

# Digger

JULY 2023

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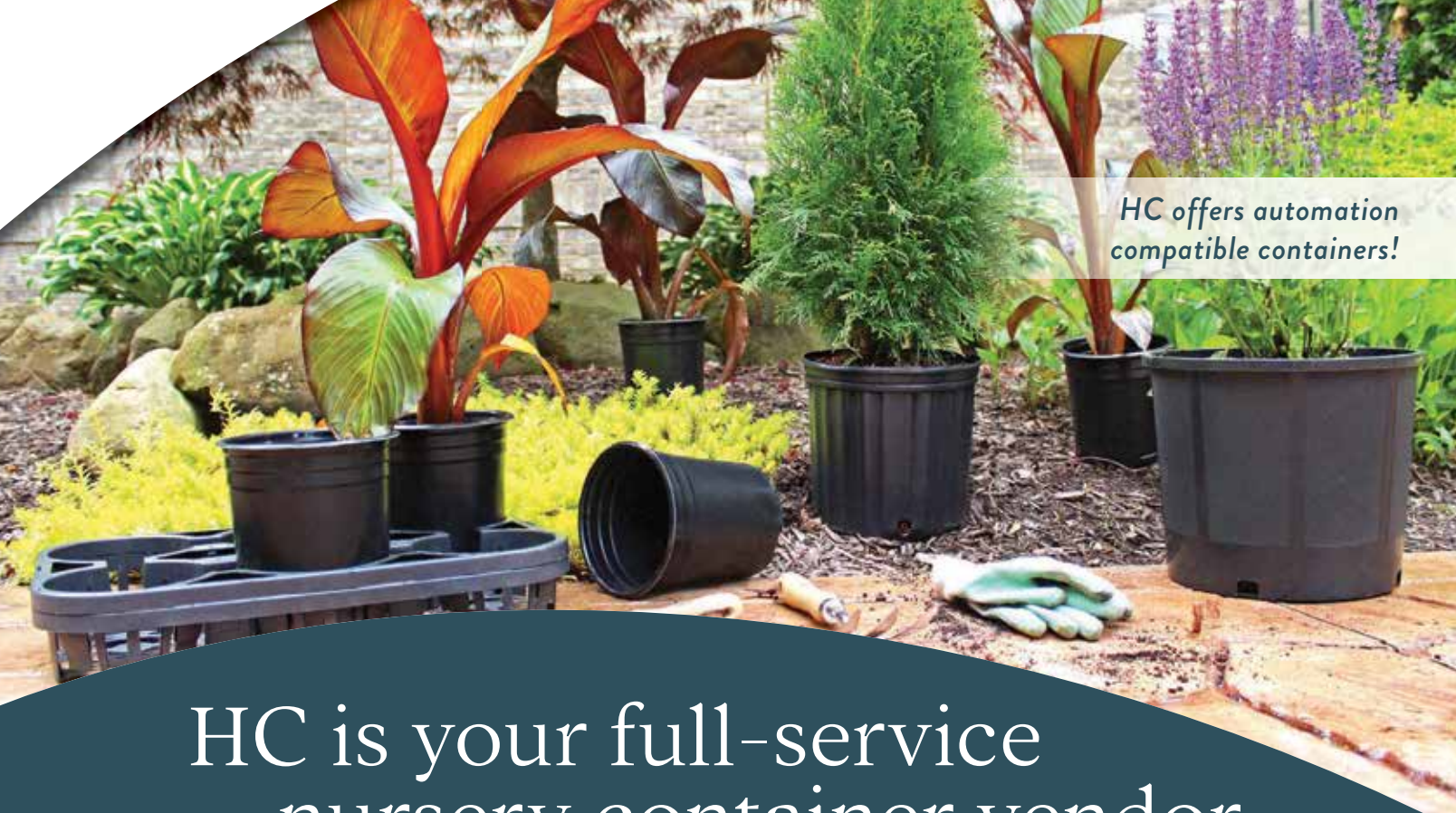
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ON THE COVER: Plant material is often considered collateral when those in the nursery and greenhouse industry seek to secure financing. ADOBE STOCK

THIS PAGE, LEFT: The Duffers Classic Tourney brought members together for fun golfing and fundraising for the Oregon Nurseries Political Action Committee (ONPAC), including from Ryan Creek Nursery (left to right) Aaron Walcott, Tatum Temple, Kyle Laminack and Erika Wilcott. PHOTO: CURT KIPP

THIS PAGE, RIGHT: OSU researcher shows off new treeform *Hibiscus*. PHOTO: RYAN CONTRERAS



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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Connecting  
with optimism**



**Todd Nelson**  
**OAN PRESIDENT**

Graduations, family gatherings, cookouts and fireworks. These are events, celebrations or things that make the transition from spring to summer the best. During this time our extended family from all over the country comes together to eat good food, stay up too late, laugh until it hurts as we celebrate Independence Day, birthdays and family milestones. This time to connect in person with friends and loved ones invigorates my spirit and refuels my purpose.

Summer is a time for change, growth and exciting adventures. This is perfectly captured in the lives of the young (or young at heart).

Recently one of my daughters has embarked on such an adventure. She is volunteering 100% of her time over the next 18 months providing humanitarian work and service to the great people of Lima, Peru.

During the early months of summer, it has come to be expected that my mailbox is flooded with invitations to graduation parties for those advancing to the next phase of their lives. These young men and women possess such contagious optimism about the future that awaits them. It's hard not to get excited for them and feed off the positive energy they put out into the world.

Similarly, at the nursery in early summer we gather our entire team for lunch to recognize their great contributions to another successful shipping season. Our team works incredibly hard all year round to ensure that the plant material that is grown and nurtured arrives to our customers in a manner that exceeds their expectations. These opportunities to pause for a short time and celebrate together are important for morale, unity, and serves as a great reminder that what we do matters for our business and our customers.

We also receive many visitors from all across the country wanting to visit and tour the nursery. We love when customers and sales reps take time out of their busy schedules to come and visit with us.

Technology is awesome! It allows us to do amazing things that none of us could have ever imagined just 20 years ago. We have leaned on technology to help us be

more efficient in our processes, mechanize portions of our operations and to enhance daily communication with our customers.

We're excited about future technological advancements and how they will impact our business for the better. Yet, there are some things that technology can't match, such as the value of a handshake, the ability to pair a name to a face, or the lifelong relationships that form only as a result of necessary interpersonal connection.

There is nothing better for our business and our industry than when we come together and interact face-to-face. For 50 years the Farwest Show has served as a horticultural hub where professionals from all over the United States, and even the world, have come together to showcase their beautiful product, reconnect with trusted friends and establish new relationships.

At the Farwest Show you can develop your skills through provided tours, seminars and classes.

For as long as I can remember we have made going to the Farwest Show a priority. It is extremely hard to fully quantify how instrumental the show has been to relationships I have developed, mentors I have gained, insights I have learned, perspective that has been changed — and yes, sales that have been made. The return on investment has exceeded every expectation.

As I walk the floor and interact with customers and fellow growers, and see new business trends that are exciting, I just can't help being swept up in the contagious optimism that is felt. I always leave the Farwest Show excited about the state of our industry and the direction it is headed.

I invite you to make plans to come to the Farwest Show, come and celebrate, connect and catch the wave of optimism. I can't wait to see you there. ☺



# CALENDAR

Spread the word about your event! Email details to [Calendar@OAN.org](mailto:Calendar@OAN.org).

**JULY 15-18**

## CULTIVATE'23

Join OAN in Columbus, Ohio for this year's Cultivate, presented by AmericanHort. The annual must-attend horticultural event offers educational and networking opportunities to grow your business, build your network and discover the latest green industry trends. For more information, visit [www.CultivateEvent.org](http://www.CultivateEvent.org).



**JULY 24-28**

## PERENNIAL PLANT SYMPOSIUM

The largest educational and trade show program devoted solely to herbaceous perennials in North America, this annual symposium is presented by the Perennial Plant Association. This year's unveiling of the Perennial Plant of the Year® will take place in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Visit [PerennialPlant.org](http://PerennialPlant.org) for more information.



**AUGUST 8-10**

## THE GARDEN CENTER SHOW

This annual trade show and networking event for independent garden center owners will take place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and includes an education program sponsored by Garden Centers of America. For more information, visit [www.GardenCenterShow.com](http://www.GardenCenterShow.com).



**AUGUST 9-11**

## NURSERY/LANDSCAPE EXPO

San Antonio, Texas, is the site for this annual expo presented by the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association. For more information, visit [www.NurseryLandscapeExpo.com](http://www.NurseryLandscapeExpo.com).



**Putter, rake, shovel or hoe. Edgefield. July 27<sup>th</sup>**

## MT. HOOD CHAPTER PITCH & PUTT GOLF TOURNAMENT

Join OAN's Mt. Hood Chapter at McMenamins' Edgefield Golf Course in Troutdale, Oregon. Take the "Tin Cup" long drive challenge – marshmallow provided – and vie for a \$100 prize! Player packages are \$25 and include 1 ball and 1 beverage ticket. **Sponsorships available!** Contact Scott Ekstrom at 503-926-4321. • For more information, please visit [www.OAN.org/Events](http://www.OAN.org/Events).

**AUGUST 13-16**

## TREES + TECH SUMMIT / ISA CONFERENCE

The International Society of Arboriculture will host its annual conference and trade show in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from August 14-16. A new pre-conference event, the Trees + Tech Summit, will take place the day before on August 13. The summit will bring together thought leaders from around the world to learn about the latest technology and strategies to solve common urban forestry challenges. Log on to [www.ISA-Arbor.com](http://www.ISA-Arbor.com) for more information.



**AUGUST 17**

## CNGA BUYERS EXPO

The Colorado Nursery and Greenhouse Association (CNGA) is hosting an outdoor

Buyers Expo at Adams County Fairgrounds (9755 Henderson Road, Brighton, Colorado).



The expo is designed for buyers and specifiers who are interested in purchasing or sourcing plant material, including retail nurseries, garden centers, landscape contractors, municipal parks and recreation departments, landscape architects, property management companies and other relevant industry professionals. To register, please visit [www.ColoradoNGA.org](http://www.ColoradoNGA.org).

## AUGUST 23-25 FARWEST SHOW

The biggest green industry trade show in the West will take place at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon. The show, produced by the OAN and celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, attracts over 300 exhibitors and 4,000 attendees from across the world. For more information, visit to [www.FarwestShow.com](http://www.FarwestShow.com). ©





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# NORTHWEST NEWS

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

## STAEHEL, BAILEY LEAD FARM BILL FIELD HEARING

OAN President-Elect Amanda Staehely (**Columbia Nursery**) presented the nursery and greenhouse industry's priorities for the upcoming Farm Bill at a field hearing with the U.S. House Agriculture Committee on June 2, 2023. Staehely was one of more than 50 individuals and organizations who addressed the committee during the two-hour hearing, which was held at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon. Staehely and fellow OAN member Angi Bailey (**Verna Jean Nursery**), who serves as the president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, led the meeting.

In her prepared statement, Staehely said in the past 18 months the nursery industry faced unprecedented smoke damage from forest fires, devastating ice storms and blistering summers.

"The current farm bill does not work well for specialty crop growers such as nurseries, and disaster relief funds are substandard in reach and funding," she said, as reported by Agri-Pulse, the national farm and policy news site based in Washington, D.C.

The Agri-Pulse article also quoted Bailey as saying, "Conservation programs should remain voluntary and climate change cannot be used to mandate conservation practices."

"This was a huge honor for Amanda and Angi, and both speakers were absolutely terrific," said OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone, who also attended the hearing. "Hearing the industry's concerns directly from growers is the best way to make an impact. Their voices were heard loud and clear by the lawmakers."

Oregon's two members of the House Ag Committee — U.S. Reps. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-Oregon, District 5) and Andrea Salinas (D-Oregon, District 6) — were joined by Committee Chairman Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-Pennsylvania, District 15), Doug LaMalfa (R-California, District 1) and David Valadao (R-California, District 22).

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Oregon, District 6) and OAN President-Elect Amanda Staehely (right)



Oregon Farm Bureau President Angi Bailey reads prepared testimony before the U.S. House Agriculture Committee



## BIPARTISAN IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL LAUNCHES

A new bipartisan immigration bill, dubbed the Dignity Act, was unveiled in late May, surprising some federal lawmakers who learned of its existence at the same time as the public, *The Hill* political news website reported (<https://bit.ly/440Q25R>).

The legislation, spearheaded by U.S. Reps. María Elvira Salazar (R-Florida) and Veronica Escobar (D-Texas), includes significant resources for beefing up security at the U.S.-Mexico border, a priority for Republicans, but primarily focuses on creating a 12-year pathway to citizenship at a \$10,000 cost for those already in the U.S. — a priority for Democrats.

Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-Oregon, District 5) is a co-sponsor of the bill, along with Reps. Hillary Scholten (D-Michigan), Kathy Manning (D-North Carolina), Mike Lawler (R-New York) and Adriano Espaillat (D-New York), and Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico Jennifer Gonzalez-Colon (R), who represents Puerto Rico in the House on a non-voting basis.

"We are a proud nation of immigrants, yet our current immigration system is outdated and broken," Rep. Chavez-

DeRemer said in a statement released by Rep. Salazar. "Unfortunately, we now also have a humanitarian and national security crisis occurring at our southern border due to insufficient border security policies. These problems reflect poorly on our country, and they put the lives of both migrants and American citizens at risk. It's past time for Congress to act."

OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone noted that immigration reform remains a critical issue for nurseries. "Our industry can't get by without a stable, legal and willing workforce," he told *Digger* magazine. "This is exactly the type of discussion on immigration that we have needed. It is focused and recognizes that our immigrant workforce and their families need to be fully authorized to work and live in our country. The OAN's five point plan was delivered to Congresswoman Chavez-DeRemer and we are pleased to see portions of it incorporated in the bill."

## REPORT: OREGON FARMWORKERS SHARE HOUSING CHALLENGES

More than 100,000 farmworkers power Oregon's \$42 billion agriculture economy, but that labor force is facing a

housing market that's either substandard or inaccessible, according to a new report by the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department.

The report, titled "Cultivating Home," studied farmworker housing in Hood River, Marion, Morrow and Yamhill counties in Oregon. It concluded that farmworkers would need help on both ends of the affordable housing crisis: They need better pay to afford housing and more affordable housing needs to be built.

According to an article, "We are souls in the dark," published by Oregon Public Broadcasting about the housing report (<https://bit.ly/3p5RDZs>), many farmworkers interviewed for the report were skeptical the government would help them, but appreciated the chance to have their voices heard.

"To the state and federal [government], please support a reform," said an



Download the report, "Cultivating Home: A Study of Farmworker Housing" at <https://bit.ly/3NuvBsl>

New homes to rent or buy are often inaccessible due to price or residency status. Farmworkers often rely on word of mouth or personal networks to find housing.

Some Morrow County interviewees specifically requested a farmworker resource center where new arrivals could be connected with housing and be informed of their rights.

unnamed Morrow County worker. "We are souls in the dark. So many of us work hard and are living and working in many conditions that deserve better .... There has been some advancement, [but] there are still many challenges. We are bringing food to many homes and are always underseen."

Attempts to find better housing are often out of reach, according to the report.

### INDUSTRY RAISES \$98,000+ FOR CRASH VICTIMS' FAMILIES

The Oregon Farm Bureau has raised \$98,911 and counting for the families of 11 contract farmworkers impacted by a deadly crash near Albany, Oregon, on May 18.

Seven of the farmworkers were killed and four others were injured when a semi-truck crashed into their worker transportation van that was parked on the side of >>

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## NORTHWEST NEWS

**The Oregon Garden provided a lush setting for a gathering of OAN past presidents and others, including:** Back row (left-right): Jeff Stone, Gary English, Clayton Hannon, Jim Simnitt (2020), Pete Brentano (2006), Jack Long (1986), Leigh Geschwill (2016), Carson Lord (2013), Art Anderson (1994), John Coulter (2002), Dick Joyce (1983), Kyle Fessler (2021), Doug Zielinski (1999), Tom Fessler (1996) and Mark Krautmann (2003).

Front row (left-right): Kristin VanHoose (2011), Lulyn Long, Rod Park (1991), Teri Dillard-Lund (1989), Paul Fukasawa (1990), Kathy LeCompte (2002), Verl Holden (1977), and Jerry Simnitt (2012). Not pictured but attending: Jack Bigej (1993) and Josh Zielinski (2018). PHOTO BY CURT KIPP



Interstate 5, pushing it into another semi that was parked in front of it.

The Farm Bureau had hoped to raise \$55,000 and, having exceeded that initial goal, is still taking donations at <https://bit.ly/3JbZLhR>.

“We want to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to everyone who has donated,” the Farm Bureau stated in a Facebook post. “If you would still like to donate, click on the GoFundMe link. 100% of the money raised goes directly to the 11 families affected, and will be split evenly amongst them to help with expenses and support.”

The Farm Bureau is also accepting checks, which should be made out to Oregon Farm Bureau with “farmworker fund” in the memo line. Those should be mailed to Oregon Farm Bureau, 1320 Capitol St. N.E., Salem, OR 97301.

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### OAN PAST PRESIDENTS GATHER AT THE OREGON GARDEN

Past presidents of the Oregon Association of Nurseries gathered for a social event May 18 in the Hall of Fame Room in J. Frank Schmidt Jr. Pavilion at the Oregon Garden in Silverton.

The past presidents in attendance spanned 45 years, from Verl Holden (1977) to Kyle Fessler (2021). They shared stories and reminisced, with a particular focus on the former executive director of OAN, Clayton Hannon, who lives in Arizona but traveled to Oregon to attend the gathering.

Past President Rod Park served as an emcee and prompted the past presidents to share. The stories were recorded for preservation and possible future use. It had been seven years since the previous such gathering. “It was a really nice evening, and we plan to

do it again soon, this time without the wait,” OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone said.

---

### DUFFERS CLASSIC TOURNEY RAISES \$39,000+ FOR ONPAC

More than 130 players took a swing for the nursery industry at the annual Duffers Classic Golf Tournament, held June 8 at Stone Creek Golf Club in Oregon City.

The tourney raised more than \$39,379 (gross) for the Oregon Nurseries’ Political Action Committee (ONPAC), which supports nursery friendly candidates for state elective office. The committee interviews candidates each election and supports those showing a willingness to listen and support the industry. They pay particular attention to several issues, including labor, water resource development, pest and disease mitigation, industry research, employer costs,



Players that teed off for the 2023 Duffers Classic Golf Tournament included (top, left to right) Tyson Bell, Ryan Marjama and Tanner Marjama from Don Marjama Nursery Co. and Rick Carlson from Cascade Meadows Nursery; (below, left to right) Vladimir and Lisa Lomen from John Holmlund Nursery teamed up with Mark Smith and Jim Simnitt from Simnitt Nursery. PHOTOS BY CURT KIPP



taxation and workplace regulation.

Several companies stepped up to support the tournament, including presenting sponsors **Brooks Tree Farm** (Salem, Oregon), **Jordan Ramis P.C.** (Portland, Oregon), and **Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas** (Woodburn, Oregon).

Banquet sponsors included **AgWest Farm Credit Services** and **Leonard Adams Insurance Inc.** (Beaverton, Oregon).

The cart sponsors were **KG Farms Inc.** (Woodburn, Oregon), **Left Coast Logistics** (Lake Oswego, Oregon) and **Syngenta Professional Solutions** (Greensboro, North Carolina).

Par 3 Hole Sponsors were **American National Property & Casualty Co.**, **Leonard Adams Insurance** and **Simnitt Nursery** (Canby, Oregon). Hole sponsors were **Adapt8** (Salem, Oregon), **Brentano's Tree Farm** (St. Paul, Oregon), **Dayton Bag & Burlap** (Silverton, Oregon), **HC Companies Inc.** (Twinsburg, Ohio), **Jordan Ramis P.C.**, **Marion Ag Service Inc.** (St. Paul, Oregon) and **MAS Labor H-2A**.

**Anderson Pots** (Portland, Oregon) was the gift sponsor. **Harrell's LLC** (Lakeland, Florida) was the women's and men's KP sponsor. The putting green sponsor was **Park's Wholesale Nursery** (Boring, Oregon). »



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**USDA REMINDS GROWERS OF CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is reminding agricultural producers and landowners in Oregon and elsewhere about the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (aka Continuous CRP).



This conservation program offers farmers yearly rental payments in exchange for removing environmentally sensitive land from production, and planting species that will improve environmental health.

“Creating sound conservation and climate-smart options for the agricultural community are top priorities for us,” said Gail Greenman, executive director of the Oregon Farm Service Agency. “Continuous CRP is one of the best ways we can do that because it offers so many options. Producers across the country are currently participating in Continuous CRP with more than 8.2 million acres enrolled, proving that agriculture and conservation can be strong partners.”

The program is similar to others USDA offers, such as General and Grassland CRP, but it has unique flexibility and program choices. The long-term goal of all such CRP opportunities is to re-establish valuable land cover, helping to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality in exchange for a yearly rental payment.

Under Continuous CRP, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. To sign up, producers should contact the FSA at their local USDA Service Center.

The CRP program was signed into law in 1985, and is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the

United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production, but has evolved over the years to provide other conservation and economic benefits.

**Announcements**

**MARION AG SERVICE PARTNERS WITH PURSELL AGRI-TECH FERTILIZERS**

Marion Ag Service ([www.MarionAg.com](http://www.MarionAg.com)) has entered into an exclusive agreement to market and distribute Pursell Agri-Tech’s line of PurKote controlled-release fertilizers in 11 western states, the two companies announced in June.

Pursell Agri-Tech ([www.Fertilizer.com](http://www.Fertilizer.com)) hopes to leverage Marion Ag Service’s

distribution capability and existing customer relationships to expand their market share in the West. Marion

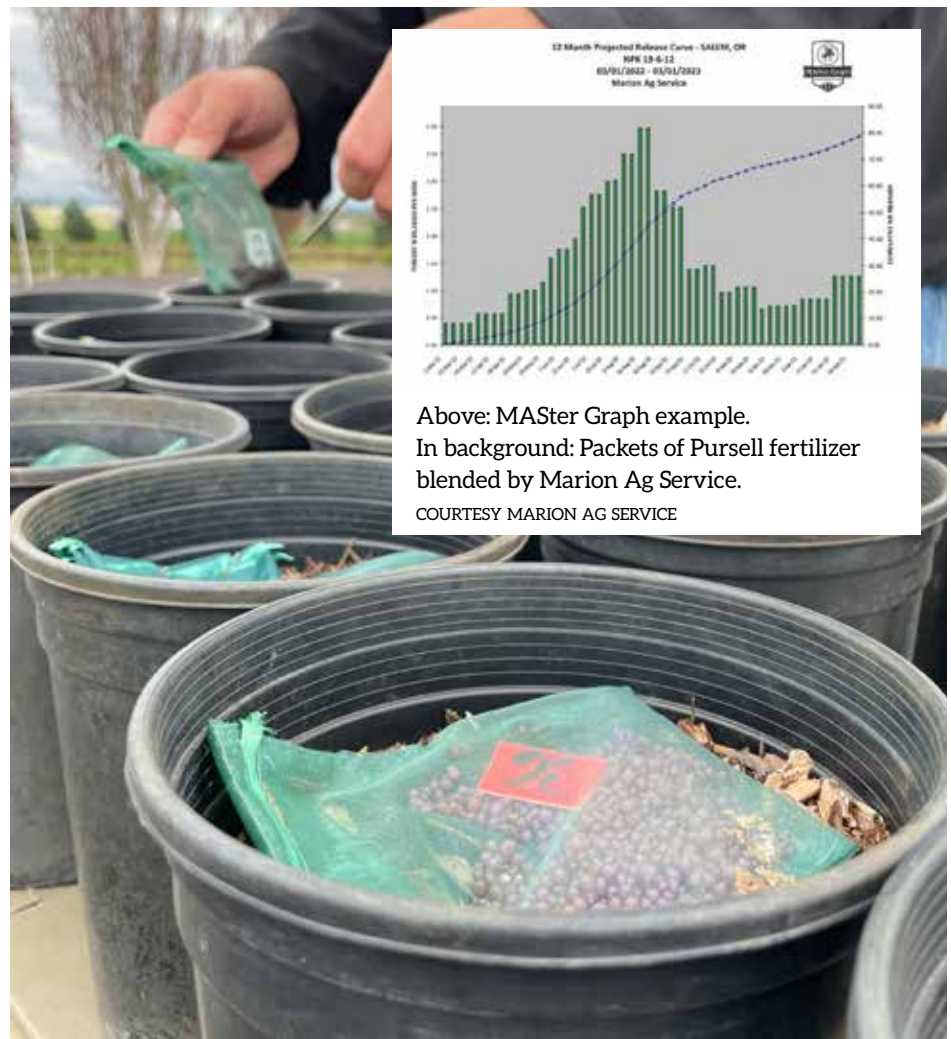
Ag Service is well known for offering customers expert advice and mixing custom fertilizer blends to meet their specific needs.

Pursell’s full suite of fertilizers will be available through Marion Ag Service starting in the third quarter of 2023.

In 2017, Marion Ag Service opened a large fertilizer blending facility near its headquarters in St. Paul, Oregon.

Allen Sanders serves as chief operating officer for Pursell Agri-Tech, which is based in Sylacauga, Alabama.

“As we look westward, Marion Ag Service is the ideal partner to bring the sig-



Above: MAster Graph example. In background: Packets of Pursell fertilizer blended by Marion Ag Service. COURTESY MARION AG SERVICE

In 2017, Marion Ag Service opened a large fertilizer blending facility near its headquarters in St. Paul, Oregon.

COURTESY MARION AG SERVICE



nificant market coverage and deep customer relationships needed to successfully develop those markets,” he said. “Our long-standing relationship affirms that our two companies are a great fit culturally, and we know that this will be a great partnership.”

John Hockett serves as CEO of Marion Ag Service. “Our vision is to empower customers to succeed in feeding and beautifying the world,” he said.

“This partnership with Pursell brings that vision into focus and supports our strategic initiative of adding value to our products to increase our geographic reach.

We have been working with Pursell controlled-release fertilizers since the mid-90s and are excited to solidify our partnership with them.”

The states covered by the distribution and marketing agreement include Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, in addition to Oregon.

Taking their partnership a step further, the two companies have developed a custom fertilizer release app called MASTerGraph, which was developed using trial data to see how controlled

release fertilizers actually perform in the Willamette Valley. The software will help the companies create custom-tailored nutrient delivery plans for customers who are engaged in ag, turf and ornamental horticulture. They say such customized plans will improve crop health, minimize nutrient loss and boost profits while better protecting the environment.

Pursell has been working to expand nationwide markets, and not just in the West. The company recently launched production facilities in Savannah, Georgia, and St. Thomas, Ontario. >>>

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**OAN HIRES EVENT AND EDUCATION MANAGER**

On June 14, Mary Claire Lamm joined the Oregon Association of Nurseries staff as the new event and education manager. She will serve on the events team for the Farwest Show and will assist with other association programs and events.

Prior to joining OAN, Mary Claire was education director for Green Living Science, an environmental education nonprofit in Detroit, Michigan. During her eight years there, she developed education seminars focused on conservation and recycling, and co-authored two children's books. Her professional passion is to create meaningful learning opportunities for people of all ages.

In her personal time, Mary Claire is an avid kayaker and gardener. Having recently moved from Montana, she is excited to call Oregon her new home.

Mary Claire looks forward to connecting with OAN members and cultivating relevant education experiences to the needs of association members. Contact her at [MCLamm@OAN.org](mailto:MCLamm@OAN.org) or 503-582-2004.



Mary Claire Lamm

ers throughout the U.S. and Canada, and Oracle transportation trainer.

According to the company, John has steadily built strong relationships with internal and external customers in the horticulture industry while focusing on continuous

process improvement and cost-effective shipping methodologies.

John resides in Oregon with his wife and is a proud father of five and grandfather of eleven. In his free time, he enjoys sport and playing music.

EHR was founded in 1993 and is based in Fort Wright, Kentucky. EHR serves as a consultant and broker to retail garden center growers, wholesale greenhouse growers, nurserymen, and landscapers. EHR is a member of AmericanHort and the Oregon Association of Nurseries, as well as other state associations where they do business.

Meanwhile, David Alm has also joined Eason Horticultural Resources (EHR) as a sales representative for Long Island and the metropolitan New York area.

"His long, successful tenure in horticulture makes him a natural fit to transition into sales at EHR," the company said in a statement.

Alm started working in the nursery industry at the age of 14. He worked with his father at Hicks Nurseries in Westbury, New York, and continued through his education at SUNY Farmingdale and throughout his career thus far. His sales career took off with Conard-Pyle Co and then Hines Nurseries, both of which preceded his operating his own brokerage company, DCA Horticultural Services.

After more than 20 years of cultivating relationships with top quality nurseries, garden centers, wholesalers and growers at his own company, David joined Star Roses and Plants

as a territory manager, before now joining EHR.

The former President of the Long Island Nursery & Landscape Association, David was also the 2016 Long Island Nursery & Landscape Association Man of the Year, a past board member of the SUNY Farmingdale Horticulture Committee and a former board member of the New York Nursery & Landscape Associations.

David has been married for 28 years to his wife Karen, and he takes great pride in his two children: Emily and Daniel. He enjoys fishing and gardening.

**MARION AG SERVICE HIRES DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

Marion Ag Service Inc., a plant nutrient supplier and technical services provider based in St. Paul, Oregon, has hired Bo Lacy as the company's new director of operations.



Bo Lacy

Lacy has spent more than 15 years in agriculture, with a specific focus on the global grass seed industry. He spent the past seven years at Barenbrug USA overseeing multiple grass seed cleaning facilities.

According to the company, Lacy's expertise "will align seamlessly with Marion Ag's recent endeavor of developing and multiplying proprietary grass seed varieties."

"We are thrilled to welcome Bo Lacy as our new director of operations," Marion Ag Service CEO John Hockett said. "His extensive experience and proven abilities make him an ideal fit for our organization. We are confident that Bo's strategic mindset and commitment to operational excellence will drive Marion Ag's growth trajectory and reinforce our position as a leading provider of agricultural solutions."

**TWO JOIN EASON HORTICULTURAL RESOURCES**

John Ollis has joined national horticulture brokerage **Eason Horticultural Resources (EHR)** ([www.ehrnet.com](http://www.ehrnet.com)) as a logistics specialist.

John started his career with Diane's Foods (now Mission Foods) as a distribution center manager and dispatcher serving the Pacific Northwest. He then spent 18 years with **Monrovia Nursery** in the roles of shipping manager, servicing custom-



John Ollis



David Alm





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## NORTHWEST NEWS

Lacy will begin his new job with Marion Ag on July 10. "Throughout his career, Bo has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and a track record of success in driving technological advancements, fostering team growth, breaking down silos, and supporting both global and domestic company expansion," the company stated in a release. "Marion Ag is confident that Bo's expertise and industry knowledge will greatly contribute to the company's vision of becoming the most trusted solutions partner, empowering customers to succeed in feeding and beautifying the world."

Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a double major in business and horticulture. After graduating college, Kurt worked for the Vaughan Seed Company with a sales territory covering the Southeastern United States.



Kurt W. Dramm

In 1968 he and his brother, John P. Dramm, formed the Dramm Company to produce garden and greenhouse watering products. Their mother, Perdita, had maintained the business out of her basement while working as a librarian. John Peter unexpectedly passed away in 1978.

Kurt was known for saying, "Nothing happens until someone sells something." Kurt's entrepreneurial spirit and passion for providing quality products grew the Dramm company.

During Kurt's 45 years of ownership, The Dramm Corporation grew to a thriving four-segment business: Commercial Greenhouse Equipment, Retail Gardening Products, Drammatic® Organic Fertilizer, and DRAMMwater for greenhouse water treatment systems.

Under Kurt's leadership, the Dramm family-owned business has entered its third generation. Kurt leaves behind a legacy his father started, providing quality products and solutions to customers. ☺

### In Memoriam

#### KURT W. DRAMM

Kurt W. Dramm, who founded major nursery and greenhouse supplier Dramm Corporation with his brother, passed away May 16, 2023. He was 85.

Kurt was born and raised in



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# Seminar Preview



Dr. Bridget Behe



## Tracking the plant shopper's journey

Dr. Bridget Behe, horticultural marketing expert, answers questions about her can't-miss Farwest Show seminars on the art and science of selling plants.

BY HEATHER CYRUS

**D**R. BRIDGET BEHE is a marketing professional who has taught marketing and management to horticulture undergraduates at Michigan State University since 1997. She maintains an active consumer research program to investigate how and why people buy plants.

Dr. Behe is a prolific writer in academic and trade journals and presents her findings to industry and professional groups nationally and internationally. In 2022, she was honored with a Horticulture Industry Leadership Award. In 2018, she was awarded the American Society for Horticultural Science Undergraduate Educator of the Year, and in 2016, she was recognized as the Outstanding State Extension Specialist in Michigan.

She will present two seminars and a mini-session at the 2023 Farwest Show, taking place August 23-25, 2023, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon. They are as follows:

- **8:30-9:30 a.m. Wednesday, August 23** — The Art and Science of Pricing Products\*
- **2-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 23** — Make Signs People Will Read! FREE!
- **9:45-10:45 a.m. Thursday, August 24** — The Shopper's Journey\*

\*Farwest Education pass required to attend.



In **"The Shopper's Journey"** you will share results from recent studies you've conducted with real plant buyers in both the lab and retail environments. What are some findings you've discovered?

In the lab, we use high-tech eye-tracking glasses to record where people look as they are making their plant purchase decisions. We can isolate displays, so consumers look at one display at a time. This allows us to study purchase decisions in a controlled manner, then we publish the results. But that

isn't necessarily how it happens on the retail floor.

With funding from the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI), we conducted a study at six retailers in Michigan to see the shopping experience with all its complications, distractions and messiness. The recordings showed us just how much people rely on signs and tags. It wasn't a surprise how much time people spent looking at tags and signs, but we were surprised how many people interacted with the sales staff — just to make a \$10 purchase!

We also discovered who uses their cellphone and why. The lab studies showed us how customers "read" a display much like they read a book, and retailers can change how they read the display with vertical merchandising.



### What will **“The Art and Science of Pricing Products”** seminar cover?

Many businesses think pricing should be based on a formula — and it should — but the formula should not have the last word! There is also an art to pricing. Improper pricing can result in lost profits.

There are many ways we add perceived value, and yet fail to capitalize on that. For example, retailers shouldn't price new cultivars equal to the old cultivars. Why not? Because there is a segment of customers who are willing to pay more for having a new cultivar.



You're also presenting a mini-session titled **“Make Signs People Will Read!”** All Farwest attendees are invited to this FREE mini-session on the Solution Center stage (located on the trade show floor at the end of aisle 10000).

In the mini-session I'll share more research using the eye-tracking glasses based on several studies that involve reading signs. Some retailers tend to make price the “headline” on a sign and that works well for discounting prices for a “sale” item but it's not the case for regular-priced items.

Retailers need to convey features to increase the perceived value of a product, especially at a distance. If people see a “high” price at a distance, it's really easy to say “no” and never get close enough to see some of the great features and benefits of that plant. I'll show how to use this information to enhance sales in every operation. ©

**Bridget Behe, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University**



**Wednesday, August 23, 2023  
8:30–9:30 a.m. | Room B110**

### **The Art and Science of Pricing Products\***

There is more to pricing than simply calculating costs and mark-up. Bridget will discuss some pricing strategies and share some research-based findings on how consumers react to pricing in communications. Price increases are always a concern. The presentation includes some ways for you to consider increasing prices that consumers will accept.

**Wednesday, August 23, 2023  
2–2:30 p.m. | Solution Center Stage**

### **Make Signs People Will Read! — FREE!**

Dr. Behe will present research-based information about how consumers read — or ignore — signage in the retail environment. Signage is essential to communicate many things people can't know without you telling them about plants (and other products).

**Thursday, August 24, 2023  
9:45–10:45 a.m. | Room B110**

### **The Shopper's Journey\***

Recent studies with real consumers in both the lab and retail environment give great insight into how consumers shop in the store. This presentation is packed with helpful tips to create more shoppable displays and merchandising information to generate higher sales.

## **Get the Farwest Education Pass**



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# Branching out banking relationships

**Financing for the  
nursery industry  
can be tricky  
without a few  
financial friends**

**BY JON BELL**

**A**NY BUSINESS FACES challenges, but nurseries have a unique set all to themselves. There's nature to contend with, a perpetual shortage of labor, and the fact that crops planted today won't be ready to sell, in many cases, for years. And when the plants are ready to sell, who knows if the market will still want them?

These challenges are compounded by housing booms and busts that can impact demand, plus random weather events and pests that can wreak havoc for years.

And then there's securing financing.



Many growers count on short-term lines of credit to smooth out the financial ups and downs that accompany day-to-day operations. They also rely on long-term financing to make capital investments in equipment, buildings or more land.

For nurseries, securing financing can be tricky because the valuation of a nursery's inventory can vary and evolve during the multi-year production cycle. A seedling isn't worth as much as a tree, but neither will it have all the costs associated with the finished product.

### Cost of doing business


"It's hard when our returns are so far away," said Ben Rough, CEO of **J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.**, a grower of deciduous shade, ornamental and flowering trees in Boring. "It's not like we're dealing with a mop or a widget or a golf club. You just can't think that way."

### 12-Month Profitability Outlook



Charts and statistics presented in the Nursery/Greenhouse Market Snapshot published by AgWest Farm Credit.



 Mortgage costs are double their ten-year average.

 Single-family housing starts have fallen 32% from peak levels in November 2021.

 Forecasters expect housing starts to settle around 1.3 – 1.4 million units in 2023.



Rough said J. Frank Schmidt employs a costing methodology to help determine the value of its inventory. The methodology considers both the direct costs associated with each plant — pots, soil, fertilizers, etc. — and the indirect ones, like travel time.

Though it can be challenging to pin down inventory value exactly, Rough said having the costing methodology in place is helpful, especially for figuring out gross margins and profitability.

Financial institutions also use the value of a nursery’s inventory on their balance sheets to help secure short-term lines of credit used to fund daily operations.

“With nurseries, there’s a lot of reliance on inventory compared to production crops,” said Todd Hatley, a relationship manager at **AgWest Farm Credit**, an agricultural lending cooperative serving farmers, growers and other related businesses.

When arranging lines of credit for nurseries, AgWest looks at inventory on a cost basis — again, all the different



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 During the COVID-19 sales boom, heat events degraded a significant number of trees, rendering them unfit for sale.

costs that go into the crops — not the catalog value.

“We don’t like to use catalog value because market conditions can change,” said Katie Briggs, a relationship manager at AgWest. “Your market value is subjective to what you can sell it for, so we use the more conservative value.”

Briggs said AgWest secures lines of credit based largely on a nursery’s trading assets (such as accounts receivable and inventory) but also takes assets like land and equipment into consideration when looking at long-term financing.

### Wildcards

Dan Nelson is owner of **Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery**, a grower of shade and flowering trees in Boring, Oregon. Nelson said his nursery has short- and long-term lines of credit, the latter for capital improvements like new buildings.

Every two years, the nursery provides its lenders with financial documents, including tax returns, a balance sheet and a statement of operations, to secure financing as needed. The nursery owns the crops and the equipment, and two other companies own the land and buildings.

“We don’t want to comingle any of the land with the nursery,” Nelson said.

Even so, lenders consider the other companies when securing financing.

“They want all those financials to base their lending off of,” he said. “They want to have something to attach to in case something happens. They really want land or buildings versus just nursery stock. You can have the best stock in the world, but what happens if nobody wants it? If it doesn’t walk out the door, it isn’t worth very much.”

That kind of scenario happened during the Great Recession, leaving many lenders out of luck. When the economy crashed and nurseries couldn’t sell their stock, banks in some cases foreclosed. When there is no market for nursery stock, inventories are much less valuable.

“The nursery stock is not worthless, but the bank never really recovers what the loan would be,” Nelson said.

### Choppy waters

Beyond economic downturns, there are other factors that can impact a nursery’s inventory value.

Rough said J. Frank Schmidt is always focused on the highest-quality trees; if any don’t make the mark, the nursery disposes of them. While that’s the business plan, unexpected challenges can happen and, in turn, impact value.

Case in point: A heatwave in June 2021 damaged thousands of trees that had to be destroyed. The following summer, a hailstorm hit J. Frank Schmidt’s property in Milton-Freewater, Oregon, damaging the bark of tens of thousands of honeylocust trees that couldn’t be sold as a result.

Nelson felt the fallout of the heatwave two years ago as well. Though the nursery was riding high on the COVID-19 sales boom — and didn’t need to tap into its short-term credit line — the heat degraded a significant number of trees, rendering them unfit for sale.

“We were in a good place, but having that warm weather in June was hard,” he said. “If we would have needed those unsaleable plants to make the whole thing go, that would have been a problem.”

Throw in rising labor costs and other challenges, and navigating the financial waters in the nursery business keeps it interesting, to say the least.

“All these variables can paint a very challenging financial picture,” Rough said. “You really have to love plants to succeed in the nursery business. You have to be nimble when nature or the economy throws you a curveball.”

### Financial friends

One way to help calm the waters as a nursery is to work with a financial partner who specializes in the business. Nelson said he used to work with a large commercial bank, but the bank’s lending officers didn’t really understand agriculture or nurseries, or the seasonality of the business. “It got to be very impersonal. It just didn’t work,” he said.

Since then, the nursery has switched to an ag-focused lender, which has yielded



marked improvements. “Somebody who knows agriculture and understands agriculture is way better than a big commercial bank,” Nelson said.

Katie Briggs, the AgWest relationship manager, has experience both in commercial banking and in the niche of agriculture lending. She said AgWest is better able to meet such a unique industry’s needs, including its ups and downs.

“During periods of adversity, commercial banks can have a knee-jerk reaction,” Briggs said. “Evenhandedness is one of our value propositions, and I think that’s really important for nurseries and all industries that we finance.”

Fellow AgWest relationship manager Todd Hatley agreed. “It comes to really building a relationship with a banker or us building one with nurseries,” he said. “We’re always excited to be working with nurseries, and that can be a huge factor in the success of both the nursery and the banking industry. We make decisions with those relationships in mind.” ☺

---

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



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At the Farwest Show on Wednesday, August 23, awards will be given to the top picks selected by a panel of horticulture experts. All show attendees also have a chance to vote for their favorites, with the winning plants earning the coveted People's Choice Award. Attendee votes will be tallied on Friday, August 25, and winners will be announced at the show.

*For more information on purchasing these varieties, visit [NurseryGuide.com](http://NurseryGuide.com).*

**Nightfall Snowbell (*Styrax japonicus* 'JFS 6SJ') swept the Best in Show award (chosen by judges) and People's Choice award (chosen by voters) in the 2022 New Varieties Showcase at the Farwest Show. Be there in 2023 to see which plant takes top honors for the 50th anniversary of Farwest!**

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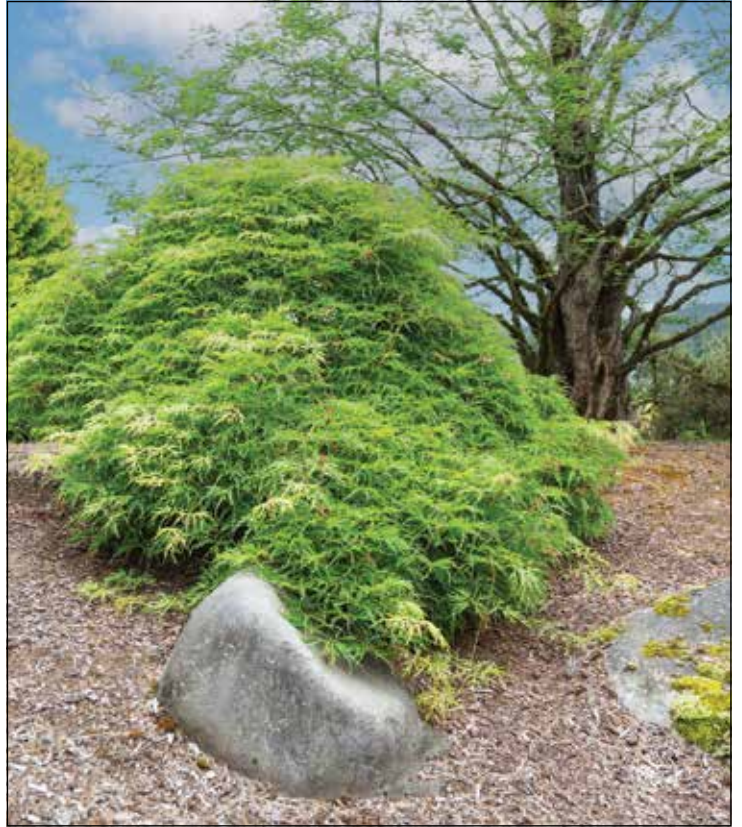
## Wabi Sabi Hybrid Maple

*Acer × pseudosieboldianum* Iseli® 'Wabi Sabi'

**Seedling from Iseli Nursery's maple breeding program. Introduced by Iseli Nursery.**

Look closely: this small maple with an irregular, gently weeping habit offers details to admire in every season. For a fleeting moment in spring, clusters of bright red winged seeds are held upright above finely divided green leaves that have striking red petioles. New branches are often waxed with a subtle white blush. In autumn, the tumbling cascades of foliage transition to a mix of vibrant red, orange, and yellow shades. 'Wabi Sabi' makes a perfect focal point in gardens influenced by the Japanese aesthetic style and cultural appreciation of nature's unpretentious, imperfect beauty. It grows to 10 feet wide by 7 feet tall, and is hardy in zones 5a-8b.

*Available as #6, #15, #20, and #24 containers from Iseli Nursery (Booth #19037).*



## Variegated Frydek Elephant Ear

*Alocasia micholitziana* 'Frydek Variegata'

**Philippines. Introduced by Andrej Suske and submitted by Cascade Tropicals LLC.**

This is a sought-after form of 'Frydek', for its unique variegation on velvety, soft foliage. Its mature leaves can get up to 18 inches long. It grows to 3 feet wide by 3 feet tall, and is hardy to zones 10a-12.

*Available as 2-inch and 4-inch containers from Cascade Tropicals LLC (Booth #7037).*



PHOTO BY JIM SCHUTTE

## Sweet Fern

*Comptonia peregrina*

**Found in the Eastern United States. Submitted by Briggs Nursery.**

*Comptonia* is native to the Eastern United States, but it is well adapted to almost the entire country. This vigorous, rounded, colony forming non-invasive deciduous shrub has very fresh, sweet, aromatic foliage. Prefers sandy or gritty, acidic soil, but will tolerate practically any soil type that is reasonably drained. It requires full sun to partial shade, grows to 4–8 feet wide by 2–5 feet tall, and is hardy in zones 2a–8b.

*Available as liners and containers from Briggs Nursery (Booth #18037) and Heritage Seedlings & Liners (Booth #15037).*



## Banana Split® Winter Daphne

*Daphne odora* 'Monzulzay' PP35217

**Discovered by Monrovia Craftsman Cesar Velazquez and introduced by Monrovia Nursery Company.**

Banana Split® is an exceptional new selection with variegated foliage. Each leaf has a wide yellow edge. Rose-pink buds open to white, sweetly fragrant flowers. It is a great foundation plant in dappled shade that resists reversion compared to other variegated daphne varieties. It grows to 3–4 feet wide by 3–4 feet tall and is hardy to Zone 7a.

*Available as #2 containers from Monrovia Nursery Company (Booth #17037).*



## Marble Variegated Pothos

*Epipremnum pinnatum* 'Marble Variegated'

**Found in Asia, Australia and the Pacific.  
Introduced by Andrej Suske and  
submitted by Cascade Tropicals LLC.**

This is a coveted form of *Epipremnum*. The foliage is mostly white with green splashes. The leaves will start to fenestrate at a young age, compared to other houseplants. Mature leaves can get up to 18 inches long. Grows to house plant size. If planted outside, hardy to zones 10a-12.

*Available as 4-inch containers from Cascade Tropicals LLC (Booth #7037).*



## Flamingo Althea

*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Flamingo' PPAF

**A seedless pentaploid developed  
at Oregon State University by Ryan  
Contreras by interploidy crossing, and  
introduced by Oregon State University.**

Flamingo is a vigorous, yet compact selection of althea with single flowers that are a rich pink. The flowers self-clean without producing seeds. This *H. syriacus* also has deep green foliage that avoids the early season chlorosis often found in this species. Grows to 3 feet wide by 4 feet tall, and is hardy in zones 5b-9b.

*Available as liners and #1 containers from Eshraghi Nursery (Booth #12025), J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. (Booth #19026), and Robinson Nursery (Booth #18028).*



## Seaside Serenade® Glacier Bay Hydrangea

*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'CAMCH045' PPAF

Hybridized in France by Minier  
Professional Solutions, and introduced  
by Monrovia Nursery Company.

Brilliant, crisp-white lacecap blooms arise from dramatic black stems. This rebloomer flowers all summer and into fall. A compact variety with bright green thick foliage, perfect for massing in the landscape or for use in containers. Produces masses of superb cut flowers with notably sturdy stems. Grows to 3 feet wide by 3 feet tall, and is hardy in zones 4a-9b.

Available as #2 and #5 containers from Monrovia Nursery Company (Booth #17037).



## Eclipse® Hydrangea

*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Eclipse' PP35544, USPP, CPBRAAF

Bred by Bailey Innovations™ and  
introduced by Bailey Nurseries.

Eclipse® is the first true dark-leaf *Hydrangea macrophylla* on the market. Its intense, dark purple foliage holds its color, even in sunny warm climates. The striking foliage, paired with gorgeous dark purple or cranberry-colored blooms, will make a big impact at retail, in the garden, and in a decorative container. Eclipse® is a grower-friendly plant that offers excellent mildew and *Cercospora* fungus resistance, holds up well in a garden center, and is a standout in the landscape. Grows to 3-5 feet wide by 3-5 feet tall, and is hardy in zones 5a-9b.

Available as #2 and #5 containers and JumpStarts from Everde Growers (Booth #14037), Kraemer's Nursery (Booth #15031), Means Nursery (Booth #15011), J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. (Booth #19026), Oregon Pride Nurseries (Booth #8032), Robinson Nursery (Booth #18028), Sester Farms (Booth #16025), and Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc. (Booth #14043).



## **Dragon Baby™** **Hydrangea**

*Hydrangea paniculata*  
'HYLV17522' PPAF, CPBRA

**Hybridized in The Netherlands  
by Lendert de Vos. Introduced  
by Bloomin' Easy® and  
licensed by Curoplant Co.**

Dragon Baby™ delivers extraordinary flower power in a petite form for modern outdoor spaces. Full panicle blooms start with a creamy lime color before igniting to a rich pink as summer fades to fall. Sturdy red stems support full panicles all season. Grows to 2-3 feet wide by 2-3 feet tall and is hardy in zones 3a-8b.

*Available as liners and #2 containers from Van Belle Nursery (Booth #8048).*



## **Peacock™** **Gingers**

*Kaempferia*  
*elegans* 'Fanciful  
Peacock Shazam'

**Found in Asia and Introduced  
by Andrej Suske. Submitted  
by Cascade Tropicals LLC.**

This plant has a unique striping pattern of silver and green. The lucky houseplant enthusiast might get a chance to enjoy the small purple flowers. The mature leaves reach up to 10 inches long. It grows to 15 inches wide by 6 inches tall and is hardy to zones 8a-10b.

*Available as 4-inch containers  
from Cascade Tropicals LLC  
(Booth #7037).*





## Honeycomb® Ninebark

*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Honeycomb' PP34624, CPBRAAF

**Bred by Dr. David Zlesak and  
introduced by Bailey Nurseries.**

Large, vibrant, chartreuse leaves hold their color all season long, even in full sun. Honeycomb-shaped white flowers appear in spring and contrast nicely with the foliage, which turns shades of gold in the fall. Honeycomb™ can be easily shaped with pruning or left to grow naturally. This ninebark grows nicely in containers and is just as attractive in the landscape. The medium size makes for a beautiful hedge or color block along a fence line. Grows to 4–6 feet wide by 5–7 feet tall. Hardy to zones 3a–8b.

*Available as #2 containers, JumpStarts and bareroot from Everde Growers (Booth #14037), Kraemer's Nursery (Booth #15031), J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. (Booth #19026), Oregon Pride Nurseries (Booth #8032), Robinson Nursery (Booth #18028), Sester Farms (Booth #17026), and Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc. (Booth #14043).*



## Moonstone® Spruce

*Picea pungens* 'INHWB' PP34321

**Found at Iseli Nursery by Curt Moody  
as a Witches Broom or branch sport  
on a *Picea pungens* 'Hoopsii' in a field-  
growing location in February 2012  
and introduced by Iseli Nursery.**

The flagship cultivar in the Iseli Blues™ collection, Moonstone® is an Iseli exclusive improvement of the popular globe blue spruce. This well-mannered little gem has bright blue foliage and maintains a compact, rounded form from youth to maturity. The perfect size and shape for suburban gardens, you can rely on Moonstone to add an easy-care pop of vivid blue to your landscape for years of enjoyment. Grows to 2 feet wide by 2 feet tall. Hardy to zones 2a–8b.

*Available as #3, #6, #10, #20 and #24 containers from Iseli Nursery (Booth #19037).*



## Glowing Hearts™ Pieris

*Pieris japonica* 'Piesid2'  
PP34660, CPBRAE

**Introduced by Gurjit Sidhu,  
Sidhu & Sons Nursery, Mission,  
British Columbia, Canada.**

Its glossy evergreen foliage emerges in scarlet hues so vivid, it almost glows in the garden. In early spring, Glowing Hearts™ is covered with cascading racemes of pink, bell-shaped flowers. This versatile *Pieris* displays equally well planted en masse, in borders or beds, as a stand-alone garden specimen, or in a patio pot. Grows to 5 feet wide by 5 feet tall. Hardy to Zone 6a.

*Available as 7cm, #1, and #2 containers from Sidhu & Sons Nursery (Booth #19045).*



## Lisa Marie Lungwort

*Pulmonaria* 'Lisa Marie' PP31226

**Discovered by Brad and Lisa Grover in northern Illinois. Introduced by GET Group & HOFFIE Nursery. Submitted by Briggs Nursery.**

'Lisa Marie' has unique, raspberry-colored flowers, extra-long lance-shaped foliage, with silvery leaf markings, and is very vigorous. This lovely lungwort makes a spectacular shade garden display. In late spring, 'Lisa Marie' is covered with loads of large, raspberry-pink blossoms arranged along sturdy stalks. After an extended bloom time, 10-12-inch dark green leaves dotted with silvery markings are a show stopper for the rest of the season. Trialed for over 10 years by HOFFIE Nursery, 'Lisa Marie' has been proven to be hardy and consistent in color and habit. For stunning seasonal color from spring to late fall, plant this beauty in part to full shade, in average garden soil that is moist but well-drained. Grows to 18-24 inches wide by 15-18 inches tall. Zones 3a-9b.

*Available as liners from Briggs Nursery (Booth #18037).*



## **Eau De Parfum™ Bling Rose**

*Rosa hybrida* 'Noa16079' PP33304

**Hybridized in Germany  
by Reinhard Noack and introduced  
by Monrovia Nursery Company.**

Big, delightfully fragrant blooms provide the classic romance of roses with the added benefit of disease resistance brought to you by modern breeding. Fuchsia blooms form a lovely bud, then slowly unfurl to its full glory. The lush foliage makes these excellent shrubs in the garden. Blooming repeatedly from early spring until first frost, you'll be provided with plenty of roses for bouquets. Grows to 4 feet wide by 4 feet tall. Hardy to zones 5a-10b.

*Available as #2 and #5 containers from Monrovia Nursery Company (Booth #17037).*



## **Orange Glow™ Knock Out® Rose**

*Rosa hybrida* 'Radslam' PPAF

**Hybridized by Will Radler in Greenfield, Wisconsin,  
and introduced by Star® Roses and Plants.**

Finally, an orange Knock Out® rose! This luminescent beauty boasts double orange blooms that display shades of coral, pink, and yellow throughout the cuplike petals. Moderate light at dusk and dawn will set its coloration and fair foliage glowing. Its incredible rust resistance makes it a top performer in every climate and a standout on the West Coast. The petal count of Orange Glow™ is higher than Coral Knock Out®. It also displays a more upright habit as compared to other Knock Out® varieties. Grows to 4.5 feet wide by 3 feet tall. Zones 5a-11.

*Available as bareroot, liners, and containers from finished growers from Star® Roses and Plants (Booth #16007) and Kraemer's Nursery Inc. (Booth #15031).*



## **Easy Bee-zy™ Knock Out® Rose**

*Rosa hybrida* 'SRPylwko' PPAF

**Hybridized by Star® Roses and Plants  
in West Grove, Pennsylvania, and  
introduced by Star® Roses and Plants.**

An outstanding addition to the Knock Out® family, this yellow rose continuously produces very bright blooms with long lasting color. It offers a light citrus fragrance and a single petal display that is alluring to pollinators. The plant is vigorous and overall demonstrates excellent resistance to black spot, rust, and mildew. Grows to 3-4 feet wide by 3 feet tall. Hardy to zones 4a-11.

*Available as bareroot, liners, and containers  
from finished growers from Star® Roses and Plants  
(Booth #16007) and Kraemer's Nursery Inc.  
(Booth #16032).*



## **Emerald Petite™ Arborvitae**

*Thuja occidentalis* 'Thusid4' PP33360, CPBR6493

**Discovered and introduced by Gurdev  
Sidhu, Sidhu & Sons Nursery, Mission,  
British Columbia, Canada.**

Dwarf cedar with a symmetrical, pyramidal habit, and glossy, bright green foliage in flat, lacy sprays. At a mature size of just 6 feet tall and 2 feet wide, 'Emerald Petite' is much smaller than its parent, with lacy foliage that is fuller and more densely packed. As with all *Thuja*, plant 'Emerald Petite' in full sun, in acidic, alkaline or neutral soil that is moist, but well drained. Hardy to Zone 3a.

*Available as #1 and #2 containers from Sidhu & Sons  
Nursery (Booth #19045).*



## Leprechaun Arborvitae

*Thuja standishii* × *plicata*  
'Leprechaun' U.S. PP33,840

**Discovered and introduced by Frank Kogut of Kogut Nursery LLC, Connecticut. Submitted by Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc.**

This unique hardy compact form of *Thuja* 'Green Giant' is soft textured, with a tight habit. It is great for hedges and screens, and perfect for smaller spaces. Grows to 6 feet wide by 15 feet tall. Hardy to Zone 4a.

*Available as #6 and #10 containers and field-grown B&B from Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc. (Booth #14043) and KG Farms (Booth #9029).*



## Queen Bee Chastetree

*Vitex agnus-castus* 'Queen Bee' PPAF

**Bred by Bailey Innovations™ and introduced by Bailey Nurseries.**

Long-lasting blooms and improved flower power make this shrub a true standout. Vibrant lavender flowers appear in mid-June and continue throughout the summer. The first round of flowers encourages a strong rebloom, which is ideal for scheduling production cycles. Queen Bee™ exhibits impressive drought, heat and cold tolerance compared to similar varieties. With its larger size, this pollinator magnet creates a beautiful and colorful hedge or focal point. Grows to 7–9 feet wide by 6 feet tall. Hardy to zones 6a–9b.

*Available as JumpStarts from Everde Growers (Booth #14037), Kramer's Nursery (Booth #15031), J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. (Booth #19026), Oregon Pride Nurseries (Booth #8032), Robinson Nursery (Booth #18028), Sester Farms (Booth #16025), and Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc. (Booth #14043).*





## New Varieties SHOWCASE

# Contacts

For more information on these Farwest Show New Varieties Showcase selections, please direct your inquiries to the following companies:

### **BAILEY NURSERIES**

[www.BaileyNurseries.com](http://www.BaileyNurseries.com)  
1-800-829-8898

### **BRIGGS NURSERY**

[www.BriggsNursery.com](http://www.BriggsNursery.com)  
1-800-444-1515

### **CASCADE TROPICALS LLC**

[www.CascadeTropicals.com](http://www.CascadeTropicals.com)  
206-604-7137

### **ISELI NURSERY**

[www.IseliNursery.com](http://www.IseliNursery.com)  
503-663-3822

### **MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY**

[www.Monrovia.com](http://www.Monrovia.com)  
800-666-0111

### **OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY**

[www.OregonState.edu](http://www.OregonState.edu)  
541-737-5462

### **SIDHU AND SONS NURSERY LTD.**

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**Wabi Sabi Hybrid Maple** - *Acer* × *pseudosieboldianum*  
Iseli® 'Wabi Sabi'

**Variegated Frydek Elephant Ear** - *Alocasia*  
*micholitziana* 'Frydek Variegata'

**Sweet Fern** - *Comptonia peregrina*

**Banana Split® Winter Daphne** - *Daphne odora*  
Monzulzay PPAF

**Marble Variegated Pothos** - *Epipremnum pinnatum*  
'Marble Variegated'

**Flamingo Althea** - *Hibiscus syriacus* 'Flamingo' PPAF

**Seaside Serenade® Glacier Bay Hydrangea** -  
*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'CAMCH045' PPAF

**Eclipse® Hydrangea** - *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Eclipse'  
PP35544, USPP, CPBRAE

**Dragon Baby™ Hydrangea** - *Hydrangea paniculata*  
'HYLV17522' PPAF, CPBRAE

**Peacock™ Gingers** - *Kaempferia elegans* 'Fanciful  
Peacock Shazam'

**Honeycomb® Ninebark** - *Physocarpus opulifolius*  
'Honeycomb' PP34624, CPBRAE

**Moonstone® Spruce** - *Picea pungens* 'INHWB' PP34321

**Glowing Hearts™** - *Pieris japonica* 'Piesid2'  
USPP#34,660, CPBRAE

**Lisa Marie Lungwort** - *Pulmonaria* 'Lisa Marie' PP31226

**Eau De Parfum™ Bling Rose** - *Rosa hybrida*  
'Noa16079' PP33304

**Orange Glow™ Knock Out® Rose** - *Rosa hybrida*  
'Radslam' PPAF

**Easy Bee-zy™ Knock Out® Rose** - *Rosa Rosa hybrida*  
'SRPylwko' PPAF

**Emerald Petite™ Arborvitae** - *Thuja occidentalis*  
'Thusid4' PP33360, CPBR6493

**Leprechaun Arborvitae** - *Thuja standishii* × *plicata*  
'Leprechaun' U.S. PP33,840

**Queen Bee Chastetree** - *Vitex agnus-castus* 'Queen  
Bee' PPAF

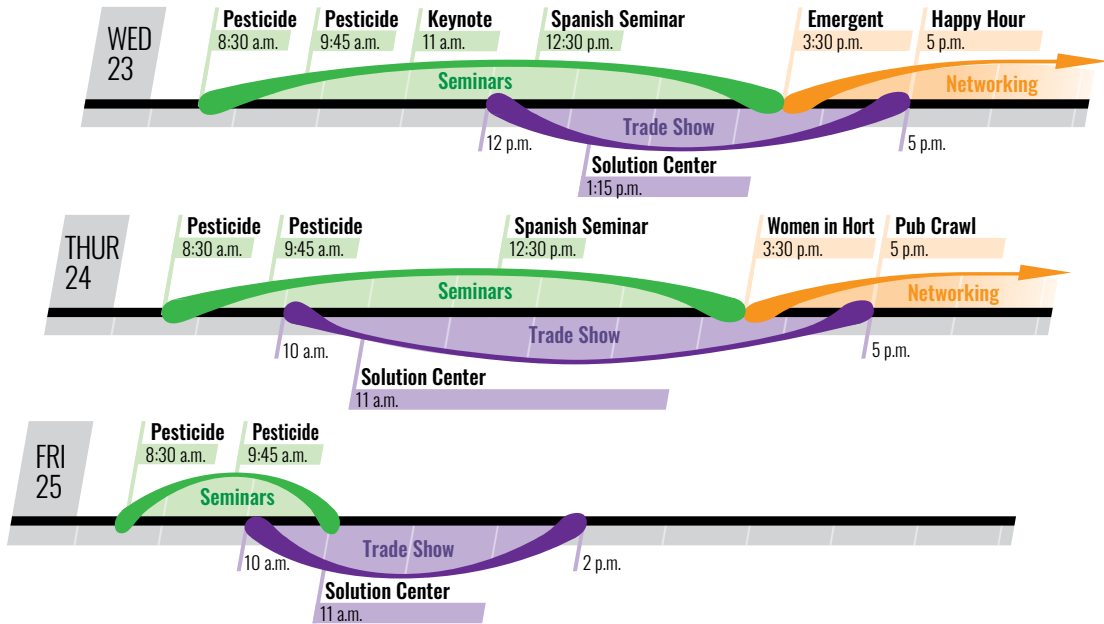
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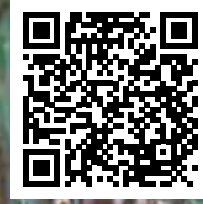




Dense plantings of *Rudbeckia* (black-eyed Susan) and *Schizachyrium* (bunchgrass) create dynamic contrasts in color and texture for maximum effect.

PHOTO BY INTRINSIC PERENNIAL GARDENS

Nursery  
Guide 



Scan QR codes to connect with 5 nurseries that carry *Rudbeckia* (left) and 3 that carry *Schizachyrium* (right)

# MAXIMALIST gardening goes BIG

BY DEBBIE TEASHON


Landscape  
designers  
maximize  
plant palettes  
with **BOLD**  
colors and  
textures

**M**AXIMALIST GARDEN design has two main principles: going bold and going big. Maximalism has found many adopters in the gardening community, but it's not limited to gardens. It also applies to graphic design, home décor and other design-related fields.

Maximalist gardeners plant as much as they can in the soil, experimenting with color combinations and throwing texture to the wind to see where it lands.

However, it's not about merely cramming more stuff into a garden without regard for its well-being. After all, mindfulness for the environment is on many people's minds.

It doesn't have to mean buying one of each kind of plant, either, although it's a design philosophy custom made for plant lovers. It works best with an organized, knowledgeable approach that considers color, texture, focus, layers, harmony and seasonality.

This is where retailers, designers and others can play an important role, helping gardeners create a 

## MAXIMALIST GARDENING

Top right: Cistus Nursery designed this garden using a wide-ranging plant palette of varying color, structure and texture. COURTESY CISTUS NURSERY

Below: Coleus come in a rainbow of colors. GETTY IMAGES

dense, personal green space they can take joy and pride in.

Sean Hogan, a designer, grower and retailer who owns **Cistus Nursery** in Portland, Oregon, has used the term “maximalist” for nearly 20 years to describe what he affectionately calls “cramscaping.”

To Hogan, the maximalist garden is one filled with a rich tapestry of plants densely planted for easy maintenance.

“One of my main drives is to encourage people to garden, and to experiment with new plants and enjoy them,” Hogan said, “Every bit as much joy can be had with a summer-dry plant palette as from an English perennial plant palette. My first question to clients is, ‘What kind of feeling do you want when you step out into the garden with your morning coffee — or vodka?’ It’s fun to think of the garden as your extended self.”



**Maximalists rely less on kitsch and more on color, volume and texture to create landscapes that are energizing, vibrant and FUN.**

Below: With its bright yellow flowering spikes and contrasting silver foliage, *Mahonia eurybracteata* adds color, texture and focus, especially in shady spots.

COURTESY CISTUS NURSERY

### Sensible to the max

Award-winning landscape designer Vanessa Gardner Nagel of Seasons Garden Design in Olympia, Washington, said she is neither a minimalist nor a maximalist in her designs. “I’m somewhere in the middle,” she said.

For Nagel, maximalism means anything goes. “You can have pattern and color, line and shape, texture and rhythm, variety and repetition,” she said. But even so, design principles still apply to any space — minimal or maximal. “You also have to have a balance that pulls it all together and makes it cohesive,” Nagel said.

It’s important to ask questions like “Where is the focal point?” and “Where does your eye rest?”

“The idea is you want to have a great design,” Nagel said. “Either way, you’re still going to evaluate by basic

design principles. People sometimes have difficulty with proportion and scale. You can mix patterns and textures, but you have to be cognizant of the scale of what you’re mixing.”

When you’re talking about outdoor furniture, it’s possible to mix a plaid pattern with a floral print, but in a garden, Nagel recommends keeping maximalism in check. One texture or color should be boldest, with others playing a supporting role. The same principle can also be applied to foliage, with fine fern-like leaf textures balanced by large-scale foliar effects.

“It speaks exactly to maximalism,” Nagel said. “Remember your scale: There needs to be some quiet space somewhere in there, even if there’s solid color in a background. You want it pleasing to the eye.”



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Nursery Guide



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## MAXIMALIST GARDENING

Top right and below: Pops of color from perennial flowers, lawn furniture and garden sculptures pack this garden with maximalist energy and inspiration.

PHOTO: LAURA CROCKETT, GARDEN DIVA DESIGNS

### When more is less

Garden designer Laura Crockett of Garden Diva Designs in Hillsboro, Oregon, remembers a time early in her career when she only knew the names of a dozen or so plants. “I would go into a collector’s garden, which looked like a massive crowd of unknown and unrecognizable items,” she said. “It’s not always comfortable.”

Over time Crockett became more educated about plants, just from visiting other gardens, talking to people, and exposing herself to the available plant materials. She now believes it is easier to understand how plants complement each other by knowing their cultural similarities. Even a tiny, shaded pocket garden can have many layers within one section.

“If you know your plant material, you can have many things pop up



The layers of complexity with garden maximalism are very **EXCITING**, nearly **ENDLESS**, but they are comprehensibly easier for people who know more plants.

Right: The bronzy orange leaves of *Carex testacea* (orange sedge) not only provide a foundation for this colorful massed border, they're also deer and rabbit resistant.

COURTESY MONROVIA

as ephemerals in the spring, and relax down in the summertime,” Crockett said. “Afterwards, a hosta pops up and fills the area. The layers of complexity with garden maximalism are very exciting, nearly endless, but they are comprehensibly easier for people who know more plants.”

Outdoor rugs, pebbles, pavers and ground cover plants also play a textural role. “It’s not always about how many plants you can put into that textural role,” Crockett said, noting she finds it interesting to play with textures, putting elements together and working with the comings and goings of plants. Both organic and inorganic materials can be used to express style.

“The ability to decorate to your personal tastes is essential and freeing,” Crockett said. “Many people judge interiors, whether things are in proportion or not. I believe you are allowed more free-

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dom of expression outside. There’s much more room for personalities; anything goes as long as you’re not torturing something.”

By comparison, minimalist gardening can feel downright restrictive.

“It becomes less interesting to me as a plant person,” she said. “Nature is messy and you have to clean all those lines. Minimalist gardens are not as easy as Pinterest makes it look.”

### Creating complimentary layers

When designing for a maximalist garden, it’s important to define spaces where the eye can rest. Hogan can recall gardens he built with many of the same plants, but he used different clones in the same area, for a slight variance between the plants to keep the texture interesting.

“Between them, they have slightly diverse flowering times, so we are 



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extending what the garden is giving back to us,” Hogan said. “On one side would be 10 to 15 different *Daphne* species — we have a year-round fragrance from these shrubs.

“In the shaded foreground, I grow *Sarcococca*. They look mostly the same from a distance but taller in some spots and shorter in others, but if you look closely, there are a half dozen different species. The garden gives us flowering times that vary from Halloween all the way to March.”

Hogan breeds Asian *Mahonia* and propagates many other species, using them as focal points in his garden designs. The shrubs have large rosettes of architectural foliage. Hogan repeats them around in the garden areas that receive more water.

“Some of the shrubs have silver

Top and right: Green roofs maximize the planting surface potential of a space.

PHOTOS: LE JARDINET DESIGNS



Below: Winter Daphne (*Daphne odora*) has maximum benefits in a tidy package: It's slow-growing, shade-tolerant, evergreen, winter-hardy and attractive to hummingbirds. It's a good choice for small gardens, requires minimal pruning, and has pleasantly perfumed flowers,

PHOTO COURTESY HEAVYPETAL.CA

leaves, some have red new growth, and they flower in the autumn and winter. They add a lot to the landscape," he said. "Most of the textures are from three or four things that are repeated."

### Companion planting

Hogan is also growing a grove of 15 to 20 *Trachycarpus fortunei* 'Wagnerianus'. An evergreen, variegated green-and-white jasmine grows up one specimen, highlighting another aspect of maximalist landscaping.

Companion planting is when two plants are grown near each other for the benefit of one of those plants or both, so the benefit can be one-way or mutual. Companion planting could be as simple as growing flowers near crops to attract pollinating insects or growing two plants along-

side each other to confuse or repel pests.

Crockett of Garden Diva Designs creates layers from the ground up, starting with a living patio. Flagstones or square pavers are interplanted with ground covers, making a walkable first level.

An 18-inch-high raised planter becomes a wall for the space, made with stone-facing or poured concrete. Within the planter, another layer incorporates more plants. She builds up higher by incorporating three porcelain containers that create a place to be expressive with plant material.

"You can put a vertical screen behind the patio," Crockett said. "Or create a living wall with mosses, *Tillandsia* and air ferns. If you roof your patio, a vine can grow up one side and play across the roof >>>





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## MAXIMALIST GARDENING

line .... That is what I like to do. I'm creating many layers within that space."

### Maximizing the seasons

Especially in a maximalist garden, designers should consider that many plants are seasonal. A plant such as a tall, flamboyant canna lily with flashy foliage doesn't come into its own until summer, so what does the space look like the other three seasons of the year?

Nagel suggested a simple solution, such as a beautiful container. "Even when it's empty, it can still look good," she said.

For spring interest, Nagel might plant a patch of epimediums, with their darling, dainty flowers dotting the landscape. Yet the rest of the year, the plants only provide texture with their evergreen foliage.

"You have that quieter green the rest of the year, maybe then you would have some other plant such as an annual you put in for the summer. It takes over the attention once the epimediums are quiet in the background."

Even plant collectors who want one of everything can have a unified garden with a maximalist design — as long as the tried-and-true design principle of repeating colors, textures and shapes is put to good use.

"We get joy from looking at plants," Hogan said. "Even small gardens can be a destination. The primary tool is that something makes it cohesive from every point of view — limited plant palette, limited texture and or repetition of something. You can get away with a lot if you repeat a few things. Add five *Carex* — it looks like you meant to do it," he said.

"If you're standing 3 feet away from the edge of a garden, you're looking at smaller vignettes that are really rich in fun color combinations, which is also a wonderful experience and different than viewing it from 20 feet away." ©

*Debbie Teashon is co-author and photographer for Garden Communicators award-winning Gardening for the Homebrewer, and a regular contributor to regional magazines. Her gardening website is [www.RainySide.com](http://www.RainySide.com).*



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# The bottom line on agricultural overtime

Oregon's new law requiring overtime pay for agricultural workers went into effect January 1



PETER S. HICKS

**Peter S. Hicks is a shareholder at Jordan Ramis PC. He can be reached at [Peter.Hicks@JordanRamis.com](mailto:Peter.Hicks@JordanRamis.com). For questions related to the agricultural exemption, applicability of the new Oregon overtime law, or potential eligibility for the tax credits, Jordan Ramis is available to provide guidance for your specific business needs.**



**OREGON'S NEW LAW** requiring overtime pay for agricultural workers went into effect January 1, 2023. If you are not already complying with the overtime requirements, you need to do so immediately! The law, enacted as House Bill 4002, establishes mandatory overtime pay for agricultural workers, with a four-year phase-in period:

- **2023 and 2024:** Overtime must be paid for all hours in excess of 55 in one workweek;
- **2025 and 2026:** Overtime for all hours over 48 in a workweek; and
- **2027 and thereafter:** Overtime for all hours over 40 in a workweek.

The law applies to “agriculture,” which is defined as all branches of farming, as well as dairying. It includes production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any agricultural or horticultural commodities; raising of livestock, bees, furbearing animals or poultry; and “any other practice performed by a farmer or on a farm as an incident to

or in conjunction with farming operations, including preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market, or delivery to carriers for transportation to market.”

An “agricultural worker” is any individual performing services in agriculture for an employer in exchange for remuneration or rate of pay.

A “workweek” is a fixed period of time established by the employer reflecting a regularly recurring period of 168 hours or 7 consecutive 24-hour periods.

The workweek can begin on any day of the week at any hour and doesn't have to coincide with the calendar week. It can also be changed by the employer so long as the change is intended to be permanent and isn't intended to evade the overtime requirements

The new law does not apply to:

- **Hand harvest or pruning laborers** paid on a piece-rate basis in an operation that is generally paid on piece-rate basis in the region — you can't change to a piece-rate basis to get around the law — for an

employer “who did not, during any calendar quarter during the preceding year, use more than 500 piece-rate-work-days of agricultural labor;” or hand harvest or pruning laborers who commute daily from a permanent residence to the farm and who have been employed in agricultural labor less than 13 weeks during the preceding calendar year;

- **Parents, spouses, children or other members of an employer's immediate family;**
- **Minors (16 years of age or under)** employed as hand harvest laborers who are paid on a piece-rate basis and paid at the same rate as employees over 16 years of age on the same farm;
- **Salaried employees** principally engaged in range production of livestock;
- **Exempt employees** (administration, executive or professional work; predominantly performing intellectual, managerial or creative tasks; able to exercise discretion and independent judgment; and salaried).

Liability for failing to pay overtime under the new law is consistent with other overtime penalties, including payment of the full wages (the difference between what was paid and what was owed), plus civil penalties under ORS 652.150, calculated as the full wage hourly rate times 8 hours per day until paid or an action is commenced, up to 30 days, plus prevailing party attorney fees.





Penalty wages can't exceed 100% of unpaid wages if the employee fails to send a written notice of nonpayment, or if a written notice of nonpayment is sent and the employer pays within 12 days.

As with other wage claims, BOLI can file suit against an employer to enjoin future violations and to force payment of amounts due but not paid, and also assess civil penalties of up to \$1,000 for any willful violation. An agreement between the employer and employee for payment of less than is required by the law is not a defense.

**The phase-in period**

To ease the burden on employers while the law is phased in, a refundable tax credit is available for eligible employers to recover some or all of the wage increase. The credit is capped at \$55 million per calendar year. It will be phased out in 2029.

**The Legal Access Program** entitles each OAN Regular and Associate Member to 30 minutes per calendar month of FREE legal advice from Jordan Ramis PC attorney Steve Shropshire. If your question cannot be reasonably answered within the allotted 30 minutes, Steve will estimate the amount of additional time he believes the answer will require. You may then elect to hire Jordan Ramis PC to represent you further on that matter, hire other counsel, or drop the matter altogether.

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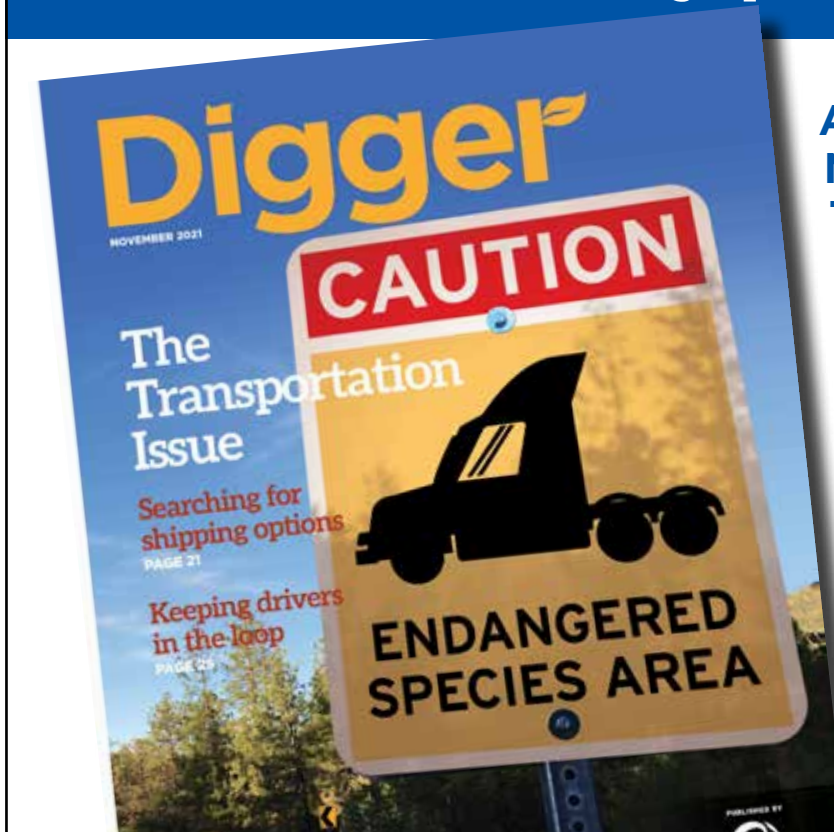
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A one-time allocation of \$10 million was also funded to establish a grant, loan or lending program to provide financial assistance to employers to mitigate the increased cost in wages. To get the credit, eligible employers must submit an application to the Oregon Department of Revenue no later than January 31 following the calendar year for which the credit is sought.

If you are not already complying with these new overtime requirements, it's imperative to do so immediately. If you haven't paid overtime thus far this year, consider paying any unpaid overtime now.

Employers should also confirm employees are engaged in "agriculture," particularly in light of the U.S. Department of Labor's recent recovery of \$167,179 in back wages from Columbia Empire Farms for misapplying the federal overtime exemption to non-agricultural workers. ☺

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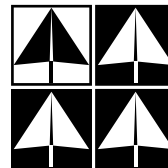
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# GROWING KNOWLEDGE

Series content is coordinated by Dr. Lloyd Nackley, associate professor of nursery production and greenhouse management at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon.



An ongoing series provided by Oregon State University in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture and in partnership with the Oregon Association of Nurseries

## What's growing on?

OSU plant breeding program shows progress on promising new cultivars

BY RYAN CONTRERAS, PH.D.



OSU's plant breeding program looked for an easier way to turn a shrub into a small tree. This resulting *Hibiscus* selection has cultivar-appropriate large, single white flowers and red eyespot, but few touches and little effort went into training the resulting tree form, as seen in field and container production.

PHOTOS BY RYAN CONTRERAS

**T**HE PLANT BREEDING PROGRAM at Oregon State University is continually working to bring new plants to market that will make growers more profitable and perform well for consumers.

On behalf of the program, I wanted to update the industry on these efforts. New plants build excitement for everyone, and I think we have a few that do just that.

The last year has been an exciting time and feels like an inflection point — though, maybe I have said that before. But that is the mantra of a plant breeder. We always believe there is a great plant in the next population or the next set of crosses will prove to be revelatory. In other words, hope springs eternal.

Below are a few of the projects and plants that I think are worthy of notice. >>





*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Flamingo' PPAF in container production. Available as non-exclusive from Oregon State University.

PHOTO BY JEFF STOVEN

### ***Hibiscus syriacus* 'Flamingo' PPAF**

It is approaching a decade that I have been working on altheas, also known as rose of Sharon or *Hibiscus syriacus*. In that time, I have heard from industry and consumers about what they are looking for.

Of course, more saturated colors are always in fashion — people want “true blue” and “really red” cultivars. We are always looking for better flower colors and many of our polyploid selections provide that depth of color.

But dark green foliage, especially early in the season, is equally important — perhaps more so. No one wants to pay top dollar for anemic-looking plants.

During the breeding process, we discarded thousands of plants with inferior foliage color and arrived at our first release, 'Flamingo'.

'Flamingo' is a seedless, single pink cultivar with deep green foliage on a compact, but vigorous grower.

The cross for this selection was performed in 2013. We have been watching it since then and it has been a reliable performer. It is available for non-exclusive licensing from Oregon State University by contacting Denis Sather ([Denis.D.Sather@OregonState.edu](mailto:Denis.D.Sather@OregonState.edu)).

For more information, please visit <https://Horticulture.OregonState.edu/File/Hibiscus-Syriacus-Flamingo>.

### **Tree-form *Hibiscus***

In recent years at the Farwest Show, I have walked the show floor looking for comparators to plants I'm working on. What I saw in althea was most growers training them as standards. The resulting plants are lovely and fit the gardening

need, but it seemed to me that we could achieve that in an easier way for growers than the effort to turn a shrub into a small tree.

To that end, we started using 'Lohengrin' and 'Tosca' in crosses with various althea cultivars. These two cultivars are hybrids of *H. syriacus* and *H. paramutabilis* that tend to be larger, more tree-like than althea. Our hybrids exhibited a wide range of growth habits, flower forms and seed production.

Most exciting to me, many of these plants naturally grow vigorously with a central leader to produce small trees. One grower noted that the least vigorous of these selections grew twice as fast as the industry standard. It will require far less effort to train altheas as trees than other cultivars. They have larger flowers and most are infertile — meaning fewer >>>

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## GROWING KNOWLEDGE

Lo & Behold® 'Blue Chip' butterfly bush is a non-invasive dwarf *Buddleia* that is approved for sale in Oregon.

PHOTO COURTESY SPRING MEADOW

seedlings to control in production.

One question is their hardiness. That is being addressed by current testing in collaboration with the Morton Arboretum. Selections include singles and doubles in mostly white and lavender. The size of some of these flowers are truly noteworthy.

There's more work to be done, but these hold the promise to be game changers. We made the original crosses back in 2015, with evaluation ongoing since then. I continue to be impressed with their vigor, novelty and beauty. These seem like an easy sell, but the proof is in the production and we have several growers testing them.

### Butterfly bush

I have been working with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) on the



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issue of *Buddleja* and how to handle the flurry of new cultivars that have been introduced.

As most are aware, *Buddleja* was banned in Oregon and elsewhere due to its invasive nature. However, the ban was amended in 2009 to allow sterile, interspecific hybrids. Since then, ODA has approved 14 cultivars based on either 98% reduction in fertility, or because they were hybrids.

We have spent the last three years evaluating a suite of 34 cultivars. These include classic cultivars with high fertility, modern cultivars on the market that are reportedly sterile, and modern hybrids. What we observed was that while most of the cultivars reported as hybrids tended to have lower fertility, there were several that had exceedingly high seedling production, equal to or greater than classic *B. davidii* cultivars such as ‘Black Knight’ and ‘Nanho Blue’.

The take-home message is that we cannot automatically assume that *Buddleja* hybrids will be sterile. We therefore should test all plants.

That is the evaluation portion. I feel that we have gained a good handle on what is in the industry and where there are gaps. In 2022, we shifted from evaluating to improvement. The primary areas that we are starting with are breeding for dwarf yellow and dwarf “black” or intense dark purple.

Of course, seedlessness is a must-have in any introduction. I am fortunate to call Dr. Denny Werner a friend and mentor. He is responsible for such introductions as ‘Blue Chip’, ‘Blue Chip Jr.’, ‘Ice Chip’, ‘Pink Micro Chip’ and ‘Purple Haze’ — all of which are seedless in addition to being beautiful.

Dr. Werner has shared with me some of his strategies to develop dwarf yellow cultivars over the years. The fact that one is still not out there is good evidence that it is a sticky problem. I make no promises that we will deliver quickly, but we have what I believe is a good strategy to fill these gaps in the available cultivars.

For butterfly bush, we are just >>



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getting warmed up. I'm excited to see where the road leads.

**Fresh for 2023**

Above I mentioned that we are in a bit of an inflection point. Woody plant breeding is a long-term endeavor. With time and observation, certain plants will rise to the top. Such is the case with a few plants we have been looking at for quite some time.

We have released a tetraploid form of *Vaccinium ovatum* (evergreen huckleberry) that has vigorous, upright growth. It's a super-strong grower in tissue culture and in containers. This is an example of a plant that may not turn the world on its head, but has improved, if not solved, some of the production issues the species-type had. This selection will be offered by Briggs Nursery.

Mock orange is a love of mine. They may only flower for a short time, but the fragrance is utterly divine. I have been using some of the species that, with some refinement, really make heads (or noses?) turn. I have made many interspecific crosses and been pleasantly surprised by the improvements possible with a single generation.

While I'm looking forward to some more novel introductions, it may be somewhat unsurprising that the first introduction from my lab resulted from an elite x elite cross. Swan Lake® (*Philadelphus* 'ORSTPHILx1' PPAF), which resulted from a cross of *Philadelphus coronarius* 'Icezam' (Icelandic™ Mockorange) x *P. lewisii* 'Blizzard', is available exclusively from Monrovia. (For more information, please visit <https://www.Monrovia.com/Mock-Orange-44290.html>).

**The promise of triploid maples**

Each year I provide an update on these seedless triploid maples that we have been working on. I fear some folks start to view this effort like the cliched "free beer tomorrow" sign you may see in your favorite watering hole. However, progress is moving steadily ahead.

I have made hundreds of observations

Flowers of Swan Lake® (*Philadelphus* 'ORSTPHILx1' PPAF) mock orange are produced in prolific numbers and are sweetly fragrant. PHOTO BY GEORGIA CLAY



of flowering of *Acer ginnala* (*A. tataricum* ssp. *ginnala*) triploids and have yet to find a viable seed. That does not mean that I can unequivocally state they are never going to set seed, but it is a very strong indication that we have reduced fertility sufficiently such that they are not an ecological threat. Still, there is more testing to be done.

We have been collaborating to increase numbers in micropropagation and then take through the production process. By the time of publication, I expect we have a few hundred that will be acclimated and growing on in containers and field plots around the West.

Remember above when I stated that "hope springs eternal"? Keeping that in mind, I would love to see one of my triploid *Amur* maples in production by 2025.

Norway maple triploids are also on the way. This species is more reluctant to

flower — none of the triploids have flowered yet — but I have moved ahead with getting one accession into propagation for production and replicated trials.

It is more challenging in micropropagation and overall more of an unknown as far as how it will grow out after acclimation compared to *Amur* maple. To address that, we are starting the process early.

We have 100–150 that will be acclimated in 2023 to evaluate production scheduling and outplant growth. Assuming things go well, we will have replicated plantings to evaluate when they flower to provide necessary data on seed set, or lack thereof. ©

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*Ryan Contreras, Ph.D., is a professor and associate head of horticulture at Oregon State University. He can be contacted at [Ryan.Contreras@OregonState.edu](mailto:Ryan.Contreras@OregonState.edu).*



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# The shining city on the hill

Only the stoutest of political nerds would recall that President Ronald Reagan's farewell address to the nation invoked a 1630 sermon by Puritan pilgrim John Winthrop.

White House speechwriter Ken Khachigian tapped into Reagan's long-held North Star of America, defining his vision of "the shining city upon a hill." Looking back from where we were as a nation, 34 years later, it seems that the nation needs to recommit to goodness that is our blessed lands.

## The true land of opportunity

Now, as we set sail towards the 2024 election, I wonder what the American electorate would think of a core principle outlined by the 40th President of the United States. Reagan's address defined America as "a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here."

He continued, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world."

It is not lost on me that in his time, Reagan was seen by some as a dangerous conservative that would diminish our great nation. It is my belief that in 2024, Reagan could not even make it out of a Republican primary.

## Teaching is a call to action

As president, Reagan's sobriquet (or nickname) was that of "The Great Communicator." It is an apt description and set a standard for the presidents who followed him. Bill Clinton had his moments, but it really was Barack Obama who came closest to the former California governor and Hollywood actor.

Interviewed after his farewell speech, Reagan said, "I wasn't a great communicator, but I communicated great things, and

they didn't spring full bloom from my brow, they came from the heart of a great nation — from our experience, our wisdom, and our belief in the principles that have guided us for two centuries. ... For me it always seemed more like the great rediscovery ... of our values and our common sense."

Then, he asked, "Are we doing a good enough job teaching our children what America is and what she represents in the long history of the world?"

## The great idea of America

Every generation needs to recommit to the great experiment that is democracy and our form of government. It is not easy. It is supposed to be hard. To be earned. To respect that we continue to be the sum of our collective parts — good and bad.

What is hiding in plain sight is the degradation of education and civics in our state and country. Recently it was reported by the *Oregon Capital Chronicle* that Oregon has spent more than \$250 million in the past 25 years on reading, but that money has failed to help more than a generation of students. Over the last 25 years, nearly two in five fourth graders and one in five eighth graders have scored "below basic" on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, often referred to as the nation's report card. That means they struggle to read and understand simple words. Today, few Oregon fourth and eighth graders are proficient readers.

Along with this decline in basic education, public trust in government is also declining. The reasons are many, but it doesn't help that only a shrinking minority of Americans know how American government works.

Less than half of respondents to the 2022 Annenberg Constitution Day survey could identify the three branches of government, the first drop in six years. More than two-thirds of U.S. residents who answered the American Bar Association's 2023 civic literacy survey said that the general public is either "not very informed" or "not informed at all" about how government works.

Filling this gap could begin in our schools, but that's been neglected for decades. Earlier this month, the National Center for Education Statistics released the civics and history scores for eighth graders



Jeff Stone  
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

from its 2022 Report Card. Average civics scores declined for the first time since 1998. Fewer than 1 in 4 students were "proficient," with a level of understanding sufficient to apply the subject, and 31% tested below the "basic" level. We need to be able not only to be able to spell "shining city on a hill," but recognize what it takes for the great idea of America to shape democracy.

## Happy 247th birthday, America!

Agriculture is a bedrock of our country and our democracy, and it is with those precious few, that we continue the aim of American exceptionalism. When we see critical issues whither on the vine of apathy, we must not wait for others to act.

Our nation is at her best when the citizens understand their world around them and seek opportunity in every dark moment. We are a better people when we understand that government by, of and for the people is how we take responsibility to make a better life for our children.

Every July, as we celebrate our nation's independence, let us give thanks to our family, friends and countrymen.

Before concluding his farewell address by saying "goodbye, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America" President Reagan offered "lesson number one about America."

"All great change in America begins at the dinner table," he said. "So, tomorrow night in the kitchen I hope the talking begins. And children, if your parents haven't been teaching you what it means to be an American, let 'em know and nail 'em on it. That would be a very American thing to do."

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