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What sets Oregon apart

The Nursery Country issue of Digger is quite possibly my favorite edition of the magazine each year.



Josh Robinson

We get an in-depth look into the nursery and greenhouse operations that make our members world-class.

With COVID-19 still in effect and tours being tough to come by, this issue is the best thing short of a tour to get a feel for production, what the growers are known for, their contact information, their *Nursery Guide* listings, and best of all — the people involved.

When I read through these stories, it's almost like you know them not just on a professional level but, to some extent, a personal one as well. That is a testament to the operation's openness to share, as well as the people that put the content together. Cheers to you, Curt Kipp and team — you talented, multifaceted individuals! We are fortunate to have a publication that matches the quality of the membership.

It's no secret that Oregon operations are the most premier in the country, with all due respect to other states, as I love them all.

I have traveled to a vast majority of the country visiting nurseries, and there are, without a doubt, innovative, pristine and top-quality operations all over the place.

The one thing that distinguishes Oregon is the sheer number and variety of growers.

It got me thinking: What is it that sets us apart? I wholeheartedly believe it's that we all deeply care for each other and will do anything within our power to help our community. I would venture that each and every one of us could pick up the phone right now and call another nursery to help with a problem, and they would come through. I often hear, "What goes around, comes around," and that has 100% been my experience.

I think back to one of my first experiences calling on another nursery who was our competitor at the time. I asked for help with graft wood. The result of this would, in turn, boost our production on an item that they undoubtedly could sell if we didn't have them.

It struck me as crazy: Who in their right mind would do this?

I thought to myself, "My boss must be playing a prank on me." I reluctantly picked up the phone, expecting a laugh on the other end. To my amazement I was met with, "We can help. Is there anything else you need?"

Really!?! I was absolutely floored. Going through college, I was taught the exact opposite — that Pepsi would never help Coca-Cola.

We get to operate in an environment where you can call on people that are the best in the business at what they do, and they will be more than willing to share everything with you. I couldn't put an exact figure on it, but I would imagine we have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars by getting help from other nurseries. I hope that we have reciprocated the same savings to others. We are willing to do the same for any of you.

We are all blessed to be members of the OAN. The culture of our community wouldn't exist without these great growers and the giving spirit that they embody. I believe it's the glue that holds our nurseries together. We will soon get back to chapter events, open houses and member-wide Zoom calls, so we can continue to learn from each other and grow together!

As with all of these columns, I like to issue a call to action. We need to encourage our people to get out of the nursery and attend OAN events so that the network of our people expands. The result of this will continue to keep us a world-class industry. ☺