	<i>Cotoneaster apiculatus</i>	Cranberry cotoneaster	Tolerant
4	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	'Stricta', Irish yew	Tolerant
5	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	'Autumn Magic', chokeberry	<i>Susceptible</i>
6	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	'Skyrocket', Eastern red cedar	Tolerant
7	<i>Taxus</i> × <i>media</i>	Dark green spreader yew (hybrid)	Tolerant
8	<i>Lonicera pileata</i>	'Privet', honeysuckle	Tolerant
9	<i>Ilex crenata</i>	'Sky Pencil', Japanese holly	Tolerant
10	<i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i>	'Munchkin', oak-leaf hydrangea	<i>Susceptible</i>
11	<i>Sarcococca hookeriana</i> var. <i>humilis</i>	Himalayan sweet box	Tolerant
12	<i>Philadelphus</i> × <i>virginalis</i>	'Minnesota Snowflake', mock-orange	<i>Susceptible</i>
13	<i>Distylium</i> sp.	'Vintage Jade', winter-hazel	Tolerant



**Figure 3.** *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Munchkin' oak-leaf hydrangea is susceptible to Marengo, and showed extensive injury at two weeks after treatment (left 3a), a closer look at damage (center 3b), and even plant death at 12 weeks after treatment (right 3c). Within each picture, plants on the left are unsprayed and on the right were treated with Marengo. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

mock-orange presented severe injury for the entirety of the study. Two weeks after treatment, 'Munchkin' oak-leaf hydrangea showed extensive damage even at lower rates of Marengo. At higher rates, that damage progressed to plant death rates (Figure 3).

'Minnesota Snowflake' mock-orange was severely affected by Marengo but recovered somewhat, although the plants treated with Marengo were smaller (Figure 4). In summary, testing crop tolerance to Marengo can allow growers to expand its use in nurseries, with greater confidence. Any plant classified as susceptible in Table 1 should not be treated with Marengo. ©

#### Acknowledgments:

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*David King is a faculty research assistant in the Department of Horticulture at Oregon State University. He can be reached at david.king@oregonstate.edu.*



**Figure 4.** *Philadelphus* × *virginalis* 'Minnesota Snowflake' is susceptible to Marengo applied over the top (left 4a). Plants recovered from a Marengo application, but growth was significantly stunted two months after treatment (right 4b). Within each picture, plants on the left are nontreated and on the right and treated with Marengo. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY



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# No map should muffle our voice

**Every 10 years, the nation takes a census to find out where our fellow Americans reside, so they can be better represented in the political process.**

Based on those results, those states or locales that increase in population get more representation; conversely, influence recedes in the states or areas that lose voters.

While fairness is in the eye of the beholder, redistricting is ultimately controlled by those in political power. The resulting redrawn districts are often a craven attempt to hold on to such power. Ahhh, the art of gerrymandering.

## The origins of the term “gerrymander”

According to the Smithsonian, Elbridge Gerry was a powerful voice in the founding of the nation. Today, he’s best known for a political practice with an amphibious name.

Gerry was a Founding Father. He signed the Declaration of Independence and was a reluctant framer of the Constitution. He served as a congressman, a diplomat, and the fifth vice president of the United States. Well-known in his day, Gerry was a wild-eyed eccentric and an awkward speaker. He was a trusted confidant of John Adams and a deep (if peculiar) thinker.

He could also be a dyspeptic hothead. This trait got the better of him when, as governor of Massachusetts, he signed an infamous bill that created misshapen districts, including one that resembled a mythical salamander, with claws and wings.

People combined the pol’s name with the beast, and the term “gerrymander” was coined. Ever since, it’s been used to describe some politicians’ practice of drawing district lines to favor their party and expand power.

Today, we see gerrymandering in Ohio’s 9<sup>th</sup> district, aka the “Lake Erie Monster,” and Pennsylvania’s 7<sup>th</sup> district, aka “Goofy Kicking Donald Duck.” (Google these.)

We see equally stupid contortions of state and congressional districts in every corner of the country and in Oregon. Legislative lines are not city or county lines — rather, they are supposed to bring together communities of interest. I live in unincorporated

Clackamas County near the Tigard-Portland-Lake Oswego triangle. What on earth do I have in common with Stayton, Oregon some 50 miles away? The love of good pizza is not a community of interest.

## How Oregon is changing

When it comes to redistricting, there’s good news and bad news regarding our state. The good news is that more people are moving to our little slice of the country. It is hard to argue against the best farmland in America and exceptional wonders like the Columbia Gorge, not to mention our mountains and rugged coastline.

We are not the beret-wearing, mushroom-hunting, antifa-loving community that is lampooned in the media. We are fiercely independent, connected to the natural beauty in work and play — and yes, we make exceptional wine and beer.

This year, Oregon gets to add a sixth Congressional district — which is terrific. The state is becoming more racially diverse — for the first time more people of color were born here. They will eclipse 50% of the state’s population in 20 years.

But there are warning signs. The rural areas are shrinking, and urban areas seem to be boundless. The drain on rural areas is a real thing. This is not only happening in Oregon, but across the country.

What does this mean for the nursery and greenhouse industry that is both urban and rural? The bulge of voters in urban areas expands the disconnect between economies, perspectives, and policies at the state level. Landmass does not equate to votes.

The continual widening of the divide will only cause conflict and hard feelings. Oregon’s new congressional map looks like pizza slices emanating from the city of Portland — a cynical effort at best.

## No map can mask your voice

A coalition of Oregonians is pushing to create a “citizen’s commission” in charge of redistricting, by putting a measure on the 2022 ballot. Taking the inherent self-interest out of map-making is a good start, but let us not be lulled into complacency. Redistricting is always a political beast.



Jeff Stone  
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rural areas are losing. In order to prevent isolation and dismissal by urban folks who have never gotten their feet dirty or worked in a field growing up, we need to go on offense and tell our story.

Oregon’s nursery industry does not plan around election cycles or even redistricting timelines. We play the long game. That’s good, provided the short game doesn’t lay waste to the capacity for sensible economic and regulatory policy.

Regardless of whether an OAN member is conservative or liberal — we need engagement at every touchpoint of the political process. We must lend our voices to our churches, school boards, soil and water conservation districts, and city halls, all the way to the halls of Congress.

Our blended voice is powerful. No map can mask your voice.

## What we can do together

It’s time to get off the bench. Indifference and avoidance are the silent killers of our industry. The association has broad shoulders, keen political senses, and a highly functional volunteer system and board of directors. We preach the idea that seeing is not just believing, but understanding. That’s why we offer tours to gubernatorial candidates, elected officials and state agency personnel. Doing so is our great natural advantage.

I am proud of the effort being made by so many of our volunteer leaders. They are the first and best advocate that the OAN has. We come together as one for an industry that we love. I encourage all in our industry to put aside any apprehension or distaste for public engagement, because we need you. ☺

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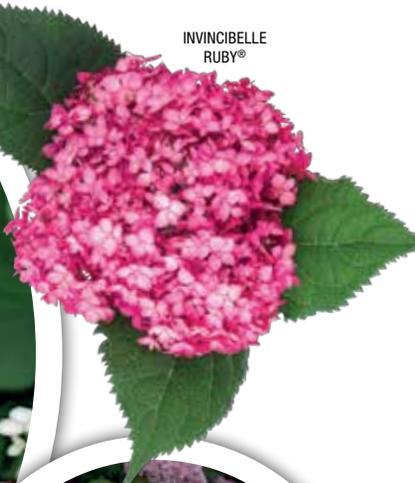


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