

2024-2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ben Verhoeven PRESIDENT	Peoria Gardens Inc. 32355 Peoria Road S.W. Albany, OR 97321 BenV@PeoriaGardens.com 541-753-8519
Amanda Staehely PAST-PRESIDENT	Columbia Nursery 29490 S. Jackson Road Canby, OR 97013 Wayne@Columbia-Nursery.com 503-263-2623
Patrick Newton PRESIDENT-ELECT	Powell's Nursery Inc. 5054 S.W. Boyd Road Gaston, OR 97119 PowellNursery@gmail.com 503-357-0631
Darcy Ruef VICE PRESIDENT	Al's Garden & Home 1220 N. Pacific Hwy. Woodburn, OR 97071 DRuef@Als-GardenCenter.com 503-981-1245
Jesse Nelson TREASURER	Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery Inc. 31020 S.E. Waybill Road Boring, OR 97009 JNelson@HansNelson.com 503-663-3348
Chris Robinson SECRETARY	Robinson Nursery Inc. PO Box 100 Amity, OR 97101 Chris@RobinsonNursery.com 877-855-8733
Tyler Meskers MEMBER AT LARGE	Oregon Flowers Inc. PO Box 311 Aurora, OR 97002 Tyler@OregonFlowers.com 503-678-2580

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patrick Peterson ASSOCIATE MEMBER	Simplot Turf & Horticulture Patrick.Peterson@Simplot.com 541-214-5802
Sam Pohlschneider CONTAINER GROWER	Pohlschneider Nursery Sam@PohlschneiderNursery.com 503-969-1310
Dave Daniel CONTAINER GROWER	Fall Creek Farm & Nursery Inc DaveD@FallCreekNursery.com 541-937-2973
Blake Nelson CONTAINER GROWER	Bountiful Farms Nursery Inc. Blake@BountifulFarms.com 503-981-7494
Jason Burns FIELD / B&B GROWER	Patterson Nursery Sales Jason@PattersonNurserySales.com 503-668-6000
Sam Barkley FIELD / BARE ROOT GROWER	J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. SamB@JFSchmidt.com 503-663-4128
Vladimir Lomen FIELD / BARE ROOT GROWER	John Holmlund Nursery VladimirL@JHNSy.com 503-663-6650
Andrea Avila Aragon GREENHOUSE	Smith Gardens Andrea.Avila-Aragon@ SmithGardens.com 503-678-5373
Noah Fessler GREENHOUSE	Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc. NoahF@WoodburnNursery.com 503-634-2231
Gary S. English RETAIL	Landsystems Nursery Gary@LandsystemsNursery.com 541-382-7646

Make the first move

Ken Free and Amy Wagner are two of the hardest working folks in sales. I've driven here to JLPN Inc. (Salem, Oregon) on a sunny day, to see what makes them tick. Turns out that the most important lesson they teach me is to be proactive with your customers. Make the first move.

Between the two of them, Ken and Amy have 50 years of experience helping **JLPN** grow and produce the finest bare root and container tree seedlings and rooted cuttings. That doesn't mean they are content to rest on their laurels. Like any good team, they are always looking for ways to improve.

Ken tells me that a lot of their material goes out of state, and a perennial challenge is scheduling multiple deliveries to different customers out of the same large truck. It used to be that they would wait for customer A to call and request a delivery, then wait for customer B to ask for a delivery, always on a different date. After that it was a matter of negotiating between the customers to arrive at a single delivery day.

Now Ken builds the truck, using physical paper that he can shuffle and move. Once the puzzle is solved, and he has a full truck, including everything for customers A and B, he'll give them a call and propose a delivery date. This all happens well ahead of when they would have previously reached out. "The customers like it. It's a win-win," says Ken.

The customers no longer have to remember to schedule their deliveries. Ken and Amy do the work for them. JLPN also gets a more efficient truck load, without all the overprocessing and back and forth between customers that no one has time for in the spring.

Another way Ken and Amy are making the first move is by working with customers to roll over orders into the next



Ken Free and Amy Wagner are make the first move when it comes to customers. PHOTO BY SEAN OFFIEL

year. Amy tells me her customers "get busy just like anyone else." Rolling over orders helps customers secure product well in advance. They can always adjust later, but there are fewer panicked last-minute calls trying to order trees that are no longer available. "They really appreciate it," says Amy.

It also helps JLPN reduce overproduction. Now they can better plan rather than produce trees with no customer in mind. Amy tells me it's a shame to "do everything to grow [the trees], and now it's just gone."

Amy and Ken are more than just a good sales team. They are partners for their customers. They are thinking several moves ahead, because they know that by doing so they are helping everyone out. It's about, "mutual respect between us and the customers," says Amy.

So go ahead, make the first move. ☺