

Digger

JANUARY 2022

OREGON

IS

Nursery Country

Meet some of the growers
who help make Oregon
the gold standard for
nursery production

STARTING ON PAGE 19

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On the cover: Oregon growers are the nation's leading provider of many tree and ornamental plant varieties. TOP PHOTO BY CURT KIPP, BOTTOM PHOTO BY JON CHRISTOPHER MEYERS / COURTESY OF TRECO

On this page: Left: Blooming varieties of rhododendrons fill the fields of Simnitt Nursery. Right: Engel's Evergreens began producing fruit-bearing plants to diversify their offerings.

PHOTOS BY CURT KIPP



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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. ☺



Calendar

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

VARIOUS DATES

FIRST AID AND CPR CLASSES

OAN-sponsored First Aid and Adult CPR training classes continue into 2022. 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. Five classes will be held from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the OAN office, 29751 S.W. Town Center Loop West, Wilsonville, Oregon. Classes on January 18 and February 15 will be conducted in English, and those on January 27, March 10 and March 17 will be in Spanish. Five classes will be held from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the CPR Lifeline facility, 9320 S.W. Barbur Blvd #175, Portland, Oregon. The February 8, March 8 and March 15 classes will be conducted in English, and classes on February 10 and February 17 will be in Spanish. Register online at www.oan.org/cprclass.

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. The cost to attend is \$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.

JANUARY 20-21, 2022

IDAHO HORTICULTURE EXPO

The Idaho Nursery & Landscape Association's two-day trade show is known as the "best little show in the West." More than 1,100 attendees will pass through the Boise Center on the Grove, 850 W. Front Street, Boise, Idaho. The show will also feature educational seminars and demonstrations. For more information and to register, visit <https://inlagnrow.org>.

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 at www.utahgreen.org.

FEBRUARY 1-3

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JANUARY 12-14, 2022

NORTHWEST AG SHOW

The 52nd edition of the Northwest Ag Show 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). Both events contribute to Ag Week celebrations for the Salem area. For more information, log on to northwestagshow.com.

industry professionals in all time zones will gather to discuss major topics, share their experiences and see examples of each other's work over three days. The event is free to attend and will feature fast-paced online sessions and a virtual trade show that will be open throughout February. Sid Raisch, president and CEO of Bower & Branch, and Australia-based horticultural consultant John Stanley serve as co-chairs of the new event. They have stated it will be the largest audience ever to be in an industry-wide conference trade show. Each of the daily conference sessions consists of three 20-minute sessions, which can be accessed on-demand, as well as several discussion rooms and Q&A sessions. Attendee registration, sponsor and exhibitor information is available at gardenretailconference.com.

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 for more information.

FEBRUARY 2-23

PLAN FOR YOUR LAND

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District is hosting a free four-part series of courses for small farms planning a conservation plan for their land. Experts will discuss protecting water, improving soil health, increasing wildlife habitats and potential project funding. The first of four courses, Conservation Planning & Soils, starts on February 2. Water, Vegetation & Project Permitting will be held February 9, and Streamsides, Woodlands & Wildfire is on February 16. The final course, Working Lands, Wildlife Habitat & Action Plan, will be February 23. The courses will be conducted from 5-8 p.m. at Mt. Angel Community Festhalle. Sign up at tinyurl.com/2s4e2wp6.

FEBRUARY 14

NOR CAL LANDSCAPE & NURSERY SHOW

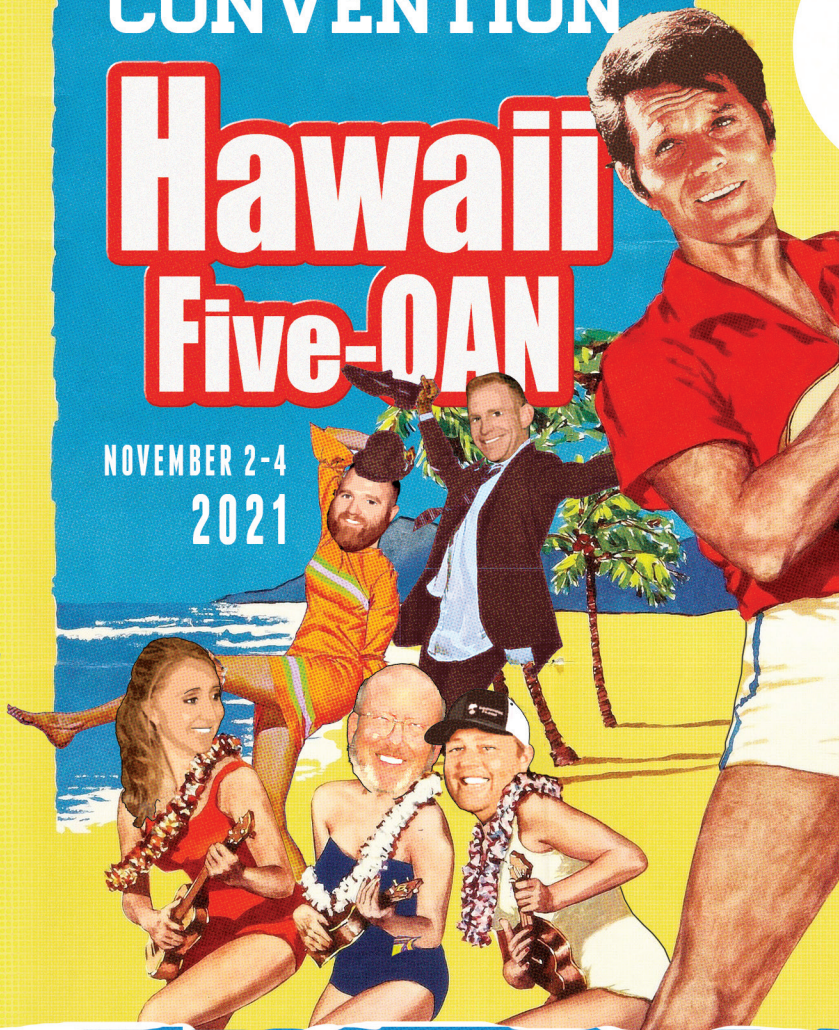
The Nor Cal Landscape & Nursery Trade Show is a one-day professional collaboration between California's horticulture and landscape industries. It features more than 250 exhibits and nine educational seminars. Revenues raised by the Nor Cal Show are reinvested in the industry through education, research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

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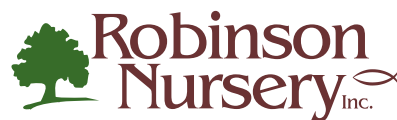


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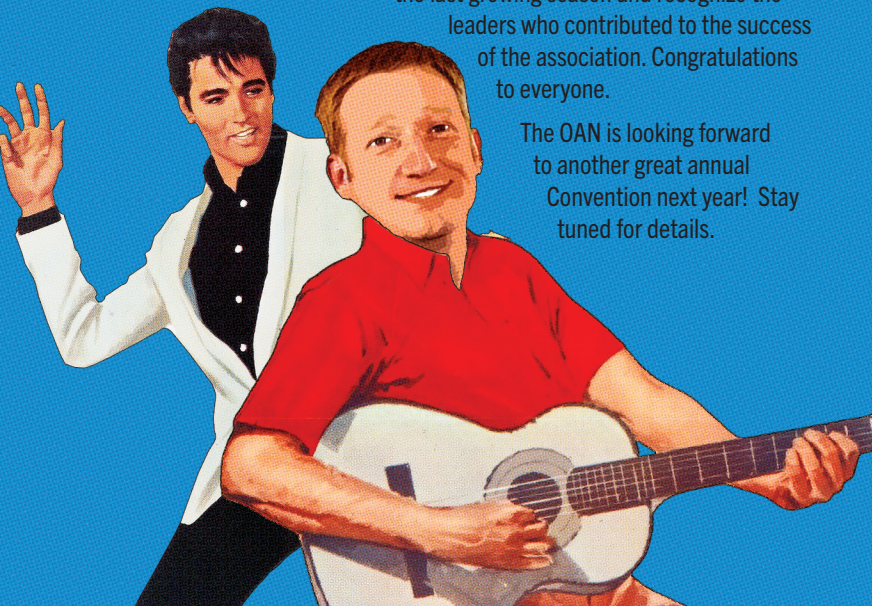
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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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 faced 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.



www.oan.org/convention



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.

Weather may contribute to worker shortages

Families of agricultural workers used to make it a tradition to travel to Oregon to work the fields. Still, trips are less frequent, according to a report from *The Oregonian*/OregonLive. Economic disruptions and fewer affordable housing options contribute to the decline in workers, but hotter and drier summers are also to blame. Harvesting in the summer is not pleasant work anymore.

Professor Edward Taylor of the University of California Davis' Agriculture and Resource Economics department is conducting a study to determine if there was a connection between harvest migration and extreme heat, wildfires and other weather-related concerns. Many families are not following in the footsteps of their elders and are seeking other work or conditions.

Blueberry grower Anne Krahmer-Steinkamp used to employ nearly 200 Californians to work on her farm five years ago, but now it's only 10 employees. Her farm lost 15% of its crop due to the heat dome, but others lost almost everything. Workers started harvesting as early in the morning as possible before triple digit temperatures set in. Log on to tinyurl.com/49ad9t4c to read the full story.



A lawsuit aims to drop the exemption agriculture businesses have for paying overtime. PHOTO BY BILL GOLOSKI

OREGON FARMERS MAY FACE OVERTIME REQUIREMENT

Oregon farmers are fighting a two-front war to preserve their longtime exemption to the overtime wage requirement.

Democratic legislators in Oregon are planning to advance a bill in the 2022 session to phase out the exemption. Meanwhile, worker advocates have filed a lawsuit threatening to nix the exemption via court ruling, regardless of what the legislature does.

Although the federal Fair Labor Standards Act exempts agricultural businesses from having to pay overtime wages, states don't have to honor the exemption. California and Washington have already done away with it.

But Oregon farmers say they need the harvest-time flexibility that the exemption provides. This allows them to get their perishable products to market when ready and needed. They say workers are reliant on the extra pay from working additional hours, and that a change would result in most farmers capping hours at 40. Workers would thus lose out.

Oregon legislators considered doing away with the exemption in 2021, but ultimately didn't advance a bill that would have done so.

After the 2021 session, an interim work-

group comprised of various stakeholders was formed by the Oregon Legislature to discuss how to resolve the issue in a way that gives all sides something they want. The Oregon Association of Nurseries participated actively, sending two representatives. But the OAN was taken aback when the lawsuit was filed.

"To say it's disappointing would be an understatement," OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone told the *Capital Press* newspaper (Salem, Oregon). "It's not the greatest circumstance to get to a solution, when a lawsuit is hanging over your head."

The suit alleges that the ag overtime exemption can't be enforced by the state's Bureau of Labor and Industries, and that it contradicts the Oregon constitution's demand for equal privileges, including overtime pay. It asks a court to strike down the exemption, potentially exposing growers to a requirement to pay missed overtime to the workers.

Political considerations may play a role in what happens in the legislature. State Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Lake Oswego) plans to introduce a bill to lift the overtime exemption in 2022, and it is likely to be her last chance to do so. She plans to run for a congressional seat.

Nurseries say they are a friend to workers. They have supported immigration reform,

More COVID-19 coverage online

Further updates on how the COVID-19 virus is impacting the greenhouse and nursery industry is online at www.diggermagazine.com/category/coronavirus. We are reporting on the most current information as of press time, but please check online for the most up-to-date information.



passed a bill to provide access to driver's licenses for all, supported the development of educational resources, and more, all to help their workers succeed while staying in business themselves.

BRADFORD PEAR BANNED IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Officials in South Carolina have banned from sale the Bradford pear tree (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford') as an invasive plant, effective October 1, 2024.

The New York Times made note of the tree's journey from being touted as a sterile cultivar to attracting the ire of regulators, landscapers, landscape managers and others as an invasive species. The tree has even become the butt of social media jokes. It is noted for a foul, fishy smell, as well as a tendency to escape cultivation.

Just as its early proponents promised, Bradford pears cannot pollinate each other, but there's something they didn't anticipate. Other pear species can pollinate the Bradford pear, resulting in viable *P. calleryana* seeds and, ultimately, trees. These in turn crowd out other species, particularly in the South, causing harm to wildlife and ecosystems.

South Carolina is the second state to ban it; Ohio did so first, effective in 2023. Both are giving the industry time to stop production and get it out of inventory. The South Carolina ban also covers trees grafted onto *P. calleryana* rootstock. Officials are encouraging people with the tree planted in their landscape to get rid of it and replace it with a native selection. David Coyle, a professor at Clemson, has organized "Bradford Pear Bounty" exchanges — turn in up to five dead Bradfords, get a free native replacement for each. Read the

full story at tinyurl.com/3nvjzav7.

The tree once sold in large numbers, but has largely vanished from wholesale availabilities. No one is listing it on the OAN's **NurseryGuide.com** plant search platform currently.

LEAF BLOWER BAN IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY SEES SUPPORT

A group called Quiet Clean Portland is advocating for a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers in Oregon's most populated county, KATU Channel 2 (Portland) reported. Noise and air pollution are their two main concerns.

The group supports a resolution that the Multnomah County Commission is considering passing on December 16. The group has quoted Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson as saying the resolution will






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do two things — direct county departments to start the transition to electric leaf blowers and start the process of developing a county-wide ban on gas blowers.

But a Portland landscaping professional who wanted to remain anonymous told the station that a change to electric blowers would be unworkable for the yard care industry. “I can see why a homeowner would think that, but for a commercial user, especially these lawn guys that are going from one job to the next to the next, they gotta go in volume,” he said.

The lawn care professional did try to switch to electric at one point. “The design of them and the weight of them, we were getting injuries, we’re having shoulder pain and back pains, so we just stopped using them because they also weren’t as effective,” he said. “It just didn’t work. We would love to be cleaner, but you have to

make that financial tradeoff.” Log on to tinyurl.com/cf2hjnum to read more.

STATE REGULATORS PASS NEW CLEAN TRUCK RULE

Oregon’s Environmental Quality Commission (OEQC) has approved the Clean Trucks Rule, the *Capital Press* (Salem, Oregon) reported. The rule only applies to vehicle manufacturers and does not impact current vehicles. The commission passed the mandate that seeks to cut emissions by requiring production of cleaner trucks.

The first step expects manufacturers to increase their production of electric trucks. Second, any new medium- and heavy-duty diesel trucks sold in Oregon must meet stricter emission standards — 75% less nitrogen dioxide than current levels starting in 2025 and 90% less by 2027.

“It is never the right decision to increase the cost of goods, which these rules will do,” said Oregon Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis (R-Albany). The rule will ultimately raise prices on trucks that are essential to agricultural businesses.

Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of government affairs at the Oregon Farm Bureau, told the newspaper that the rule will motivate businesses to buy trucks out of state. Trucking industry leaders also estimate the price of a new heavy-duty electric truck will be \$58,000 more than a diesel truck. Additionally, the state does not have the infrastructure in place to serve a quick increase of electric vehicles. The full story is available at tinyurl.com/yckumpr2

GESCHWILL TESTIFIES BEFORE LEGISLATURE

OAN past president Leigh Geschwill, an owner at **F & B Farms** in Woodburn, testified before the Oregon Legislature’s Agriculture and Land Use Committee on November 17 regarding the natural disasters that hit the Willamette Valley over the past 18 months.

Geschwill focused on the effect on nursery operations and workers, and how they managed a series of disasters, including COVID-19, wildfires, an ice storm and extreme heat.

Several industry sectors testified, including: Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of public policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau; Elin Miller, co-chair of the Oregon Wine Council and owner of Umpqua Vineyards and Umpqua Nut Farm (representing wine and hazelnuts); Clint Carlson, president of the Oregon Wheat Growers League and a wheat producer from Ione, Oregon (representing wheat); Taylor Martin, a farmer with G&C Farms (representing canberries); Ben Stone, president of BTN of Oregon, Inc. (representing Christmas trees); Kevin Richards, partner at Fox Hollow Farms (representing irrigated agriculture); Tom Sharp, president of the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association (representing livestock); and Diana Wirth, president of Oregon Cattlewomen (representing livestock).

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The group was supportive of the broad agricultural coalition's case to legislators to support ag producers with a \$50 million aid package. The almost three-hour discussion provided legislators a sobering view of the agricultural industry's challenges in 2020–21.

A copy of the funding letter can be found at tinyurl.com/4ea9rtb3. Geschwill's testimony begins 45 minutes into the video at tinyurl.com/2p9y29a9.

SUPPLY CHAIN DIFFICULTIES ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE

Supply chains and the movement of goods will continue to be difficult at least until the summer or fall of 2022, according to an update by Dr. Charlie Hall, professor of horticulture at Texas A&M and chief economist for AmericanHort. Hall's new update on supply chain woes and inflation pressures, posted in the AmericanHort Knowledge Center, states that the green industry will continue to raise prices given the transportation and logistics problems. Hall updated his prediction since his presentation at Cultivate'21 that the cost for inputs will likely increase by 8% this year and 5% the year after that if the pandemic wanes. Read more at tinyurl.com/mvnxk2ym.

The revitalized popularity of home gardening will likely continue until 2023. Wise growers and landscapers will continue to explain the health benefits of plants to their customers and maintain the captive consumers. Download the article as a PDF at tinyurl.com/yckn35w9.

EXPERT SEES GAINS IN WAR ON ASIAN GIANT HORNETS

Entomologists are very cautiously optimistic that they are on track to eradicate the Asian giant hornet populations that were found in Whatcom County, Washington, according to a report from *Capital Press* (Salem, Oregon). In a testimony to the Senate agriculture committee during a pre-legislative session workshop, Sven Spichiger explained that only one hornet was found on either side of the U.S.-Canada border this summer or fall. The specimen was likely a

straggler from previously destroyed nests, and more than 1,600 traps were set up to trace more.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture does not know for sure if unmated queens reached beyond the area, but the four nests that have been destroyed since October 2020 were all along the same 3-mile area. Asian giant hornets can survive wintery conditions, and researchers have seen them come back to life when put on ice in coolers. Read the full story at tinyurl.com/3tya2c25.

EPA EVALUATED HERBICIDES

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finished its biological evaluation of glyphosate, atrazine and simazine, according to a release from the agency. The three herbicides "may affect, and are likely to adversely affect," one or more species listed under the Endangered Species Act. This doesn't necessarily mean the species is in jeopardy of extinction. The result may lead to additional restrictions on the chemical's use. Read the full evaluations for glyphosate, atrazine, simazine and the frequently asked questions report online at tinyurl.com/bdh7emzk.

The American Farm Bureau and American Soybean Association do not agree with the findings, according to a report by Agri-Pulse. The ag groups claim the EPA didn't use the best available scientific and commercial data, as required by law. Go to tinyurl.com/4twmu8dn to learn more.

Announcements OAN HIRES EVENT AND EDUCATION MANAGER

On December 6, Heather Cyrus joined the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) staff as the new event and education manager. She serves on the events team for the Farwest Show and will assist with other association programs and events.

Heather has several years of experience in event planning, marketing and communications. Most recently, she held a part-time role as a marketing coordina- ➤



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in sales

Oregon's greenhouse and nursery industry earns \$1.02 billion* in annual sales.
*2019, USDA Census of Agriculture

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tor for the Environmental Learning Center at Clackamas Community College. She also spent seven years working at SecureWorld Expo delivering more than a dozen cybersecurity conferences across the nation annually. The experience has prepared her for all aspects of conference setup, registration, speaker outreach and more. As a writer, Heather has also provided blog posts, articles and website content for various local institutions and nonprofits.

A Pacific Northwest native, Heather has earned two bachelor's degrees from the University of Oregon; the first in environmental studies and the second in journalism and communications. She is passionate about environmental education, stewardship, volunteering, gardening and other outdoor activities. Feel free to contact her at hcyrus@oan.org or 503-582-2004.

WESTERN PULP PRODUCTS HIRES SALES MANAGER

Don Wackerly has been appointed to the position of sales and marketing manager for Western Pulp Products Co., according to a release from the company. Based out of Corvallis, Oregon, he will be promoting Vintner's Choice molded wine shipping products (made from recycled paper), protective innerpack products, nursery and greenhouse containers and m     floral containers.

Most recently serving as the vice president of sales for Small World Wine Company in Philomath, Wackerly joins the company with more than 25 years of experience with beverage and alcohol distributors and suppliers. He earned a Master of Business Administration from Oregon State University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Toledo, Ohio.



In Memoriam RHONDA BONI-BURDEN

The OAN is saddened to report the passing of Rhonda Boni-Burden, the chief operating officer of **Gulick Freight Services** and a longtime leader in the OAN Mt. Hood Chapter. She died September 26, 2021 at age 62 from pneumonia and complications of COVID-19.



Rhonda was born April 16, 1959, to Bob and Phyllis Boni, and grew up in Washougal, Washington. She graduated from Washougal High School in 1977 and was voted "most likely to succeed." She attended Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, then graduated from Clark College in 1981 with an associate's degree in accounting and business law.

She worked for Gulick Freight



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Northwest News

Logistics in Vancouver, Washington, for more than 20 years, and became chief operating officer in 2020. She served as secretary of OAN's Mt Hood Chapter for eight years and was a constant presence at chapter functions. She volunteered for numerous other organizations as well, including East County Little League, Women of the Moose in Camas/Washougal, the American Legion Cape Horn Post 122, the American Truckers Association, the National Truckers Association, the National Rifle Association and others.

A memorial service was held October 9 in Washougal, Washington, followed by interment in Washougal Memorial Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center in Vancouver, Washington.

In Memoriam GLEN HART

The OAN is saddened to report the passing of Glen Hart, owner of longtime members **Hart's**



Nursery of Jefferson, a greenhouse grower based in Jefferson, Oregon. He passed away October 14, 2021, at the age of 86.

Glen was born in Albany, Oregon, to Charles and Margaret (Cochran) Hart. He grew up in Jefferson, Oregon, and graduated from Jefferson High School. He joined the Navy and later the Naval Reserves. He also got into farming at a young age, farming mint with his father. Later, they started Hart's Nursery of Jefferson. The nursery's story was featured in the January 2011 issue of *Digger* magazine.

Glen married Nancy Newman on July 25, 1968, and they combined eight children to form a family, then had a child of their own. He enjoyed fishing, boating, travel and gardening. He was a community supporter, serving more than 20 years on the board of the Albany Boys and Girls Club, including serving as president.

A celebration of life was held October 28. Memorial contributions may be made to the Albany Boys and Girls Club. ©



OREGON

IS Nursery Country

STORIES BY CURT KIPP

THE YEAR 2020 will always be remembered as the year when everything lurched to a sudden halt for everyone. We all remember the arrival of COVID-19. First, the NBA canceled games. That was the first noticeable sign. Then so many other daily activities normally taken for granted fell like dominoes. Many states imposed orders to limit person-to-person exposure, affecting every aspect of daily life.

This happened in March 2020 — right in the middle of nursery shipping season. It was expected to be a complete disaster for nurseries.

Except that's not what happened.

After only brief pauses, nurseries got right back to business shipping product, but a funny thing happened as the season went on. They kept shipping. And shipping. And shipping.

People stuck at home wanted plants. Gardening was something they could still do, and they rediscovered their love affair with working in the soil. Nurseries were more than happy to reciprocate. They did everything they could to give the

people what they wanted.

Behind the scenes, nursery leaders worked very hard to ensure continued market and shipping access for nurseries and their delivery trucks, and the leading nursery state of Oregon was a national leader in facilitating that conversation.

When Oregon's agricultural sales figures by commodity for 2020 were released this past October, it wasn't surprising to see nurseries at the top of the list again. Nursery and greenhouse products

are nearly always the state's top commodity, ahead of cattle, wheat and everything else. But the figure this time was eye-catching — nurseries and greenhouses in the state had racked up \$1.2 billion in sales. It was an all-time record.

The most recent USDA Census of Horticultural Specialties, based on data gathered in 2019, shows Oregon to be the No. 3 state in nursery stock sold, behind the much larger states of California and Florida, but it is No. 1 in several key categories. These include deciduous shade trees, deciduous flower- ➤



\$1.2 BILLION
in sales

Source: *U.S. Department of Agriculture, Census of Horticultural Specialties, 2020
** Oregon Department of Agriculture, 2019

Nursery Country

 <p>Oregon is the nation's top seller of DECIDUOUS SHADE TREES (17% of the market)</p>	 <p>Oregon is the nation's top seller of CONIFEROUS EVERGREENS (18.6%)</p>
 <p>Oregon is the nation's top seller of DECIDUOUS FLOWERING TREES (14%)</p>	 <p>Oregon is the nation's third-largest seller of BROADLEAF EVERGREENS AND DECIDUOUS SHRUBS</p>

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Census of Horticultural Specialties, 2019

ing trees and coniferous evergreens. Oregon is No. 2 in fruit and nut plants and No. 3 in broadleaf evergreens, deciduous shrubs, ornamental grasses, bareroot herbaceous perennial plants, cacti/succulents, and a category called “other woody ornamentals and vines.” Now that’s some variety.

If it’s a nursery or greenhouse product, you name it, it is likely grown in Oregon, and probably in considerable quantity.

Certain plants are favorites. Plants selling more than \$10 million worth out of Oregon include boxwoods, rhododendrons, spruces, arborvitae, junipers,

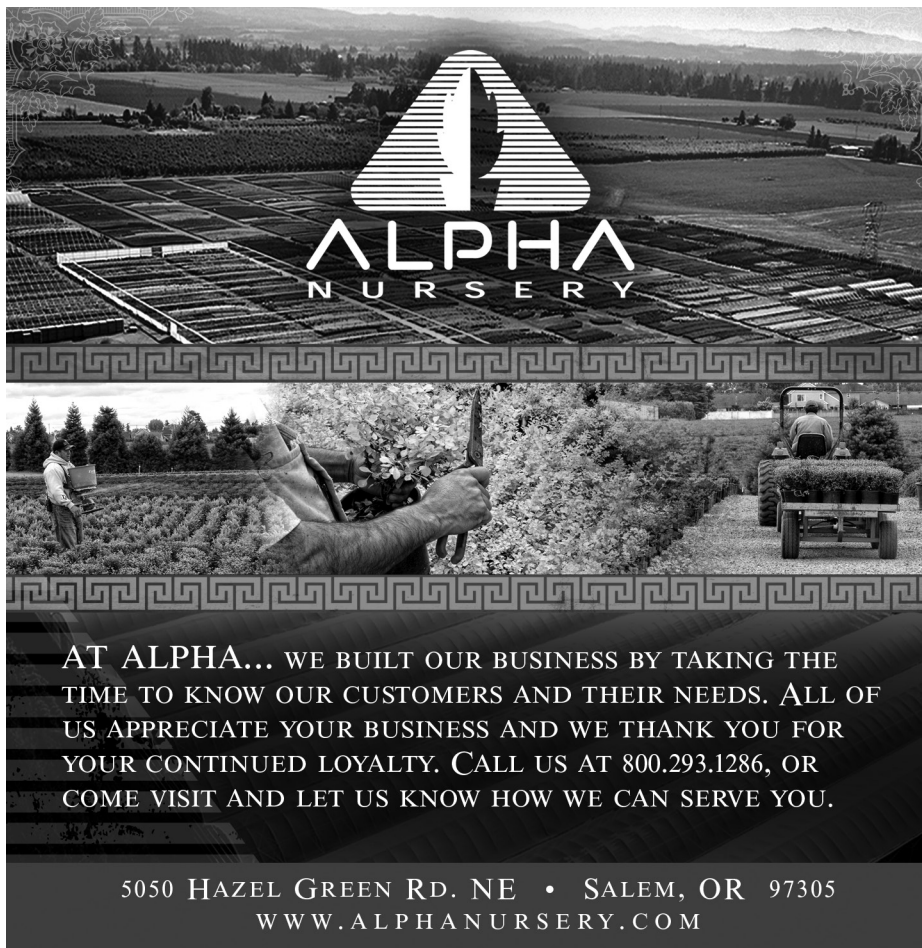
pinus, Japanese maples, red maples, maple (other) and hydrangeas.

The plants that Oregon is No. 1 in are many. Boxwoods, *Rhododendron*, *Pieris*, cotoneaster, spruce, arborvitae, cedar, fir, hydrangea, barberry, spirea, lilac, weigela, peony, lupine and columbine are some of these.

Most of the material comes from a five-county area surrounding Portland and Salem, in the Willamette Valley. Growers enjoy a long growing season, a mild climate, winter dormancy to help woody material, a dependable (but threatened)

water supply, and some of the world’s best topsoil, and this environment has not only nurtured great plants, but the outstanding growers who send them to market.

In this, the annual Oregon Nursery Country issue of *Digger*, we’ll meet some of those growers and learn about the perseverance that has helped them excel. As always, the variety of plants that Oregon offers is shown in these pages. You’ll find all the plants on NurseryGuide.com. Just do a search there by common or botanical name, and you’ll see who grows it. Enjoy your journey with us into Nursery Country. ☺



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From left: Jeff and Brent Smith are cousins continuing their grandfather's family business.

PHOTO BY JON CHRISTOPHER MEYERS / COURTESY OF TRECO

OR PART 1

GROWER PROFILE



OWNERS

Jeff and Brent Smith

KNOWN FOR:

Being a propagator of premium, disease resistant rootstock for nurseries and orchardists.

PEOPLE

Jerry Walden, accountant; **Eva Perfecto**, office assistant and hr; **Elena Burnum**, production manager; **Josh Bradley**, shop foreman; **Jose Luis**, irrigation and harvesting; and **Gerardo Garibay**, greenhouse production and equipment operator.

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TRECO – Oregon Rootstock and Tree Co. Inc.

Founded: 1941 by Bernard Smith

THERE ARE 80 YEARS and three generations of innovation backing every piece of rootstock grown and shipped by **Oregon Rootstock and Tree Co. Inc.**, a company better known by its brand name, **TRECO**.

Founded by Bernard Smith and now run by two of his grandsons, cousins Jeff and Brent Smith, TRECO ships apple and pear tree rootstock, mostly to grafting nurseries that produce trees for orchardists in the United States and internationally.

“The Willamette Valley offers the perfect climate for producing well-rooted liners year after year,” Brent Smith said. “There are a few rootstock nurseries in Washington, but the majority of fruit rootstock comes from the Willamette Valley in Oregon.”

Orchardists rely on different rootstocks that are available to give their producing trees the qualities needed and desired, based on ever-changing production styles, disease considerations, consumer demands and even local climate and soil conditions. The largest share of their product goes to the leading apple-producing state of Washington, but they also ship to New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, California and elsewhere.

“The rootstock helps control the size of the tree production, and helps it through different soil types, different climates,” Brent said. “What might be a good rootstock for Washington wouldn’t necessarily be a good root stock for California. Same as West Coast, East Coast.”

Their key apple rootstock products include Geneva, EMLA, Poland Series, Budagovski Series and M-9 clones. The rootstock is grown using a layer bed process, where a mother tree is planted in a mounded bed and grown for a year. The following spring, it is twined to the ground, where it generates shoots that reach the ground and develop roots.

After this has time to grow, the shoot is cut off and becomes rootstock.

“That is our product that we sell year to year,” Brent said. “The main layer, or the main mother plant that was planted originally, will stay in the ground for as long as we leave it in there.”

The rootstock must be shipped to the grafting nurseries when the material is dormant; otherwise, the graft will fail. That makes for a busy time starting in late November.

“The plant materials typically start going dormant toward the end of





November, so we can typically start harvesting right around Thanksgiving,” Brent said. “As soon as we’re harvesting, we’re grading and we’re packing, and we’re trying to prepare the early stuff for shipping.”

There are additional shipping windows for some rootstocks that go dormant later in the winter, into early spring, but the main harvest is the busiest time. The nursery employs 45 people year round, but it swells to as many as 135 during that peak season.

The nursery also grows filbert trees for hazelnut orchards. These are their sole “full tree” product. The filberts are propagated using the same layering process as the fruit trees grown for rootstock, but are shipped as one-year whips. The company also has a portion of its property devoted to ryegrass seed production and hazelnut production.

In the beginning

The company now known as TRECO has gone through three generations of family ownership, but it all began with Bernard Smith.

Bernard was born in 1913 to Sylvester and Christine Smith, who were farmers. They were moving from Minnesota to Oregon when Bernard made his entrance

in the small community of Idahome, Idaho, which is about halfway between Salt Lake City and Boise. He was the third of 13 children — eight boys and five girls.

Upon arrival in Oregon, the family homesteaded near St. Paul, a farming community on the French Prairie of the Willamette Valley. Bernard dropped out of school in the eighth grade to help on the farm. He met Gertrude Kahut, and they married in 1935.

They started their own farm, where Bernard grew row crops, such as corn, beans, mint, rhubarb and potatoes. Bernard started working with Oregon State University (then known as Oregon State Agricultural College) to develop new varieties of strawberries, including Hood strawberries and Marshall strawberries.

He founded a small apple orchard near Woodburn, Oregon, in 1941, on 150 acres. This would later become TRECO, but in the beginning it was called Knolview Nursery.

On this nursery, Bernard began stool bed propagation of new clonal rootstocks for apple trees. Replacing plain old seedlings with clonal rootstock provided a way to grow dwarf and semi dwarf apple trees

for fruit production.

The innovation sparked considerable interest and demand, prompting the nursery to grow the dwarf and semi-dwarf apple trees on contract.

Bernard and Gertrude had 11 children. Four of their children would become involved in the nursery and ultimately become its second generation of leadership. They were Dave (father of Brent), Fred (father of Jeff), Mike and Dan. They ran Knolview after Bernard retired in 1963.

Growing up on the nursery

In 1975, the Smith family made a big investment in the future of their rootstock business. They purchased the rootstock operations of Chick-A-Dee Nursery in Tualatin, Oregon. This brought them additional genetics and know-how, allowing them to expand their line of rootstocks considerably.

“The stuff we had before was a non-certified rootstock, and they dealt in certified,” Jeff said.

The family kept growing trees under the Knolview Nursery name, but created a new entity, Oregon Rootstock Inc., to grow and sell the rootstock.

It was during this time that Brent and

Jeff grew up and worked on the nursery.

“As 6-year-olds, we used to go pick berries with the neighbors down around the corner, and then for another friend of the family, we picked cherries and currants,” Jeff said. “And then when I turned 9, I graduated to work at the nursery. And it was basically just field work, budding and hoeing and de-budding and tying, and eventually working up to where we did irrigation and drove small tractors and things like that, once we got older.”

The nursery work brought the cousins spending money they needed to socialize. Growing up on the farm wasn't like the city. They needed cars to get somewhere and spend time with friends. That money wasn't just going to be given to them.

“It was nice to have a job that earned money and to be able to buy your first car yourself,” Brent said. “Lots of kids didn't

have that opportunity.”

If there was any time off from school, they were working. Summer vacation, Christmas break, spring break — “If you had a week off, a day off or whatever, you were helping,” he said.

After graduating high school, Brent earned a two-year associate's degree in horticulture from Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, Oregon, and Jeff studied business at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon, while both continued working on the nursery.

They came of age as the business underwent another transformation. It no longer made sense to run two separate companies. In 1989, they merged Knolview and Oregon Rootstock, thereby creating Oregon Rootstock and Tree Co. Inc., doing business as TRECO.

“It just became easier for us to merge it together and be one company,” Jeff said.

Change at a breakneck pace

Bernard Smith died in 1991, 50 years after founding the family nursery, leaving a legacy that continues to develop.

The 1990s turned out to be a turning point for apple production. The Alar apple scare changed the market for the top staple among fruits.

Alar is one of several names for daminon, a plant growth regulator. It was sprayed on fruit to regulate growth, make harvest easier and keep the apples from falling off the tree before they ripened. This kept the apples red and firm for storage and, ultimately, for market.

But with reports on “60 Minutes” and elsewhere that Alar posed a long-term cancer risk for those who consumed >>



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treated fruit over time, producers stopped using it on their apples. Demand cratered for the Red Delicious apple, which was until then the leading variety. Consumers demanded replacement varieties not reliant on Alar.

“It forced the industry to produce something better for marketing and be more appealing to customers,” Brent said. “Now there are almost too many different varieties in the supermarket, from Gala to Fuji to Cosmic® Crisp, an apple that almost eats better after being in storage for a year. There is hardly ever a Red Delicious on display anymore.”

It was around this time that Brent and Jeff ascended into leadership of the family business. Three of the four Smith brothers (Dave, Fred and Mike) making up the nursery’s second generation of leadership retired from the business in the mid-1990s. The youngest of the four, Dan, stuck around before retiring in 2014.

Around the year 2000, TRECO discontinued growing of trees to focus on growing rootstock. The ornamental and fruit trees they grew for decades went by

the wayside. Filbert trees are the only full trees they grow now.

As Brent and Jeff have observed, today’s apple orchard industry bears little resemblance to the past. Big, bountiful apple trees are no longer the norm.

“Back in the day, you had full-size trees where you had to use ladders to harvest the fruit,” Brent said. “It took five, six years for them to come into production.”

Now, the industry needs dwarf and semi-dwarf trees that produce in just a few years. That’s because the marketability of an apple variety might only be 10-12 years.

“All your trees are crammed — they’re planted 18 inches apart, six to eight feet in rows,” Brent said. “And on what they call fruiting wall or a V-trellis, all the picking and everything’s pretty much done from the ground.”

With trellis growing, a support system helps the trees withstand the wind and fruit load, so they can direct energy into fruit production. Trellis growing also means that varieties can be replaced quickly if they become passé. Brent compared it to an “orchard on a hinge.”

“They have to be able to do that to stay within the market,” he said.

Brent and Jeff expect to see greater mechanization of harvest in the not-too-distant future.

“Orchards are trying to get to where they’re picking mechanically now, with robots and color picking with cameras,” Brent said. “Instead of having this tree with multiple branches hanging out all over, they have a real skinny tree with short, what they call spur branches, or fruit spur branches. And they may have two to three apples on that little spur, but when you look down this row, it looks like a wall of fruit, and robots and cameras can go through and pick.”

This affects what TRECO grows, and in what quantities.

“It’s driven by the customer, and we’ve got to grow what they want to put in their orchards,” Brent said. “There’s a lot of guys that watch the science. There’s breeders that are really good salesmen, that can convert a whole group of orchardists to swing into a different rootstock overnight. We have to be prepared for that kind of stuff.” ©



PHOTO BY JON CHRISTOPHER MEYERS / COURTESY OF TRECO



From left, Jerry Simnitt and Jim Simnitt run the family business started by their father.

PHOTO BY CURT KIPP

OR PART 2

GROWER PROFILE



OWNERS:

Jerry and Jim Simnitt, owners.

PEOPLE

Roberta Simnitt, bookkeeper.

KNOWN FOR:

A variety of woody shrubs, including more than 200 varieties of rhododendrons and a variety of quality *Daphne*, *Pieris*, *Kalmia*, *Leucothoe*, *Prunus* and other shrubs, all propagated and raised on-site until ready for market.

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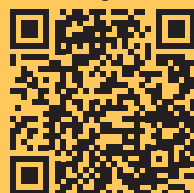
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Simnitt Nursery

Founded: 1978 by Jerry Sr. and Janice Simnitt

SIMNITT NURSERY IS A family-owned nursery that sells field-grown and containerized woody shrubs — think rhododendrons, daphne, *Pieris*, laurels and more — to retailers, landscapers and rewholesalers.

The nursery was founded by Jerry Sr. and Janice Simnitt in 1978, and today is owned by their two sons Jerry and Jim Simnitt. Their main calling card is rhododendrons and daphne.

“We grow a lot of different varieties of rhododendrons, like over 200 varieties, which is quite a bit for rhododendron growers,” Jerry said. “It’s a lot.”

And they go beyond the typical.

“Our customers are looking for something unusual,” Jim said. “We can offer an unusual rhododendron. People think of rhododendrons and it’s that old-fashioned kind. There’s so many out there that are different and new and unusual and cool. We can offer that.”

The nursery is also known for its strong collection of *Daphne* offerings.

“We grow a lot of *Daphne*, which is a great plant for these smaller yards because some of them bloom all summer, and they’re low maintenance,” Jim said. “It’s just somewhat drought-resistant, which is great in this kind of environment.”

Rock daphne (*D. cneorum*), Eternal Fragrance (*D. × transatlantica* ‘BLAFRA’ PP18361) and Summer Ice (*D. × t.* ‘Summer Ice’) are three of the notable selections they grow.

Almost everything is propagated on-site by the Simnitts, so they have full quality control from the beginning until the plants are market-ready.

Although the brothers are 14 years apart in age — a running joke among Oregon growers has people “mistaking” older brother Jerry for Jim’s father — their partnership flows naturally, and they share many responsibilities. “We don’t have titles,” Jim said. “We do everything. We’re just partners and own it. And it works.”

In terms of production, Jerry focuses on containers. Jim concentrates his efforts on field production. On the business side, Jim works on inventory and sales, while Jerry focuses on propagation and plant quality. Jerry’s wife, Roberta, serves as bookkeeper. They have a work crew of eight supporting them, several of whom have been there for the long term.

The two brothers have a shared belief in hard work, and their goal is to provide a quality product that they, themselves, would be eager to buy. Gathering cus-





customer feedback is critical in that. They make a point of talking to customers, asking them whether the product meets their needs — what's working well and what needs improvement.

"Anytime we do deliveries, a lot of times it'll be Jerry or myself," Jim said. "And then when you're unloading it there, you can see, what does it look like coming off the truck?"

School's out

The nursery began in 1978. Jerry's father — Jerry Simnitt Sr. — was working as a vice principal at Boise-Elliott Elementary School in Portland. The family lived in the Parkrose area on the east side of Portland. The area was of a rural character, with mailboxes on posts, but it was urbanizing rapidly in the 1970s, with construction of the East Portland freeway (Interstate 205) not too far away.

When some of his relatives moved down into the Willamette Valley, Jerry Sr. picked up his brood — wife Janice, son Jerry Jr., daughter Joanie and baby Jim — and followed suit.

They purchased a home and some land north of the Willamette Valley community of Canby, on a bluff not far from the Willamette River floodplain. Now they had 2.5 acres and needed something to do with it.

So they did what many Oregonians with farm acreage decided to do. They started a nursery.

It really wasn't a left-field choice. Jerry's grandfather, Kenneth Simnitt, had worked at nurseries in the Parkrose area. Jerry Sr. had some skills he'd picked up from his dad, so he made use of them.

"During the evenings and summers and weekends, [my dad] would propagate rhododendrons and plant them and grow nursery stock," Jerry said.

At the same time, a friend of the family was retiring from the nursery business and provided Jerry Sr. with a key contact to buy many of the first plants they produced.

Jerry Sr. enjoyed his new line of work so much that in 1980, he made Simnitt Nursery his full-time venture. Jerry's mother, Janice, assisted. They built the business together.

"It helped a lot that she was free labor and so were my sister and I, and then Jim eventually, too," Jerry said.

Not that young Jerry, who was 14 at the time, objected to his duties.

"I loved it," he said. "It was a great, great childhood. I was able to learn to do something and plant it or propagate it and see it on all the way through, till the end where you could sell it. You nurtured it and it grew."

Jim was also in the field at a very young age. Born in 1978 when the nursery started, he was soon being carried on his mother's back as she propagated plants in the greenhouse or planted them in the field.

"It was just what we did as a family," Jim said.

A typical summer day started around 7:30 in the morning. "We did a lot of weeding, and we potted," Jerry said.

As Jerry came of age, he took on a larger role in the business, and soon, he and his father were running it together. "They were partners in all this," Jim said.

In the beginning, most of the material grown was sold to wholesalers in the Seattle area. As sales grew, the nursery gradually expanded its acreage. It moved from 2 acres to 5 to 9, and expanded from there. Today the nursery grows on three non-contiguous sites totaling 65 acres. Two are near Canby, and one is in the Aurora area.

A time of transition

In 2005, Jerry Sr. retired from the business and Jim stepped in as Jerry's new partner. By then, Jim had a horticulture degree from Oregon State University; a season of work with acclaimed garden retailer Molbak's in Woodinville, Washington; and six years of experience as a grower at Simnitt under his belt.

The two brothers then worked together to chart the nursery's path forward.

"We started just slowly adding more plants, adding more products," Jerry said. "[We] looked at what worked at some other places, saw what products are selling or different things that would be a good niche for us also."

Over the past 15 years since the brothers have become partners, they have



made retailers a more prominent part of their customer base. They sell to some local landscapers as well. Geographically, the customer base is diverse. About 85% of the customers are outside Oregon.

"You can't be everything to everybody, but we can be some things to everybody," Jim said. "Some people want big stuff, some people want container material, so we're trying to balance that so we can do it all, and have a diverse customer base, and have a diverse customer location too."

They keep in mind that trends change, and the long-term health of their business is important.

"The market might be doing one thing right now, but we can't change with the market over a year," Jim said. "With our crops, we're 2, 4, 6 years out and you've got to look at that [long-term] trend, not just what's happening today."

Both brothers have taken on industry leadership roles. Jerry joined the Oregon Association of Nurseries Executive

Committee, serving as president in 2012. He did it to support the industry and to be involved in the issues affecting them.

"We're lucky to be in Oregon, and we're lucky to be in Oregon because of our association," Jerry said. "It has looked out for us and taken care of us in a lot of ways and kept us safe to keep growing and to grow plants. We're lucky that the growers before us set up the association, and it's been as good as it's been, and protected us."



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Jim witnessed his brother's experiences as an OAN leader firsthand and saw the value, so he followed suit, serving as president during the tumultuous year of 2020.

"It's a lot of work, but it's rewarding," Jerry said.

They see many issues ahead for the industry, as well as for their business. Labor and water availability are key.

One of the issues for their nursery, specifically, is urbanization. Although Canby is a farm town detached from Portland proper, it is not far away and has absorbed significant regional growth. Although the main Simnitt Nursery property was once somewhat isolated from Canby proper, new neighborhoods keep popping up closer and closer.

"It makes growing more difficult because we have to bring our semis through residential areas to load," Jerry said. "We're more careful on spraying, we're more careful on discing than we used to be, and noise — moving equipment is a hassle."

Sometimes people move to be near scenic farmland but don't anticipate the things that go along with that. "I don't want any issues, so we try hard," Jerry said. "Most people are very, very nice about it."

The importance of family

In the end, the Simnitts have enjoyed the nursery lifestyle, as it has allowed them to pursue what they truly value. There are few things they would change.

"Our family is pretty important," Jim said. "We're pretty close. Our sister's not part of the business, but she lives right here. And so, we see everybody, and our parents live right here. We see them all the time."

Jerry and his wife, Roberta, enjoyed being able to raise his five daughters on the farm.

"My kids grew up here," he said. "Every day when they got home from school, I was able to see them. I usually had lunch with them in the summer when they weren't in school. Those are things I really liked. I saw [Roberta] every day. She worked at the nursery also, but was also taking care of the kids. I was very



lucky. Those things were important to me. I didn't realize how important until now."

One of Jerry and Roberta's daughters, Amanda, became a grower herself. Amanda and her husband, Wayne Staehely, own **Columbia Nursery LLC**, which is also located in the Canby area. Amanda has followed her father Jerry and her uncle Jim into OAN board service and is currently on the Executive Committee.

"She's really smart," Jerry said. "She can do anything she wants, and she's proven it."

With Amanda, that makes four generations of the Simnitt family involved in

nurseries: Kenneth Simnitt, the nursery worker; Jerry Simnitt Sr., the nursery founder; Jerry and Jim, the nursery owners; and now Amanda.

And for Jerry Sr., it's a legacy he can take pride in.

"I think he is very pleased with setting the nursery up and both of us here doing it, taking over for him," Jerry said. "Our families are all here. I think he just worked hard to make sure that we had the nursery started and let it grow. I don't think he had any long-term plans for what it would look like, but I think he's very pleased with what happened." ©



The crew from Bamboo Garden pose for a photo.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BAMBOO GARDEN

GROWER PROFILE



OWNERS:

Noah Bell, general manager;
Nancy Oberschmidt, owner.

PEOPLE

Office manager Penelope Costley; nursery foreman Isaias Ramirez; shipping manager Niki Atterbury; inventory manager Suhaila Aboulhosn; plant health specialist Gary Figueroa; designer and consultant Anna Foleen; sales consultant Peter Berglund; planter craftsman Lloyd Dubois; freight shipping foreman Jose Cano; senior propagation specialist Reveriano Ramirez; propagation specialists Teresa Lopez and Manuel Ramirez; catalog designer Charissa Brock.

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Bamboo Garden

Founded: 1984

BAMBOO GARDEN'S LATE founder, Ned Jaquith, was known as an evangelist or ambassador for the virtues of bamboo. His nursery started as a backyard operation, but grew into one with the largest bamboo collection in the United States, with more than 300 varieties of the plant.

Although Jaquith passed away in 2012, his nursery remains a much-respected resource in the plant community, well known for researching and introducing numerous new cultivars to the trade. Employees are committed to carrying on Jaquith's legacy.

"We've become good at collecting the seed and germinating them," said the nursery's general manager, Noah Bell. "And then, through studying different characteristics of the seedlings and doing field testing, we're able to establish new cultivars that have special characteristics. That ongoing field of research is our specialty."



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The nursery grows its bamboo on a 20-acre operation. They sell to retail and mail-order customers, as well as wholesale accounts, a customer mix of roughly 50/50.

Consumer desires for a privacy plant drive more demand than anything else. "Bamboo is one of the quickest ways to get a tall plant in a very narrow vertical space," said Penny Costley, the nursery's office manager.

Increasingly compact urban development patterns — tall homes on small lots — have only increased this demand, but the plant should not be typecast by any stretch. There are many other uses for bamboo, and more are being developed all the time.

"You can use it as a specimen," Costley said. "It's edible. You can build things out of it. It's a multipurpose plant."

Collectors and designers love it as well. They develop a passion or interest for bamboo's unique look and assortment of varieties, from small-statured selections to big timber bamboo. It comes in various colors, sometimes with variegation. There are, of course, clumping varieties, as well as running varieties that require a barrier.

People often show up at Bamboo Garden or call looking for plants or just information to fulfill their needs or their curiosity. The 18-member staff helps them find solutions and get the right plant for the right place or application.

"If someone calls up just with questions and then they go and buy



Bamboo Garden



a bamboo somewhere else, that's fine," staff designer Anna Foleen said. "We want to make sure that you're happy, that you're knowledgeable, that your plants are happy. That was really big for Ned — that people knew what they were doing so that the plants could stay happy."

Inspired to grow

Bamboo Garden may have begun in Ned Jaquith's backyard in Portland, Oregon, but the roots of his interest in plants went back as far as childhood.

Jaquith was born in the Route 66 desert outpost of Kingman, Arizona, in 1939. From the age of 6, his family lived in the small town of Winterhaven, California, one mile from Arizona and four from the Mexican border. From watching Tarzan and Jungle Jim movies to visiting the San Diego Zoo with his family, he developed an affinity for the tropical look of bamboo.

Jaquith became a gardener early. From the age of 5, he would help his parents grow vegetables that they sold to a nearby grocery store during World War II. As a teenager, he planted his own vegetable garden.

After high school, Jaquith studied at San

Diego State University, then attended Arizona Western College and graduated with an associate's degree. He went to work as a brakeman for Southern Pacific Railroad.

Jaquith moved to Portland in 1976, following his future wife, Nancy Oberschmidt, who had moved there earlier. He brought with him a *Bambusa oldhamii* plant, which died because he didn't realize it wasn't hardy in the Northwest climate.

That experience was instructive. Ultimately, cold hardy bamboo would become a specialty for Bamboo Garden.

The *Phyllostachys vivax* that a friend gave him also died, not due to climate, but rather because it flowered. That too was instructive.

"Bamboo has a very rare, unusual flowering process that will flower once every 60 to 120 years," Bell said. "During the time that a bamboo species goes into flower, all of the copies of that particular plant will flower simultaneously, so the parent plant perishes, but they leave behind thousands of seedlings."

Bamboo Garden would go on to propagate bamboo plants in this fashion.

Although these experiences might

have discouraged others, Jaquith renewed his interest in the plant in 1980. He attended a plant sale in Pasadena, California, and purchased starts of 12 different types of bamboo, bringing them back to Portland.

He joined the newly formed American Bamboo Society (ABS) and would travel hundreds of miles to San Diego to attend meetings. In 1983, he and fellow bamboo collector Daphne Lewis founded the Pacific Northwest Chapter of ABS.

The next year, he took the numerous bamboo plants he had acquired over the past few years and founded Bamboo Garden in the backyard of his Milwaukie, Oregon, home. When he ran out of room there, he rented a two-acre nursery nearby and kept collecting and propagating new bamboo species and cultivars.

By the mid-1990s, the nursery had more than 200 of them.

A key turning point in the nursery's history was the launch of bamboogarden.com in the late 1990s, when the internet came into general usage by the public. Search engine optimization was also in its infancy, but whether by intent or organically, the website



attracted attention and became a resource for the curious.

“We became renowned internationally as a source of bamboo knowledge,” Bell said. “People started looking for us, finding us. Anytime they searched for bamboo on the internet, we would come up.”

That drove more sales, and the nursery soon outgrew its initial space in the city.

“We had collected so many different species of bamboo,” Bell said. “The original intent was we just needed more space to grow them, and that was back in the early 2000s. The business and the demand for bamboo started to grow as well. So not only did we need space to grow the plants, but we needed greenhouses to propagate and a shipping warehouse to facilitate our shipping orders and everything.”

Jaquith identified a forested, 20-acre

site that was for sale 22 miles northwest of Portland, outside the small, Sunset Corridor town of North Plains. He purchased it in the early 2000s and gradually moved the nursery there.

“I think he just really liked the local geography of having the creek and the hillside, and different diverse microclimates, under which you can grow a diverse number of bamboos,” Bell said.

Around that time, Bell became the general manager of the nursery, responsible for day-to-day operations and helping it along its path of growth.

“Ned was my mentor, more than just my boss,” he said. “He taught me almost everything I know about bamboo and provided the environment and opportunity to learn and grow as the business grew.”

And grow it did. Over the years,

the nursery has supplied bamboo for large landscaping projects across North America, including a whopping 53 truckloads of it for the Asia Trail of the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.

Other projects in Oregon include: the Wayne Morse Courthouse in Eugene; the Portland Japanese Garden; the Lan Su Chinese Garden (formerly Portland Classical Chinese Garden); and the Oregon Zoo. The nursery also shipped bamboo to help landscape Point Defiance Zoo (Tacoma, Washington); Wellesley College (Wellesley, Massachusetts); and the mixed-use Shangri La high rise building in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

“Ned was passionate about everything he got into,” said Foleen, who started working for Bamboo Garden in 2008. “It was only natural that once he got >>





addicted to bamboo, the addiction turned into a 20-acre nursery. Just anybody who knew him probably would have expected it, I think.”

Continuing a legacy

Sadly, Ned was diagnosed with cancer in June 2012 and passed away in September of that year. It was a tremendous loss for the nursery industry in Oregon and beyond, as well as the bamboo community worldwide.

Foleen worked with Jaquith for several years before he passed, and remembers him, as many do, for his generosity.

“He was one of those people that literally would give you the shirt off his back if you needed it,” she said. “I actually saw him do that once. He was that kind of a guy, always out to be helpful, always out to be friendly, always easygoing.”

The staff at Bamboo Garden feels privileged to be able to continue Jaquith’s legacy through the cultivation and promotion of bamboo.

Peter Berglund, a sales consultant who

went to work for Bamboo Garden after being a customer for decades, promotes bamboo as a “world plant,” pointing to more than 1,000 species worldwide with different uses.

“It’s for carbon sequestration, for an oxygen output ratio higher than most plants, (for) heat island effect design uses,” he said. “It’s got so many applications, and it’s really being looked at around the globe for material use.” He cited dimensional lumber, flooring, clothing, paper towels and even toilet paper as a few of the examples.

Research into these applications has become a part of Jaquith’s legacy through the Ned Jaquith Foundation (<https://www.nedjaquithfoundation.org>), a non-profit organization that supports bamboo research and education. The organization’s website lists the projects that have been done over the years.

“Every year, we have a fundraising event, and we have grant applicants that we award the funds to in various arenas,” Bell said.

Funds have been awarded to individuals and groups developing bamboo bicycles, those developing it as a food source and those hoping to improve production methods, among others. Timber production, in particular, offers great potential for sustainability and profitability.

“When managed correctly, you can establish a grove that can be harvested 30–50% every year, and then it naturally replenishes the following year,” Bell said.

But for those who love the plant best, it’s still all about the passion for bamboo that drove Jaquith’s initial interest. That’s something he came to personify, and now it will doubtlessly outlive him for many decades to come.

“That brother- and sisterhood of just collecting a particular plant, just makes it much more fun,” Berglund said. “It’s a never-ending story of what they may have, what they’ve encountered, what they’ve had in the past, what they’re looking for in the future. And that just makes it fun. That’s just fun all the way around.” ©



From left, Vince and Kathy Engel (with Nala) operate a 5-acre nursery.
PHOTO BY CURT KIPP

GROWER PROFILE



OWNERS:

Vince and Kathy Engel, owners.

KNOWN FOR:

Dwarf fruit trees, shade and flowering trees, and holiday greens products such as wreaths, swags, arrangements and centerpieces.

PEOPLE:

Quentin Engel, supervisor;
Nala, mascot

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Engel's Evergreens LLC

Founded: 1984 by Vince and Kathy Engel

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You read that right. Despite being called "Engel's Evergreens" — a name based on the Christmas wreaths they also sell — fruit trees are the main bread and butter for the nursery and owners Vince and Kathy Engel. Shade and flowering trees are also part of the portfolio.

For Vince and Kathy, it's all part of the nursery's long tale of perseverance, adaptability and keeping a positive outlook.

"As Kathy said, 'The glass is half full,'" Vince said. "There's always a positive way to look at it. And bigger isn't always better because it's not necessarily going to be more profitable."

The nursery's Christmas business used to generate \$250,000 in sales, but margins were low, so the couple cut back on that side to focus more on fruit, shade and flowering trees. These are grown from the liner stage to the market stage for about a year, then sold to garden centers.

"We try to keep it turned so that we don't have a big capital investment," Vince said.

Most of Engel's trees are sold in 5-, 7- and 10-gallon containers, with the 5s making up the bulk. The fruit trees are mostly

dwarf and semi-dwarf selections, including peach, apple, pear, nectarine, apricot, cherry, plum and fig.

"The true dwarf trees are only going to be maybe five or six feet tall, or there are some apple varieties that are columnar that are going to be only maybe three feet wide and six feet tall or eight feet tall," Vince said.

They also offer combination and espaliered versions of some of these.

"Those can go in a small yard as well," Kathy said.

Small fruit and berry bushes are also offered — raspberries, gooseberries, blackberries and currants, as well as grapes. These were added to the mix due to customer requests.

"People were starting to go back to the 'victory garden' thinking — grow my own fruit, my own vegetables and stuff, especially now with the pandemic," Kathy said.

"The last two springs [2020 and 2021], we sold out of everything and we've dipped into next year's crop already," Vince said.

The nursery employs six year-round workers, plus seasonal workers as needed. Kathy works in the office, including billing, payroll, order entry and some sales. Vince works outside, serving as his own head grower, essentially. He plans production, orders supplies, maintains equip-



ment, manages inventory and is the main person on sales. Their young adult son, Quentin, works on equipment and other tasks as needed.

In the beginning

The unexpected has defined Engel's Evergreens from the beginning. In fact, the nursery started out as Engel's Liner Nursery — but first, the story before the story.

Kathy grew up on a farm west of Salem, Oregon. Upon graduation from South Salem High School, she enrolled at Oregon State University and graduated with a bachelor's of science in horticulture in 1981.

Vince grew up in rural Illinois. His parents were both teachers — his mother taught home economics, and his father

taught agricultural studies and advised the Future Farmers of America at the school. They also owned a hog farm about 80 miles west of Chicago, until misfortune struck.

"My dad passed away when I was 4," Vince said. "And so, my mom sold the farm, and we moved to town."

After high school, Vince attended the University of Illinois, just as his parents had. "I've got a forestry degree, and [during my studies], I took a plant identification class," he said. "Mike Dirr was the professor. He's a well-known plant geek. So, I had him for his last year at Illinois, before he went on sabbatical and then moved to Georgia."

According to Vince, Dirr's big tree and shrub reference was 250 pages when he was at Illinois, then doubled in size

when he moved to Georgia because the state is two zones warmer.

At that time, Vince also left Illinois, but he headed in a different direction — to Oregon. "I got tired of looking at the corn and bean fields," Vince said. Having visited Oregon with his brother, Vince decided to seek an opportunity in the Beaver State, and found it in an old friend.

"I'd worked at a garden center in Aurora, Illinois," he said. "The sales manager moved out here and he became the sales manager for Amfac Nurseries in Oregon, [which at the time owned] **Glenn Walters Nursery**. And so, I called him up and he said, 'Send me your resume.' And I moved out six weeks later."

At Glenn Walters, Vince became the inventory manager for the nursery. There,



he met Kathy, who was working as the inventory clerk. They were in their mid 20s.

"Yeah, he was my boss," Kathy said.

A relationship developed and the two started their nursery in 1984 before marrying in 1985. They began their business venture on two acres of rented property and located in Hillsboro, Oregon, about 12 miles away from where they would ultimately locate their nursery.

"I was tired of working for somebody else," Kathy said. "I was raised on a vegetable farm, so I always worked. The family worked for itself. I never had to work for anybody else. I thought I wanted to get back to that and start my own business again."

In 1985, they purchased a five-acre flag lot of their own near the small town of Gaston, in the Tualatin Valley, but they didn't move their nursery to it until 1987, when their lease at the other place expired.

Initially, their nursery was a propagation nursery called Engel's Liner Nursery. The couple foresaw that plant demand was going up due to higher demand, and they were hoping to tap into the opportunity. They knew growers needed material to grow. Liners made that easier.

"The industry had just recovered from the early 1980s, with high inflation and everything," Vince said. "Things were starting to build up again to where people were looking for plants and starts to expand their nurseries."

Starting off, the nursery propagated a variety of shrubs and sold them to wholesale growers, both in Oregon and out of state. They were growing azaleas, arbovitae, boxwood, heather, spruce, cypress, *Pieris*, rhododendron, potentilla, spirea and more, but these were just small, rooted cuttings in 2-inch and 4-inch square pots. After raising them, they applied some hustle to get them sold. The tenor of business then was much more formal, and they had to act the part.

"It was a different time then, because at the **Farwest Show**, you went in a coat and tie to get East Coast business or Midwest business, which is a lot different from what it is now," Vince said. >>



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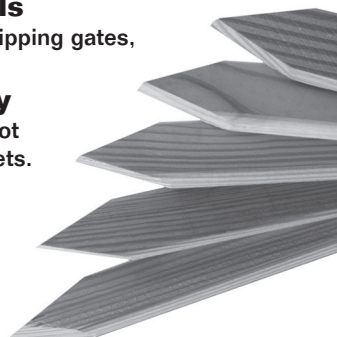
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In 1987, the Engels added a new product to their business plan. They began to make Christmas wreaths and other holiday products. The greens were stored in a cooler until ready for market.

Growers often benefit by adding to their product lines, but in this instance, the move backfired at first, due to an unexpected misfortune. On a Saturday evening in November after everyone had quit working, a thunderstorm came through and knocked out power to the cooler, which was normally set to 38 degrees to protect the product.

"When I checked the cooler on Monday morning, it was 65 degrees," Vince said.

"The wreaths were in there, so we lost \$30,000 worth of product," Kathy said. "So, as a result of that, bank loans weren't paid off timely, and the bank said, 'You've got to get a real job,' basically. So that's how Vince ended up at another nursery."

With Vince taking a day job, Kathy became the main engine behind the business.

"Our son was born the year after that, in 1994," she said. "I continued to do propagation, and then I did some ground covers, too."

They also continued with the wreaths and other holiday goods. Those became a successful line. They sold some to retailers, but most go to fundraising groups. "Boy Scouts, schools, church groups, sports

teams — any nonprofit that wants to make money for their cause," Kathy said.

Forced to adapt again

Taking a day job was a boon for Vince's career. He started at Thompson and Walters Nursery, which was taken over by the Berry Family of Nurseries. He continued successfully under that ownership, working his way up to general manager of the company's Oregon properties.

"I'd worked for Glenn and Viola [Walters], but I also worked for Bob Berry. He used to have nurseries here, and he bought the nursery," Vince said. "His main nurseries were in Oklahoma, and the Berry Family of Nurseries had acquired seven





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nurseries across the country. Oregon was unique because it grows the maples and the blue star junipers and all that stuff that everybody wants. He had nurseries in Michigan, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Tennessee and Florida, and within a 300-mile radius of each of the nurseries, he could drop material to 75% of the country.”

But the Great Recession interrupted the winning streak for both Engel’s and for the Berry Family of Nurseries. “The thing that drove [Bob Berry] to sell was the fuel prices in 2009, 2010 were so expensive,” Vince said.

The problems weren’t limited to Berry. The stock market crashed, unemployment skyrocketed and the demand for plant material dried up, in part due to the evaporation of demand for new housing. “Pretty much nobody ordered anything,” Vince said.

Vince was laid off from Berry as sales plummeted at Engel’s — a double blow for the family. They were left figuring out what to do next.

“We contacted a friend of Kathy’s and asked what he needed, and he said, ‘Fruit trees,’” Vince said. “So, we started growing fruit trees, and we’ve added shade and flowering trees to that.”

They ceased to be a propagation nursery, choosing instead to grow from liners. Kathy was happy to take propagation out of her portfolio, having done it for close to 20 years.

“I said, ‘I’m done with those greenhouses.’ In the winter, you’ve got to come and knock the snow off, and in the summer, they’re hot, and you’ve got to keep everything watered and the mist running,” she said. “It wasn’t easy. It was evident to me that fruit trees, shade trees became easier to maintain.”

At this point, the name of the nursery changed from Engels Liner Nursery to Engel’s Evergreens LLC.

“And the Evergreens is because of the Christmas product,” Vince said.

The Engels sold their new fruit and shade tree product initially through Kathy’s friend, and primarily into the mountain states — Idaho, Utah, »



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Engel's Evergreens LLC

Montana and Wyoming. They gradually shifted to retail garden centers as their primary customer. They rode the long economic recovery that began around 2012.

But adversity wasn't finished with the Engels. The family of three was driving along Highway 99W near Amity, Oregon, in December of 2016 and got into a motor vehicle accident.

“There was a 19-year-old, and he was on his phone texting and he ran a stop sign at 60,” Kathy said. “He hit us head on.”

The Engels have all recovered, but Vince does not get around as well as he did previously. They persevere through the ever-present challenges of running a nursery.

“Labor gets to be a challenge,” Vince said. “Shipping costs. And then, another challenge that is starting to creep in is suppliers and customers that are closing due to retirement. We’ve lost two or three suppliers of trees that we’ve gotten, because nobody in the family wanted to keep the business going.”

They’ve lost customers this way as well — retailers that have shut down due to retirement. “If they can’t sell a retail garden center to somebody, they just sell the land to somebody for a subdivision,” Kathy said.

Association involvement is key

Over the years, the Engels have made time to contribute to the Oregon Association of Nurseries. They chaired multiple annual conventions and have spent time in chapter leadership.

They see the value of involvement. “The OAN is big with lobbying for agriculture and on legislation,” Vince said.

Along the way, they got to know industry leaders, like Art Anderson (former general manager at **J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.**), the late Arda Berryhill (owner of **Berryhill Nursery**), Cindy Lou Pease (owner of **Evans Farms**), and Cindy Jeffers (works at **Landsystems Nursery**).

“It’s helped us be known in the industry,” Kathy said. “People come to us because we’re OAN members and have been involved in the association.” ©

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EMPLOYMENT

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EMPLOYMENT

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EMPLOYMENT

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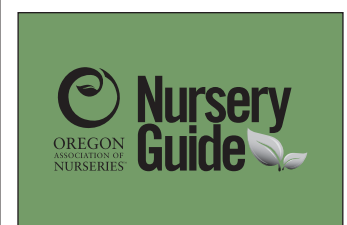
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To apply: Email resume and answers to these questions: Are you willing to work outside in all weather conditions throughout the year? What is your education? How long have you been in the nursery business? (5 years preferred) What language(s) do you speak? What licenses or certifications do you have? (driver's license required; chemical applicator's license preferred) Please visit our website at www.moanannursery.com



EMPLOYMENT

POTTING PRODUCTION LINE MECHANIC – ISELI NURSERY

Isele Nursery is accepting applications for a Potting Production Line Mechanic to repair and maintain potting equipment on our Tickle Creek Farm in Boring, Oregon. Experience repairing and servicing potting equipment, farm equipment and welding preferred. Must be customer service and safety minded, motivated, team-oriented and able to problem solve. This is a full-time career-oriented opportunity. Compensation commensurate with experience. This position provides medical benefits, 401K with matching employer contribution, 125 flex plan, paid time off, and a positive work environment. Candidates may send a cover letter and resume to: Alicia Fernandez – Human Resources afernandez@iselinursery.com 1(503)663-3822 (Ext 231)



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EMPLOYMENT

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4. Production Plan: Work closely with herbaceous planning coordinator and production manager to implement production plan according to sales plan and production schedules.

5. Training: Develop, schedule and conduct training for operational processes as deemed necessary.

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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EMPLOYMENT

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KEY Responsibilities: 1. Planning — Master plan development, supply demand balancing, inventory management and control. 2. Scheduling — Monitor workflow to provide for the most efficient operations to ensure the highest possible quality and yield of the crop. 3. Purchasing — serve as DCA brand ambassador with all vendors, oversee and ensure processes are followed to maintain the accuracy of the production inventory. 4. Analysis and Reporting — Provide market analysis, generate timely royalty reports for all Licensors, report trends, and make appropriate adjustments in the production plan.

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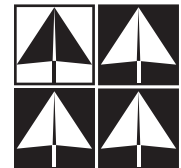
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GROWING KNOWLEDGE

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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Knowing your cedar pests

Part 2: *Thuja*, *Juniperus* and *Cupressus*

BY JAY W. PSCHIEDT AND DAVID C. SHAW

IT'S IMPORTANT TO be aware of issues in the landscape and forest, as these can become problems in the nursery or for your customers. On the flip side, problems not detected in the nursery can become big issues when planted out at the customer's end. Cedar trees have a number of issues to be aware of, from abiotic disorders to insects and diseases.

The word cedar is used loosely on many different trees. We covered problems on *Cedrus* spp. (true cedars), *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*, *Calodendrus decurrens* (Incense cedar), and *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (Port Orford cedar) in the January 2021 issue of *Digger**. In this article, we will cover *Thuja* spp. (Arborvitae and Western Red Cedars), junipers and cypress.

Recently, drought and heat/scorch have become a big issue. The heat dome that influenced the PNW during late June 2021 had major impacts on western red cedar in some parts of western Oregon, especially in a band just a few miles inland from the coast. It appears that western red cedar is very susceptible to these high-temperature events, and young trees can be killed.

The influence of drought on plant health, however, can be very confusing. Many pathogens and insects respond to plant stress associated with drought, and it can be very difficult to discern which is truly responsible for the problem. Getting a proper identification of the pathogen or insect found on the plant allows the grower to determine if the pest is a drought opportunist or a primary host attacker.

Complex drought, heat and vapor pressure deficit related mortality

Drought injury has become a major issue over the last several years, especially in the landscape and the forest. Although this problem can be observed in nature, it can also occur in potted nursery trees.

In some potted plants, the root-shoot ratio is so lopsided that trees have a difficult time maintaining water balance. Many conifers, including cedar, are susceptible to drought stress, especially when planted on lower elevation, south-facing or marginal sites. However, juniper and cypress tend to be much more resistant than



Figure 1. Scorch on western red cedar in Siletz, Oregon, from late June heat wave, 2021. Note the regular pattern of necrotic tissue. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

western red cedar and arborvitae.

Newly planted trees are most at risk to drought damage. Drought-stressed trees are highly susceptible to secondary attack from insects such as cedar bark beetles (*Phloeosinus* spp.) (*Coleoptera: Curculionidae*) and canker-causing fungi. Drought damage can accumulate over several years of subnormal precipitation and persist after normal conditions return.

During extremely warm, dry weather, trees may not regenerate rootlets fast enough to replace those lost to moisture stress. The degenerating root system results in crown decline, which in turn reduces food supply to roots. This process is known as carbon starvation. Branch flagging may also indicate drought damage.

Throughout western Oregon (and Washington state, both west side and east side), western red cedars of all size classes have died of unknown causes over the past few years, but most likely this is associated with drought combined with high vapor pressure deficit (VPD). VPD is the difference between how much water is in the air versus the amount of water the air can hold.

High VPD can put extreme stress on a tree as it contributes to the pull of water from the plant. Warmer air can hold more water, so high temperatures can exacerbate the effects of drought. The late June 2021 heatwave was particularly hard on western red cedar, causing tip reddening and browning, whole branch reddening and browning of the foliage and killing the branch (Figure 1). In some cases, especially younger trees in highly exposed settings, the entire tree is killed.

Insects of western red cedar, arborvitae, cypress and juniper

Insects are generally pretty rare on these hosts, especially foliage eaters. A bark beetle, several wood borers and spider mites may be the most important for nursery growers. Table 1 lists the common insects known to occur on these tree species. Perhaps the most common insect is the cedar bark beetle, which has been routinely found on drought-stressed trees that are dead or dying. Meanwhile, the flatheaded cedar borer is becoming more of an issue for arborvitae.

Diseases of western red cedar, arborvitae, cypress and juniper

Thuja plicata - Western red cedar

Leaf blight (Keithia blight) – The fungus *Didymascella thujina* is a problem on trees and shrubs of all age classes whether in nurseries, landscapes or forests. However, seedlings are most severely affected.

Leaves turn brown or ash gray and may be cast in fall. Fungal fruiting structures (apothecia) are imbedded in leaf tissues; the entire structure drops out, leaving deep pits. The cultivars ‘Atrovirens’ and ‘Excelsa’ are susceptible. Conditions that keep foliage wet will also aid disease development and spread.

Spore discharge from wetted apothecia begins in late spring, with a second ascospore release in the fall if conditions are wet and above 50 F. Symptoms develop the season after spore dispersal. Be sure to propagate from disease-free stock plants or use seed from British Columbia coastal, low-elevation populations. Space nursery plants and time irrigation to promote rapid drying of foliage.

Stem decays are primarily a forest

Table 1. Insects and mites associated with cedars. Most insects that occur on cedars can be found on multiple species, and also on cypress and juniper.

Insect or mite species/group	Common symptoms/signs	Importance
Cedar bark beetles <i>Phloeosinus</i> spp. (<i>Coleoptera: Curculionidae</i>)	Cedar bark beetles can occur on any of the cedars, cypress, or juniper. They are usually associated with stressed, dying or recently dead trees. They are not considered primary mortality agents, but recent observations indicate they have become increasingly common on drought-stressed trees.	Typically associated with stressed and dying trees, especially associated with drought.
Western cedar borer, <i>Trachykele blondeli</i> (<i>Coleoptera: Buprestidae</i>)	Mostly a forest/lumber problem of western red cedar, but can occur on other species, including juniper and cypress. Adult beetles feed intermittently on cedar foliage for several days before mating, after which the female lays eggs under bark scales on branches of living trees. The larvae tunnel into the heartwood via the branches. Living trees are attacked without visibly injuring or killing the tree. Infested trees are readily found once they have been felled and limbed as the larval tunnels are exposed in the knot faces.	Not important in young trees.
Flatheaded cedar borer, <i>Chrysobothris nixa</i> (<i>Coleoptera: Buprestidae</i>)	A native beetle that tunnels into several members of the <i>Cupressaceae</i> . They have become common on nursery-grown arborvitae (<i>Thuja</i> spp.). This insect can also occur on <i>Calocedrus decurrens</i> , <i>Thuja plicata</i> , <i>Cupressus</i> spp, and <i>Juniperus occidentalis</i> .	Has become important in some nursery settings especially on arborvitae.
Spruce spider mite, <i>Oligonychus ununguis</i> (not an insect, belongs to the Class <i>Araachnida</i> with spiders. <i>Trombidiformes: Tetranychidae</i>)	Can occur on a wide host range, including many cedars, cypress and juniper. Look for dark green mite stipples and bronzes needles, beginning at the base. These mites overwinter as red-orange eggs.	Can be important in nursery settings, especially where broad spectrum insecticides that kill natural enemies are used.

problem with pencil rot (sometimes called brown pocket rot), caused by the fungus *Postia sericiomollis*, as the most common. Yellow root rot caused by *Perreniporia subacida* is another forest problem usually found on suppressed or weakened trees. It is rarely seen in vigorous trees.

Armillaria root rot is yet another problem but mostly in the forest. It is not expected to be a nursery problem, but it could exist in the landscape if trees are planted in new home sites recently cleared of native vegetation. Avoid wounding roots and overwatering in landscape settings.

Thuja occidentalis - Arborvitae cedars

Black flagging, or young foliage on branch tips, show a very dark-brown to black discoloration. The color is not the brown associated with normal or disease-induced leaf senescence. This can occur on only one side, be evenly distributed over the entire plant, or occur only on some branches.

Plants with black flagging are not permanently disfigured or injured and the condition does not always recur on an individual plant. Repeated isolations by multiple diagnosticians across the country have consistently failed to produce any disease-causing microorganisms. The injury is not caused by insects mining in the foliage, nor is it due to girdling twig cankers. This suggests that the problem is due to stress of some sort, but the exact source of stress that results in black flagging is unknown.

Root rot is in many samples sent to the OSU Plant Clinic. The condition thrives in poorly drained and wet sites where oxygen depletion to the roots has occurred. Occasionally, pathogens such as *Phytophthora lateralis* or *Armillaria ostoyae* are associated with rotted roots. The cultivar *T. occidentalis* 'Pyramidalis' has intermediate resistance to *Phytophthora* root rot while *T. occidentalis* 'Smaragd' is most susceptible.

Root rots can be avoided by not reusing pots from a previous crop for propagation. If pots must be reused, then wash off all debris and soak in a sanitizing solution or treat with aerated steam for 30 minutes. Also, plant only in deep, ➤



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Knowing your cedar pests

Figure 2. Leaf blight (Keithia blight) on western red cedar. In contrast to heat related scorch, note the random pattern of necrotic tissue.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

well-drained soils or media.

Tip blight, caused by the fungus *Pestalotiopsis funereal*, is a common problem. The fungus can colonize tissue damaged from other pathogens, insects, freeze injury or sunscald. Other stresses include being pot-bound, too much or too little water or fertilizer. Spores are disseminated from diseased tissue by splashing rain. The fungus has a wide host range of many different conifers and has been associated with leaf and stem blights, cankers, diebacks, and even root rots of these hosts.

Berckmann's arborvitae — *Platycladus orientalis*

Berckmann's blight (*Seimatosporium berckmannsii*) — *P. orientalis* var. *conspicua* 'Berckmannsii' is particularly susceptible to infection by this fungus. Most cultivars, including the golden arborvitae and several green forms of globular or pyramidal habits, are susceptible to the disease as well. American and European species seem to be immune.

The fungus produces spores in late September, which are washed and splashed by rains to infect new foliage within the plant. These small spores are also easily carried by insects or by air currents to other shrubs. This is a foliage disease confined to the imbricated or bract-like leaves and small twigs where the fungus overwinters. Large woody stems are not attacked, but infected plants eventually die because of continued defoliation.

***Juniperus* spp. Juniper**

Twig blight is mostly a nursery problem and not present in the landscape as much. Two fungi (*Diaporthe juniperivora* and *Kabatina juniperi*) cause a foliar blight and tip dieback, which are difficult to separate. In areas west of the Cascades, *D. juniperivora* (formerly *Phomopsis juniperovora*) is found most often. *Kabatina* tip blight is more common in eastern areas of the Pacific Northwest and throughout nursery markets east of the Rocky Mountains.

Cultivars differ in susceptibility to both fungi: *J. chinensis* 'Pfitzeriana Aurea' is considered resistant to both. *Diaporthe* infection

occurs whenever foliage is young and moisture and humidity are high, generally in spring. Older, mature foliage is resistant to infection. Excessive pruning or shearing in summer will stimulate new, succulent growth that is highly susceptible. *Kabatina* infection is thought to occur in fall and often is associated with wounds, insect feeding or mechanical damage.

Several fungi in the genus *Gymnosporangium* cause rust on juniper and members of the rose family, such as serviceberry and pear. Seven different species are reported from Oregon, nine from Washington and six from Idaho.

Spore stages produced on junipers infect only members of the rose family in early spring over a 2- to 3-year period. The spore stages produced on serviceberry, pear or others in the rose family only infect junipers during the course of one summer. These fungi may produce large witches' brooms or reddish-brown, gelatinous masses on leaves, or woody, round, elongated galls on branches and small stems. Cedar apple rust is common east of the Rockies on *J. virginiana* but in the West, it is rare on *J. virginiana* and *J. scopulorum*. Galls on juniper in the Pacific Northwest are more likely due to other species of rust.

There have been several species of the fungal-like microorganism *Phytophthora* reported on juniper to cause root rot. The disease is favored by wet or waterlogged conditions during warm weather. The pathogen can produce swimming spores that are attracted to roots and can move from one infected tree to another in saturated soil or between flooded pots in a nursery.

Inoculum also may be found in containers previously used to grow other crops. Many cultivars are susceptible; however, some may show similar symptoms simply from waterlogging and not necessarily from infection. Armillaria root rot is another problem in the landscape if trees are planted in new home sites recently cleared of native vegetation.

***Cupressus* spp. — Cypress**

The fungus *Seiridium cardinale* can infect many genera of the *Cupressaceae*.



To produce cankers. Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) has the worst damage, but other *Cupressus* spp. also are affected.

A typical lens-shape, sunken canker can be found on the branch below affected foliage. Top death and dieback are common. *Cupressus glabra*, *C. lusitanica*, and *C. torulosa* are more resistant although not immune. Other trees including *Chamaecyparis*, *Juniperus* and *Thuja*, as well as hybrids such as Leyland cypress are also hosts.

Spores are rain splashed but the fungus also can be moved on pruning tools and infected nursery stock. It enters trees through natural occurring wounds or insect damaged tissue. Favored by prolonged periods of mist and light rain with moderate temperatures. Cankers enlarge faster on drought-stressed trees. ☺

For more information on the diagnosis and management of these problems, please refer to the PNW Handbooks for Insects and Plant Diseases. These can be found at <https://pnwhandbooks.org/>.

* Pscheidt, J. W. and Shaw, D. C. 2021. Knowing your cedar pests: Grower awareness of problems can protect both grower and customer. Digger 65(1):41-44. Part of the OSU Growing Knowledge Series.

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It is go time

It seems like the same narrative happens at the beginning of every year: "This is a make-or-break year for the industry."

But I am going to say it: 2022 will be a defining year.

We grow, sell and ship the best nursery and greenhouse products in the country. But every year, there has been a steady diet of regulation and structural obstacles that keep our industry from doing what it does so well.

If these obstacles were isolated, we could deal with it. Instead, we have decision-makers who seem to think water comes from a tap and plants magically arrive at retail locations. That's why we focus on political engagement, so people can be informed about our industry before making decisions that affect it.

I fully recognize that many of our members would rather have their right arm severed than engage in anything political. Politics is a dirty word. Processes are unpredictable and often unfair. All of that deserves your derision.

However, the OAN knows the political landscape — pitfalls, land mines and all. When you get involved, our experienced guidance and resources will ensure you are not alone. What we know most of all is that you, the member, are the best voice for the industry. We need your involvement. With your help, we can deliver for the industry. We are asking you to engage.

It is go time.

The shifting landscape

Power is fleeting, even in Oregon. It shifts within parties and within a caucus. Even for those in charge, new centers of power can pop up and destabilize things. Centers of gravity in a caucus room make all the difference.

Of late in Oregon, we have seen shifts away from "moderate problem solvers" to the extended reaches of each party. Let me call it as I see it — some people want chaos. They come to the table with a gas

can and a match, without regard for long-term solutions. Chaos has consequences.

I come from a school of politics shaped by my former boss, retired U.S. Sen. Bob Packwood, an Oregon Republican.

Packwood believed that the people drive Congress and the Oregon Legislature, not the elected members. He taught me, and I believe, that elections reflect the will of the people. Whether or not we agree, districts elect people who reflect the district.

But there's no denying we've seen a change. Many congressional and state legislative members are in solid shape in their districts — too solid. Swing districts are very few. Purity of ranks then takes hold. That's how "crazy town" people get elected.

Relationships matter

Even in this chaotic environment, politics is all about relationships. It means listening to one another and learning the difference between what people want and what they need. Don't burn a bridge, because you never know when you will need a partner on an issue that you neither contemplate nor recognize in the future.

Look. Salem and DC's process can be opaque, orchestrated or just a plain farce. Agricultural overtime discussions happening right now are a perfect example. Farm labor advocates and leaders from the Democratic aisle are very quick to make judgments on farm operations without necessarily grasping farm economics. Deliberations toward honest solutions are cast aside for political expediency and fundraising optics.

For issues that alter the very fabric and viability of an industry, it still comes back to the voices of our diverse industry. Not tactics, but truth. Letting people know the reality.

I remember wins and losses. Both have lessons you must observe. Not many understand the need to be good at reacting to what happened, good or bad. When it comes down to it, victories and setbacks will come. I am more likely to remember the people, not the politics. Legislative fights come and go, but personal relationships stick around and set the stage for the next day.



Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Training to maximize your voice

The not-so-hidden secret, at both the state and federal levels, is that a low percentage of your elected officials read each law they are voting on. Staff usually have a better handle, since they are divided into subject areas. Committee staff tend to be the best stewards on complex codes and regulations. However, there is no better influencer or educator than you, the member.

In any policy debate, legislators should be looking at how the policy will impact real people. You have the unique ability to talk about what you know and help good people understand the consequences of a vote. If we are silent or do not have a plethora of voices, rowing in the same direction, we fall victim to the old adage that a legislator can do more with the stroke of a pen to harm an industry.

I personally balk at the term lobbyist. When I was in government at the federal or regional level, it always seemed slick and sleazy. On the trade association side, I view myself not as a lobbyist, but as a vocal and focused advocate for a sane industry.

We train members how to be effective and tell their stories. We do what we can to understand the contours of a decision. We do our level best to help inform the decision-maker. I have more than 30 years of experience, and I understand a fundamental truth: You are the best voice.

We are holding an Advocacy Training for members on January 26 — contact me for details at jstone@oan.org. Please join us for tailored training to maximize your voice. It's time to contribute and support our great industry. ☺

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