

Digger



SEPTEMBER 2025

Foodscaping

New trend mixes
edibles, ornamentals

PAGE 23

ONF scholarships
jump start careers

PAGE 29

Research shaping
nursery industry's future

PAGE 41

PUBLISHED BY



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES

Decorative & Decorated



You get more than beautiful structure from our **Ornamental Tree Program**. Year after year, our varieties are receiving industry acclaim and gaining sought-after appeal.

Why Buy In

- Award-winning varieties with excellent trial performance nationwide
- Habits that complement your space—not the other way around
- Trees for everywhere from the patio to the desert plains



star[®]
ROSES and PLANTS

Contact our team for orders and availability.

1-800-457-1859 • www.StarRosesandPlants.com

▲ Scan
to view the
full program

We know ag
financing like
you know how
to land the
office with the
best view.



For over a century we've served customers who can do just about anything. You deserve a financial partner who works as hard as you do.



AgWestFC.com

 Equal Housing Lender
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

September 2025 Vol. 69 No. 9

Digger



23 **A feast of flowers and edibles**
The popular trend of foodscaping incorporates veggies, herbs and fruits into the home landscape.

29 **Getting a jump start**
Former Oregon Nurseries Foundation scholarship recipients say the assistance helped them launch their careers.

9-16 **2025 Farwest recap**
New Varieties Showcase and Best in Show winners plus much more.



COLUMNS

- 6,7** President's Message
- 46** Director's Desk

DEPARTMENTS

- 8** Calendar
- 17** Northwest News
- 37** Classifieds
- 41** Growing Knowledge
- 45** Digger Marketplace



Printed in Oregon on domestic recycled paper when available.

On the cover: Foodscaping allows home gardeners to incorporate edibles into their flower beds to make the most of smaller lot sizes. PHOTO BY BRIE ARTHUR

On this page: Left: Several varieties of lettuce are incorporated into a flower bed, adding color as well as texture. PHOTO BY BY NTDANAI Right, clockwise from top left: Emily Iverson (Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm), Lee Powell (Lee Powell Landscape Design), Bethany Rydmark (Bethany Rydmark :: Landscapes), Erica Willis (Wilbur-Ellis), and Jessica Gonzalez (Living Habitats LLC). PHOTOS BY VIC PANICHKUL AND COURTESY OF LEE POWELL AND JESSICA GONZALEZ

MATERIAL FLOW AND CONVEYOR SYSTEMS INC.

21150 Butteville Rd. NE
Donald, OR 97020

Toll Free 800-338-1382
Phone 503-684-1613
Fax 503-684-5133

Visit Our Website:
materialflow.com
All pricing F.O.B.
Donald, Oregon

SALE ON MANY PRODUCTS USED/SURPLUS RACKING, CONVEYORS, CONV. BELTING, SHELVING, PLASTIC BINS, LIFTS, CASTERS & MUCH MORE. 2 miles off I-5 just south of Wilsonville.



Used and New
TEARDROP PALLET RACKS
IN-STOCK



HAND TRUCKS 58PMP
\$141
100s of Hand Trucks
IN-STOCK



IN-STOCK
Rivet Shelving
Various Colors Available



Gravity Roller Conveyor
In Stock - Donald, OR
Powered Conveyors



CPT2748E
4400 Lb. Cap.
27 x 48
\$264



CASTERS
1,000s **IN STOCK**



Special On Self Dump Hoppers

MF5055 - \$1,014
MF7555 - \$1,116
MF10055 - \$1,229
MF15055 - \$1,399
MF20055 - \$1,565



OUTDOOR ALL-TERRAIN TRUCK
\$1,149
IN-STOCK

Assembly Required



ALUMINUM DOCK PLATES
IN-STOCK



STEEL DOCK BOARDS
IN-STOCK

Many Sizes Available
\$334 to \$589
IN-STOCK



MFRLC357 shown

ALUMINUM DOCK BOARDS
IN-STOCK
\$930 to \$2,044

INDUSTRIAL STEEL ROLLING LADDERS
Capacity 350 lbs.
F.O.B. Donald, OR.

Top Step Platform - 16" x 24" W

Model No.	Steps	Height to Top Step	Wgt.	Price
MFRLC354	4 Step	40"	165	\$499
MFRLC355	5 Step	50"	196	\$634
MFRLC356	6 Step	60"	229	\$782
MFRLC357	7 Step	70"	260	\$839
MFRLC358	8 Step	80"	293	\$940

Assembly Required

Prices subject to change without notice

CRUISE THROUGH YOUR WORK!



LX3520DTN

- 34.9 Gross HP; 4-Cycle Kubota Diesel Engine
- 3-Range Hydrostatic (HST) Transmission • Standard Rear PTO
- Performance-Matched Implements Available



KX057-5

- 47.6 Gross HP+ Kubota Diesel Engine • New Keyless Start
- Optional Rearview Camera • Optional Hydraulic Angle Blade
- Improved A/C System

\$0 DOWN, 0% APR FINANCING AVAILABLE ON SELECT NEW KUBOTAS!



MCMINNVILLE
2700 ST. JOSEPH RD.
MCMINNVILLE, OR
(503) 435-2700

HUBBARD
19658 HWY. 99 E.
HUBBARD, OR
(971) 216-0111

LINN BENTON
33599 HWY 99 E.
TANGENT, OR
(541) 926-1811



1-866-385-9073 • orequipmentsales.com



\$0 Down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 36 months on purchases of select new Kubota BX23S and KX040-5 Series equipment from participating dealers in stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A.; subject to credit approval. Example: 36 monthly payments of \$27.78 per \$1,000 financed. Some exceptions apply. Terms subject to change. Offers expire 09/30/2025. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For more information, see Dealer or go to KubotaUSA.com.† For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer and the product operator's manual. Power (HP/KW) and other specifications are based on various standards or recommended practices. K1042-21-152614-4

You ain't seen nothin' yet

It's early in the morning when I pull into Kraemer's Nursery in Mt. Angel.

It's peaceful, not unlike the abbey just a few miles up the road, but as I get closer to the center of the nursery, things begin to wake up.

First, a forklift. Then a crew loading a trailer. An irrigator making her rounds. Then the welcoming smile of Skye Cuevas-Arevalo, logistics coordinator, and my tour guide for the morning.

Skye has been with Kraemer's since 2022 and has quickly risen through the ranks. What strikes you is not just her cheery demeanor, but also the warmth and respect she shows to her coworkers.

Skye is excited to tell me about some of the improvements the team has made, starting with the use of their moving forks. Imagine a fork with 14 tines. Each tine is precisely spaced to carry a row of gallon pots.

Prior to this invention, all the moving was done by hand and a team of 11 people. Fifteen days of bending over with pots all day long, moving 100,000 or more boxwoods. The improvement "started as a way to make potting more ergonomic," Skye explains. "But we ended up seeing productivity gains in the transportation of the pots."

Now the work of 11 can be accomplished by four people, with fewer touches and most importantly, less bending over.

As we walk the nursery, Skye introduces me to Tristan Wampole, an account manager at Kraemer's. He shows me a grid of 1" x 1" wood screwed together. At the time the moving forks were first implemented, he noticed that it was challenging to keep the pots spaced on the trailer. He raced off to the maintenance shed on his lunch break, emerging with this grid of wood. The lift driver could deposit a load of potted plants onto the grid, maintaining exact spacing for the next driver to unload.

Tristan recalls that afternoon when the team immediately asked, "Can you



From left: Skye Cuevas-Arevalo, Ben Verhoeven and Tristan Wampole at Kraemer's Nursery. PHOTO BY JOSUE RAMIREZ

make 40 more?" Fast forward a few years, and they have replaced Tristan's early wooden batch with metal grids, but a few of the originals still exist — enduring reminders of creativity over capital.

"Employees tend to have some of the best creative minds," Skye says. She reiterates that these tools were "built to help the employees. From that we found other uses for them." Now they have banks of color-coded forks and matching grids to accommodate many different size pots. Tristan explains the colors "make it so somebody brand new can do it right the first time."

As I bid farewell to my hosts, the most important lessons I take from my visit are that if you make someone's job physically easier, productivity will follow. Skye and Tristan's enthusiasm is a good reminder that when you let people harness their creativity, there is no end in sight. Skye smiles and says, "We're not done yet!" I couldn't have said it better myself. ©



29751 S.W. Town Center Loop West
Wilsonville, OR 97070

PH 503-682-5089 PORTLAND
PH 888-283-7219 NATIONWIDE
FAX 503-682-5099 MAIN OFFICE
FAX 503-682-5727 PUBLICATIONS
info@oan.org EMAIL
www.oan.org OAN WEBSITE
www.diggermagazine.com DIGGER WEBSITE

STAFF

Jeff Stone JStone@OAN.org
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 503-582-2003

Tess Chapman TChapman@OAN.org
MARKETING COORDINATOR 503-582-2004

Stephanie Collins SCollins@OAN.org
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION 503-582-2001

Beth Farmer BFarmer@OAN.org
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES 503-582-2013

Curt Kipp CKipp@OAN.org
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS 503-582-2008

Tana Klum TKlum@OAN.org
OFFICE COORDINATOR 503-582-2012

Jamie Moore JMoore@OAN.org
EVENTS AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR 503-582-2010

Vacant
DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Vic Panichkul VPanichkul@OAN.org
PUBLICATIONS MANAGER 503-582-2009

DIGGER

Curt Kipp CKipp@OAN.org
EDITOR & DISPLAY ADVERTISING 503-582-2008

Vic Panichkul VPanichkul@OAN.org
MANAGING EDITOR & ART DIRECTOR 503-582-2009

Tess Chapman TChapman@OAN.org
E-DIGGER PRODUCER 503-582-2004

Dr. Lloyd Nackley Lloyd.Nackley@OregonState.edu
GROWING KNOWLEDGE SERIES COORDINATOR Oregon State University

Jon Bell, Mike Darcy, Erica Browne Grivas, Emily Hoard, Mitch Lies, Kym Pokorny, Debbie Teashon CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Copyright © 2025 by the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN). *Digger* magazine is an official publication and a member service of the Oregon Association of Nurseries, 29751 S.W. Town Center Loop W., Wilsonville, OR 97070.

REPRINTS AND SUBMISSIONS *Digger* allows reprinting of material with written permission; requests should be directed to the editor. We are not responsible for unsolicited freelance manuscripts and photographs. Contact the editor for contribution information.

SUBSCRIPTION AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS Circulation is controlled. Domestic subscriptions are complimentary to qualified U.S. nursery industry members. Non-qualified U.S. subscriptions are \$42. Qualified foreign subscriptions are \$35 to Canada; \$45 to Mexico; and \$80 for all other countries. Single copy rate is \$6 while supplies last. Notify OAN Publications of change of address. Please allow 3-4 weeks for address change.

Postmaster: Change of address correction requested to above address.

ADVERTISING Contact OAN Publications at ads@oan.org for display and classified advertising rates. Deadlines are the 1st of the month preceding the month of publication.

**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
- Vacant**
CONTAINER GROWER
- 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

No has visto nada todavía

Es temprano por la mañana cuando llego al vivero Kraemer's en Mt. Angel.

Es un lugar tranquilo, similar a la iglesia a solo unos kilómetros, pero a medida que me acerco al centro del vivero, todo empieza a despertar.

Primero, un forklift. Luego, un equipo cargando un remolque. Una irrigadora haciendo su ronda. Luego, la sonrisa acogedora de Skye Cuevas-Arévalo, coordinadora de logística y mi guía turística de la mañana.

Skye lleva en Kraemer's desde 2022 y ha ascendido rápidamente. Lo que llama la atención no es solo su actitud alegre, sino también la calidez y el respeto que muestra a sus compañeros de trabajo.

Skye se complace en contarme algunas de las mejoras que ha implementado el equipo, empezando por el uso de sus tenedores móviles. Imaginen un tenedor con 14 dientes, cada uno con la separación precisa necesaria para transportar una hilera de macetas de un galón.

Antes de este invento, todo el movimiento se hacía a mano con un equipo de 11 personas. Quince días agachados moviendo macetas todo el día, moviendo 100,000 o más boxwoods. La mejora "empezó como una forma de hacer que el trabajo en macetas fuera más ergonómico", explica Skye. "Pero terminamos viendo mejoras de productividad en el transporte de las macetas".

Ahora, el trabajo de 11 personas puede ser realizado por 4, con menos toques y, lo más importante, agachándose menos.

Mientras recorrimos el vivero, Skye me presenta a Tristan Wampole, gerente de cuentas de Kraemer's. Me muestra una rejilla de madera de 2,5 x 2,5 cm atornillada. Al instalar el tenedor, notó que era difícil mantener la separación entre las macetas en el remolque. Corrió al almacén de mantenimiento durante su hora de almuerzo y salió con esta rejilla de madera. El conductor del forklift podía depositar una carga de plantas en maceta sobre la rejilla, manteniendo la separación exacta para



De izquierda a derecha: Skye Cuevas-Arévalo, Ben Verhoeven y Tristan Wampole en Kraemer's Nursery. FOTOGRAFIA DE JOSUE RAMIREZ

que el siguiente conductor las descargara.

Tristan recuerda aquella tarde cuando el equipo preguntó de inmediato: "¿Pueden hacer 40 más?". Unos años después, reemplazaron el primer lote de madera de Tristan con rejillas metálicas, pero aún se conservan algunas de las originales, recordatorios perdurables de la creatividad por encima del capital.

"Los empleados suelen tener mentes muy creativas", dice Skye. Reitera que estas herramientas fueron "diseñadas para ayudar a los empleados. A partir de ahí, les encontramos otros usos". Ahora tienen estaciones de tenedores con códigos de colores y rejillas que coordinan para macetas de diferentes tamaños. Tristan explica que los colores "hacen que alguien nuevo pueda hacerlo bien a la primera".

Al despedirme de mis anfitriones, las lecciones más importantes que me llevo de mi visita son que si facilitas físicamente el trabajo de alguien, la productividad aumenta, y que el entusiasmo de Skye y Tristan es un buen recordatorio de que cuando se permite que la gente desarrolle su creatividad, no hay fin a la vista. Skye sonríe y dice: "¡Aún no hemos terminado!". No podría haberlo expresado mejor. ☺



Calendar

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

SEPTEMBER 5

NEXGEN CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

Have a fun time and get your game on at the second annual NexGen Cornhole Tournament Friday, September 5 from 5–8 p.m. at **Brentano's Tree Farm**, 5009 Davidson Road N.E. in St. Paul, Oregon. There will be hamburgers, sausages, sides, and drinks to keep you fueled and ready for the competition. There will also be prizes for the tournament winners, so be sure to bring your "A game." A big thank you to Brentano's Tree Farm for sponsoring this event. If you already have a tournament partner in mind, you can sign up as a team by indicating it on the RSVP form at TinyURL.com/CornholeNexGen, but don't fret if you don't have a partner figured out. Just sign yourself up and they will be sure to find you a match. All NexGen and OAN members are invited to the event.

SEPTEMBER 16

MOUNT HOOD HARVEST PARTY

Join the Oregon Association of Nurseries Mount Hood Chapter for its annual fall Harvest Party at J. Frank Schmidt Arboretum from 5–7 p.m. Tuesday, September 16. Cost is \$25 per person, children under 12 free. Food and drinks are included. Yard games will be provided and all are welcome. **J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.** is located at 9500 S.E. 327th Ave. in Boring, Oregon. For questions, contact Vladimir Lomen at VladimirL@JHNSY.com.

OCTOBER 4

PLANTFEST

The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon's popular annual PlantFest event returns 10 a.m. –2:30 p.m. Saturday, October 4, to Clackamas Community College, 19600 Molalla Avenue, Oregon City. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. This year's PlantFest welcomes Lisa Graff of Lux Perennials Nursery with her talk, *The Power of Fall Planting: Long-Blooming Perennials for Color from Spring to Fall*. Drawing on her lush, two-acre English-style garden, Lisa will showcase top-performing perennials known for their season-long blooms, sharing expert tips on planting, care, and design. Learn the benefits of fall planting, discover hardy and unique varieties, and get inspired to create a vibrant, low-maintenance garden that thrives from spring through fall. The speaker begins at 10 a.m. and the plant sale begins at 11:30 a.m. Attendees are invited to browse a curated selection of boutique nurseries and garden artists. Vendors include Black Dog Gardens & Nursery, Illahe Rare Plants, Lux Perennials Nursery, and Van Hevelingen Herb Nursery. Admission to lecture is \$5 for members, \$20 for non-members. No admission is required for the plant sale. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to HardyPlantSociety.org/PlantFest.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WAILA BEACH RESORT MARRIOTT

OCTOBER 29–31

2025 OAN CONVENTION IN HAWAII

Cue the sound track and rev up the Ferrari, it's time to join the Magnum P.I. (Plant Investigators) crew at the Oregon Association of Nurseries Convention in Maui, Hawaii, October 29–31 (Wednesday–Friday) at the Wailea Beach Resort Marriott. Leave your field work clothes and boots behind, dust off your aviator sunglasses and put on your Aloha shirts and sandals. We just hit 50+ All-Access Pass registrations – mahalo! To celebrate, we're dropping the All-Access Pass registration price to \$495. If you've been waiting to commit, now's the time to lock in your spot and save. Start your Maui mission with island cocktails and ocean views. Sharpen your skills and help steer the industry's future (no Ferrari required). Celebrate the individuals making a real impact in our industry and make lasting memories with ocean views, poolside networking, island sunsets, and great company. Register now at OAN.org/Convention25.

OCTOBER 7

IR-4 ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE WORKSHOP

Join IR-4 October 7–8 in Kansas City, Missouri, at the Crown Plaza Kansas City downtown hotel, for the IR-4 Environmental Horticulture Program's biennial priority-setting event. Together participants will help shape IR-4's ornamental pest management research priorities for the next 2 years. Early bird rate (until September 26) is \$400, regular rate is \$500. For more information or to register, go to TinyURL.com/WorkshopIR4.

OCTOBER 13–15

INTERNATIONAL PLANT TRIALING CONFERENCE

Join the International Plant Trialing Conference October 13–15 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota, near the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. There will be two full days of educational sessions covering ornamentals, edibles, trialing techniques and industry trends. More specialized breakout sessions will be targeted for both new and experienced plant trialers. Attendees will also be immersed with folks from around the world

who are doing the same thing you are doing – trialing plants. It's your opportunity to learn and share. This event got its beginnings in 2011 in the United Kingdom, followed up in 2013 with an event at Longwood Gardens. The last event was held in 2015 in conjunction with the Farwest Show in Portland, Oregon. For information or to register, go to TinyURL.com/PlantTrialingConf.

NOVEMBER 11–13

CORE PESTICIDE TRAINING

Need more CORE pesticide credits to renew your license before the end of the year? Oregonians for Food and Shelter is hosting classes during the Willamette Valley Ag Expo Tuesday through Thursday, November 11–13, in Albany, Oregon. These classes are designed to provide essential education and certification for pesticide application, ensuring best practices and safety in agricultural operations. Courses are complimentary with paid expo admission. The event is at the Linn County Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Road E. in Albany. Expo admission is \$5 at the door, and parking is free. ☺



Scott Palmer from Van Belle Youngplants (right) visits with Brad Sweeney from Total Energy Group at the Farwest Show. Palmer donned a bathrobe to promote Van Belle's new Bubble Bath™ Hardy Hydrangea. PHOTO BY CARLY CARPENTER

Excitement, optimism prevail at 2025 Farwest Show

BY VIC PANICHKUL

A palpable sense of excitement and optimism for the future prevailed at the 2025 Farwest Show in Portland, Oregon, as exhibitors put their best foot forward, forged new customer connections and strengthened existing relationships.

“This year’s Farwest Show had great energy and traffic on the show floor with more than 4,000 attendees and 326 exhibitors,” said OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone.

“It’s amazing that we had 60 first-time exhibitors this year,” said OAN Director of Finance and Administration Stephanie Collins.

One of the exhibitors this year was **T&L Nursery** (Redmond, Washington), which returned after a 10-year absence.

“We were so excited to be back with a booth at the show. It was wonderful



reconnecting with customers, checking out the amazing products from other vendors, and spending time with our peers in the industry,” said T&L Marketing and Communications Coordinator Anastasia Brondino. “A special shoutout to two members of our growing team, who attended two full days of seminars and are bringing back fresh ideas and insights to T&L. We’re grateful to be part of this special community and can’t wait to see what

the future holds for the show.”

James Szadek, who represented **Blooming Nursery** (Cornelius, Oregon), said the foot traffic at his booth was very good on opening day Wednesday, but he was surprised that it was equally good on the second day as well.

“It’s been a positive show for us,” said Szadek, who has been attending Farwest since 1999. “It’s been really exciting. We’ve had a lot of good interaction with existing customers and new customers. We made some great new contacts.”

For industry veteran Joshua LaPoint, owner of **Standard Nursery** (Lafayette, Oregon), it was his first time representing his own nursery instead of someone else’s.

“Coming as an owner instead of working for someone else definitely gives you a different spin on things,” he said. “It’s been awesome — definitely a positive show for us. I got to meet a bunch >>



There were 15 fantastic products showcased in the New Products Showcase at the Farwest Show. PHOTO BY CARLY CARPENTER

of new customers and vendors as well. They've got big product and different material that I don't have yet, but I want to bring to my customers."

"Farwest is an Oregon show but it's also a growers' show," LaPoint said. "So when you come here, it's all green. Everywhere you look, there's giant trees and amazing topiary. If I were a buyer, coming to Oregon for Farwest makes complete sense because all of the nurseries are geared up for tours, everyone's so close together, and I can see all of this plant material at the show."

Marissa Marshall, vice president of business development with **Growmentum** (Morgantown, West Virginia), was also impressed with how green the show was. "I was surprised to see so many plants," she said. "I've been to other shows across the country, and this seems like it's the greenest nursery industry trade show."

"This is more than 40 Farwest shows for us," said Jerry Simnitt, co-owner of **Simnitt Nursery LLC** (Canby, Oregon). "We've been coming for a long time. It's a good industry meetup. Lately it's a great meetup for our sales in the West, which is a bigger part of our portfolio. And the education seminars were great."

Another aspect that brings Simnitt back is he wants to show support for the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN).

"The association does so much good [for the industry] and this supports the association," he said. "That alone would be a good reason to keep coming back. But



Participants tour the Canapii autonomous greenhouse at GK Machine during the Automation Tour. PHOTO BY VIC PANICKUL

all of the conversations I have, all of the people I meet — local or far away — it's always a great event for us as a grower."

For the first time, the Oregon Association of Nurseries hosted a Climate Summit at Farwest. It was a two-day, comprehensive discussion of the role of the nursery and greenhouse industry in climate issues. Day 1 focused on science and data and Day 2 focused on policy. It included participants from Oregon Department of Agriculture and staffers from the offices of U.S. Reps. Andrea



Participants tour the Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery, one of the stops on the Wholesale Grower Tour. PHOTO BY CARLY CARPENTER

Salinas (D-Oregon 6th district) and Suzanne Bonamici (D-Oregon 1st district).

"The discussions were far-ranging and very productive," said OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone.

"The climate summit this year — which I got to be a part of — was a really terrific thing to move the ball forward on climate," said Simnitt.

For the first time in years, Farwest offered three pre-show tours on August 19, rather than the usual two.

An Automation Tour was added



**By
the
numbers**

- 4,000+ attendees
- 326 exhibitors
- 60 first-time exhibitors
- 46 states represented
- 15 countries represented
- 56 educational sessions
- 3 Tours (Wholesale, Retail, Automation)
- 52 years of Farwest tradition

to the Garden Center Retail Tour and Wholesale Grower Tour. The Wholesale and Automation tours were the first to sell out. With scarcity of labor and immigration enforcement concerns top of mind, interest in the Automation Tour was high.

Attendees got a broad overview of labor-saving mechanization and machines that provided more consistent products than human hands could at **GK Machine, Brentano's Tree Farm, Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas, and Bountiful Farms.** At each nursery, owners highlighted how automation allowed them to shift labor to work that was more rewarding, more satisfying, and less physically strenuous and letting the machines do the backbreaking tasks.

"People were really blown away by the Automation Tour and the Wholesale Grower Tour this year," said Events and Education Coordinator Jamie Moore. "I think the fully automated Canopii smart greenhouse at GK Machine blew a lot of

minds. People were also struck by the beautiful surroundings as much as the amazing trees, shrubs and plant material they saw at the Wholesale Grower Tour that focused on nurseries in the Boring, Oregon, area:

Don Marjama Nursery Co., Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery Inc., J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. and John Holmlund Nursery LLC. Plus there was a nice social aspect to end the tour when Holmlund provided a closing cocktail time.

As the show wrapped up on Friday, one comment from Adam Queen, who represented Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, Tennessee, perhaps summed up the show best.

"As the Farwest Show comes to a close, I'm left with a thousand thoughts and ideas spinning in my head," Queen said. "This trip has been truly special. I even had the chance to spend an afternoon at Cistus Nursery connecting with local plant folk and embracing the spirit of

'zonal denial' (or maybe just a bit of social avoidance — hard to say which came first).

"The opportunity to meet industry giants and plantsmen extraordinaire while getting a glimpse into Oregon's thriving greenhouse and nursery scene has been invaluable. I hope to bring a piece of that inspiration back home and let it take root."

Organizers were pleased with how the show turned out and are anticipating what the future brings.

"We're definitely looking forward to building on the momentum of this year's show," Stone said. "We plan on making the 2026 Farwest Show even more successful and plant many, many more inspiring ideas." ©

Vic Panichkul is publications manager at the Oregon Association of Nurseries and managing editor and art director for Digger. Contact him at 503-582-2009 or VPanichkul@OAN.org.

OUTSTANDING VALUE

GROWN IN THE HEART OF THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

*Blue Ribbon Attention
Expanded Ornamental Offerings
High Quality Nursery Stock
YOU CAN COUNT ON US*

WillametteNurseries.com

WILLAMETTE NURSERIES Inc.
Canby, Oregon

Quality Bark at Wholesale Prices

Fir and Hemlock Bark • Sawdust Compost • Hog Fuel • Fines Rock, Chips, Bark Rock

Marr Bros. Bark has been serving the area with quality products and competitive pricing for over 30 years. And we deliver anywhere in the Willamette Valley!

When you want the best ... Marr Bros. is your only choice!

Call 503-838-1830 to schedule a delivery

Conveniently located at:
875 S. Pacific Hwy, Monmouth, Ore.

Marr Bros. Bark



Ruby Ruffle® Patio Peach (*Prunus persica* Ruby Ruffle®). PHOTO COURTESY OF ALPHA NURSERY



Dahlia Venti™ Fireburst. PHOTO COURTESY OF BALL SEED



Centaurea Silver Swirl (*Centaurea ragusina* Silver Swirl). PHOTO COURTESY OF BALL SEED



Edge of Night Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Edge of Night'). PHOTO COURTESY OF ISELI NURSERY



Helleborus Winter Moonbeam (*Helleborus* hybrid 'Winter Moonbeam' PP21062). PHOTO COURTESY OF MERIDIAN YOUNG PLANTS



Pink Spike Snakeroot (*Actaea simplex* 'Pink Spike'). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY

Dazzling plants, products garner Retailer's Choice Awards

BY VIC PANICHKUL

Every year, beautiful new plant introductions and dazzling new products vie for attention at the Farwest Show. This year, the best of the best were given Retailer's Choice Awards by a jury of volunteer garden retailers.

The awards were given August 21 at the Farwest Show in Portland, Oregon in a presentation emceed by Danny Summers, managing director of The Garden Center Group. Both live goods and hard goods were eligible.

The judges picked several plants with black/dark foliage colors, which could be indicative of a developing "goth garden" trend, Summers said. The same trend appeared at the Retailer's Choice Awards at Cultivate, he said.

The winners:

Ruby Ruffle® Patio Peach (*Prunus persica* Ruby Ruffle®), developed by the JC Raulston Arboretum at North Carolina State University, offered by **Alpha Nursery** (Salem, Oregon) and part

of the Star Roses & Plants Bloomables collection.

Dahlia Venti™ Fireburst, offered by **Ball Seed** (Chicago, Illinois).

Centaurea Silver Swirl (*Centaurea ragusina* Silver Swirl), offered by Ball Seed.

Edge of Night Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Edge of Night'), offered by **Iseli Nursery** (Boring, Oregon).

Winter Moonbeam Hellebore (*Helleborus* hybrid 'Winter Moonbeam' PP21062), offered by **Meridian Young Plants** (Lynden, Washington).

Pink Spike Snakeroot (*Actaea simplex* 'Pink Spike'), offered by **Monrovia Nursery Company** (Dayton, Oregon).

Dark Fire Montbretia (*Crocsmia* 'Dark Fire' PP35303), offered by Monrovia.

Growth Technology GT Focus range of plant fertilizers, offered by PlantHaul of Tustin, California.

Kodiak Jet Black® Diervilla (*Diervilla* 'SMNDSN' PPAF), offered by **Proven Winners** (DeKalb, Illinois).

Buddleia Moptop™ Fountain Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja*



Dark Fire Montbretia (*Crocsmia* 'Dark Fire' PP35303). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY



Growth Technology GT Focus range of plant fertilizers. PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL



Kodiak Jet Black® Diervilla (*Diervilla* 'SMNDSN' PPAF). PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVEN WINNERS



Buddleia Moptop™ Fountain Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja alternifolia* 'SMNBAB' PP36748, CPBRAJ). PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVEN WINNERS



Sweet Caroline Shadowstorm™ Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-034SCVPG' PPAF). PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVEN WINNERS



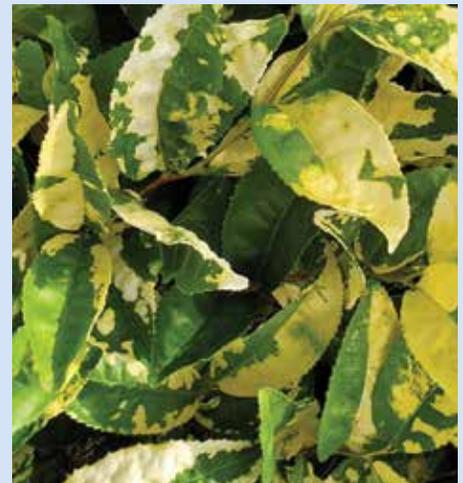
Funky Flow™ Mahonia (*Mahonia* hybrid 'NCMH1' PP34442). PHOTO COURTESY OF STAR ROSES AND PLANTS



SaucR leafed-shaped pot saucers. PHOTO COURTESY OF TRELEAF



MoonShadow™ Morello Hardy Hibiscus (*Hibiscus moscheutos* 'G191963' PPAF). PHOTO COURTESY OF VAN BELLE YOUNGPLANTS



Camelia sinensis 'Yellow Tea'. PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUNGBLOOD NURSERY

alternifolia 'SMNBAB' PP36748, CPBRAJ), offered by Proven Winners.

Sweet Caroline Shadowstorm™ Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-034SCVPG' PPAF), offered by Proven Winners.

Funky Flow™ Mahonia (*Mahonia* hybrid 'NCMH1' PP34442), offered by **Star Roses and Plants** (West Grove, Pennsylvania)

SaucR offered by **Treleaf** (Acworth, Georgia)

MoonShadow™ Morello Hardy Hibiscus (*Hibiscus moscheutos* 'G191963' PPAF), offered by **Van Belle Youngplants** (Abbotsford, British Columbia).

Camelia sinensis 'Yellow Tea', offered by **Youngblood Nursery** (Salem, Oregon). ©

Youngblood wins top booth honors

The spirit of camaraderie distinguishes the Oregon nursery industry from others, but the spirit of competition ruled the day at the Farwest Show, and it resulted in some creative booth displays.

Impartial, non-industry volunteer judges chose **Youngblood Nursery Inc.** (Booth #18049) in Salem, Oregon for the overall Ted Van Veen Best in Show booth award for 2025. This award comes with a free 10x10 booth space for the 2026 Farwest Show.

“The amount of creativity displayed by exhibitors this year was really exceptional,” said Stephanie Collins, director of finance and administration for the Oregon Association of Nurseries, which produces the show.

“It seemed like everywhere you turned there was a booth that caught your eye,” said Farwest Chair Mikaela Eaton, who works at **Eschenfelder Farms**.

Six exhibitors were chosen for best in division prizes, and three others were awarded Far From Ordinary booth awards for



Farwest Chair Mikaela Eaton (left) awards the Ted Van Veen Best in Show booth award for 2025 to Youngblood Nursery. Accepting was Troy Youngblood (right) and Mackenzie Allaert. PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

exceptional creativity. The Best of Division award winners included the following:

Growers:

- Best 10x10 Booth — **Blooming Nursery Inc.** of Cornelius, Oregon;
- Best 10x20 or Larger Row Booth — **Youngblood Nursery Inc.**; and
- Best Island Booth — **Bountiful Farms** of Woodburn, Oregon.

Service and Supply:

- Best 10x10 Booth — **Red Pig Garden Tools** of West Linn, Oregon;

- Best 10x20 or Larger Row Booth — Northwest Nursery Buyers Association (NNBA) of Welches, Oregon; and
- Best Island Booth — **RAYN Growing Systems** of Middleton, Wisconsin.

The show also recognized exhibitors who put extra creativity into their booths with three Far From Ordinary booth awards: **J&S Nursery Sales** of Newberg, Oregon; **The Pottery Patch** of West Palm Beach, Florida; and **Hopper Bros.** of Woodburn, Oregon. ©

BUILDERS OF HEAVY DUTY GREENHOUSES AND STRUCTURES

GET YOUR GREENHOUSE READY FOR FALL

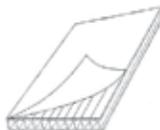


info@ovg.com * www.ovg.com
20357 Hwy 99E * Aurora, OR 97002



prices good thru 9/30/25

4' wide Clear 8mil Twin Wall
Poly Carbonate
\$1.75 per sq ft



4.25' wide Clear
Corrugated Poly Carbonate
\$1.10 per sq ft



Tufflite Poly Film many sizes in-stock from 10' to 56' wide



12' WIRE LOCK
base, wires
and screws
\$14.75



ALSO OFFERING
Poly
Poly Carbonate
Shade Cloth
Ground Cover
Wire Lock
Roll-Ups
Heaters
Exhaust Fans
Code Structures
Gutter Connects



People's Choice Best in Show

Alpenglow® Hybrid Maple (*Acer* × *sideboldianum* 'INAG-E61' PP35081) was voted as the People's Choice Best in Show winner. PHOTO COURTESY OF J FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO.



Judges' Choice Best in Show

Glow Sticks Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea* 'Glow Sticks' PP34648) was chosen unanimously as the Judges' Choice Best in Show winner. PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIGGS NURSERY.

Alpenglow, Glow Sticks shine in the New Varieties Showcase

Alpenglow® Hybrid Maple (*Acer* × *sideboldianum* 'INAG-E61' PP35081) and Glow Sticks Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea* 'Glow Sticks' PP34648) shone brightest in the 2025 Farwest Show New Varieties Showcase.

Alpenglow — a maple cross hybridized by Paul H. Halladin in Boring, Oregon and introduced by exhibitor **Iseli Nursery** (Boring, Oregon) — was voted as the People's Choice Best in Show winner.

Meanwhile, Glow Sticks — an ornamental fescue discovered by Jeremy Schmidt, introduced by Bristol Briar, submitted to the showcase by Concept Plants, and available at the show from exhibitor **Briggs Nursery** (Elma, Washington) — was chosen unanimously as the Judges' Choice Best in Show winner.

All in all, 33 outstanding new plant, shrub and tree selections were on display at Farwest and available from at least one exhibitor.

“New plant introductions are the lifeblood of the nursery industry, bringing forth new ideas, inspiration and even functionality,” said Jamie Moore, event coordinator for the Oregon Association of Nurseries, which produces the show. “Our judges were impressed with the quality and variety of new plants on display at Farwest. We are excited to see these new plants enter the marketplace and proud to play a role in making that happen.”

At Farwest, the voters and the judges each also selected three Award of Merit winners.

People's Choice Award of Merit winner — Sweet Caroline MEDUSA™ Black Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-033SCMP' PPAF, CPBRAFF) Hybridized by Craig Yencho and introduced by exhibitor **Proven Winners**.

People's Choice Award of Merit — Sweet Caroline



People's Choice Award of Merit winner was Sweet Caroline MEDUSA™ Black Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-033SCMP' PPAF, CPBRAFF). PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVEN WINNERS

Sweetheart SHADOWSTORM™ Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-034SCVPG' PPAF, CPBRAFF) — Hybridized by Craig Yencho and introduced by exhibitor Proven Winners.

People's Choice Award of Merit — Seaside Serenade®





Judges' Award of Merit winner was Daphne Perfume Princess White™ (*Daphne odora* 'Daplur2' PP30790). PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIGGS NURSERY



Judges' Award of Merit winner was Summerina Firana Black-Eyed Susan Echibecka (*Echinacea* × *Rudbeckia hybrida* 'ET RDB 751' PP34593). PHOTO COURTESY OF SMITH GARDENS



People's Choice Award of Merit winner was Sweet Caroline Sweetheart SHADOWSTORM™ Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-034SCVPG' PPAF, CPBRAFF). PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVEN WINNERS

Pebble Beach Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'SC-04-20' PPAF) — Hybridized by Dr. Michael Dirr and introduced by exhibitor **Monrovia Nursery Company**.

Judges' Award of Merit — Summerina Firana Black-Eyed Susan Echibecka (*Echinacea* × *Rudbeckia hybrida* 'ET RDB 751' PP34593 — Hybridized in the Netherlands by Bart Noordhuis of Exceptio B.V. and introduced by Exceptio B.V. Submitted by Pacific Plug & Liner and available from exhibitor **Smith Gardens**.

Judges' Award of Merit — Bubble Bath™ Hardy Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'HYLV19557' PPAF, CPBRAFF) — Hybridized in The Netherlands by Lendert de Vos, introduced by **Bloomin' Easy Plants Inc.**, submitted by Bloomin' Easy Plants Inc., and available from exhibitor **Van Belle Youngplants**.

Judges' Award of Merit — Daphne Perfume Princess White™ (*Daphne odora* 'Daplur2' PP30790) — Bred by Mark Jury and Anthony Tesselaar, introduced by Anthony Tesselaar Plants and submitted by and available from exhibitor Briggs Nursery.

Below is more info on the top two prize winners. Full plant descriptions and photos for all New Varieties Showcase plants are available online at **FarwestShow.com/NVS**, as well as listed on **NurseryGuide.com**.

Alpenglow is a red-leaved, upright hybrid maple that is hardy down to -30

F. In spring, merlot leaves dance on arching branches; translucent veins help them catch the light and glow. The deep red mellows to a burnished bronze in summer and finally turns to blazing orange and red in fall. A refined oval habit and sturdy branching make this a majestic centerpiece that you can rely on for a colorful show year after year.

The tree is a cross between *Acer palmatum* and *Acer pseudosieboldianum*. It originated from a tree breeding program started in 1997 with the goal of expanding the cold tolerance range of Japanese maple trees to include Zone 4. It grows to 15 feet wide by 20 feet tall and is hardy in USDA Zones 4a-8b.

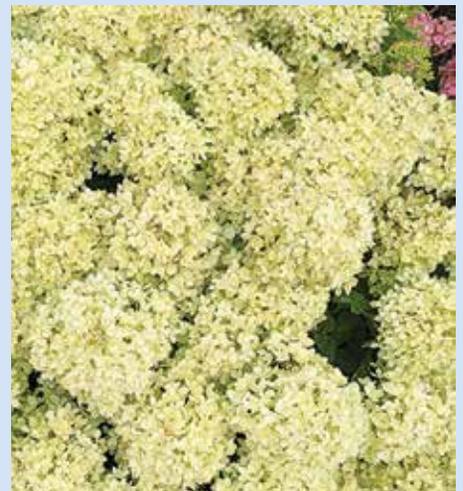
Glow Sticks forms a full, billowing mass of dramatic black, palm-shaped leaves. Compared to trailing cultivars, Sweet Caroline Medusa™ varieties have a more mounded shape with overlapping leaves, so they look more like a Boston fern than a long vine. However, they are just as heat tolerant and vigorous, thriving across North America in containers and landscapes where they won't need to be trimmed constantly to stay in bounds.

The grass grows to 30 inches wide by 12 inches tall, and is hardy to USDA Zones 11a-11b.

Farwest Show producers will begin to accept entries for the 2026 New Varieties Showcase after the first of the year. Watch for details. ©



People's Choice Award of Merit winner was Seaside Serenade® Pebble Beach Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'SC-04-20' PPAF). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY



Judges' Award of Merit winner was Bubble Bath™ Hardy Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'HYLV19557' PPAF, CPBRAFF). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY



Northwest News

OAN members and chapters are encouraged to send in relevant news items, such as new hires, new products, acquisitions, honors received and past or upcoming events. Email News@OAN.org.



Melvin Surface, founder of Surface Nursery. PHOTO COURTESY OF SURFACE NURSERY

Surface Nursery celebrates centennial

In 1925, Melvin Surface and his wife Dona bought 14 acres of prime nursery property in Gresham, Oregon and established **Surface Nursery**. This year, the nursery celebrates its centennial.

"In 1925, (Melvin) started with Mollis azalea seeds (*Rhododendron x kostermanum*)," said Shawn Nerison, vice president of Surface Nursery. "That was the first crop and it went from there."

Back then, horses were still used to prepare the ground for planting and bring in crops from the fields. Surface's son, Richard, was born on the original nursery site. In 1976 he bought the nursery from his father and continued to expand the business to 350 acres east of Gresham.

The nursery has grown from one farm to five, Nerison said. Melvin remained actively involved with the nursery until he passed away in July 1991. Richard then ran the business until his passing in 2009. Ownership of the nursery then passed on to his wife Debbie.

In the early days, the nursery specialized in evergreens. "Now all we grow is flowering and shade trees – bare root," Nerison said. "It's still family owned."

BAILEY NURSERIES NAMES FIRST NON-FAMILY CEO

Jorge Becerra has been appointed chief executive officer of **Bailey Nurseries** (St. Paul, Minnesota), replacing fourth-generation family member Terri McEnaney, who will transition from CEO to board chair.

The transition marks the company's move to its first-ever non-family CEO. It was driven by a shared vision to bring in complementary leadership that honors Bailey's roots while preparing it for the future, the company said in the announcement. The change was effective August 4.

"This moment is the result of years of planning to evolve our structure while continuing to support the Bailey Nurseries team, our customers and partners, and our core values," McEnaney said. "Jorge brings not only deep global experience in agriculture, but also a genuine curiosity, a people-first approach, and strong alignment with who we are and where we're going."

Bailey operates three Oregon nurseries — Yamhill, Dayton and Sauvie Island — as well as other nurseries in Minnesota, Washington, Illinois and Georgia.

Becerra grew up in Ecuador, where his father expanded the family business beyond cattle ranching to include one of the country's first commercial shrimp farms. He later earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in aquaculture from Texas A&M University.

He worked for 25 years at Cargill and held several leadership roles globally. Most recently, he served in leadership roles within Cargill's animal nutrition and health businesses.



Jorge Becerra is the new CEO of Bailey Nurseries. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES

USDA, ODA DEREGULATE PHYTOPHTHORA AUSTROCEDRI

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection Quarantine recently updated the official status of *Phytophthora austrocedri*, a plant pathogen, to non-quarantine.

USDA will no longer be regulating *P. austrocedri* domestically or at ports of entry. The agency said the genus *Phytophthora* is a quarantine genus and will remain as such, thereby

providing protection from potential impacts of these pathogens when the species is unknown.

In spring 2024, *P. austrocedri* — a plant pathogen newly detected in the continental United States — was identified in Oregon. This slow-growing, soilborne, fungal-like organism causes root rot and vascular dysfunction in several members of the *Cupressaceae* family and can lead to tree decline or death.

While the USDA officially deregulated *P. austrocedri*, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) will not pursue a state quarantine at this time. However, ODA strongly encourages nursery operators and industry partners to implement best management practices (BMPs) to reduce the spread of *Phytophthora* species, the department said in a statement.

Best management practices can be found in the Safe Procurement and Production Manual, published by the Oregon Association of Nurseries, which is available at OAN.org/page/861.

With federal funding support from the Plant Protection Act Section 7721 (PPA7721), ODA will conduct a statewide survey to assess the presence of *P. austrocedri* in Oregon nurseries. This project will involve:



Northwest News

- Sampling at 15 nurseries across five counties in the Willamette Valley.
- Collecting 20 samples per nursery from a range of potential host species.
- Evaluating possible symptoms of infection.

ODA is partnering with researchers from Oregon State University (OSU) to:

- Have all diagnostic work conducted by OSU Diagnostic Plant Clinic.
- Conduct host pathogenicity and fungicide trials.
- Refine and improve best management practices for *Phytophthora* spp.

If the pathogen is detected at a nursery, no regulatory actions will be taken. The sample results and associated information obtained will be considered confidential and intended solely for research purposes. However, as with any non-regulated plant health concern, ODA strongly recommends removing infested plant material and reviewing sanitation and management practices to mitigate spread of *Phytophthora*.

Nursery participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated. If you are interested in joining the survey effort or would like additional information, please contact: Kevin Bailey, Nursery and Christmas Tree Program manager, 503-508-6733, Kevin.F.Bailey@ODA.Oregon.gov.

BOX TREE MOTH SPREADS TO VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) recently announced the detection of box tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*) in four sites in Clarke and Loudoun counties, Virginia.

Within days of the announcement, the Maryland Department of Agriculture and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) confirmed box tree moth in a state park in Washington County, Maryland. This is the first detection of the destructive pest in both Virginia and Maryland.

VDACS said it will provide treatment for boxwood plants, if box tree moth is confirmed on boxwood plants. Maryland



The new detections of box tree moth in Virginia and Maryland bring the number of states infected by the pest to 19. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Park Service staff are removing and destroying the affected boxwoods that were found at Fort Frederick State Park as a way to prevent the spread of this invasive pest.

The box tree moth (BTM), a federally regulated insect, is a destructive pest of boxwoods, feeding primarily on them. BTM was first found in the United States in New York in 2021 and has rapidly spread with populations found in Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

“This expands BTM infested states from 17 to 19,” OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone said. “Currently, there is no national quarantine against BTM. However, USDA does place localized quarantines on counties where BTM is found and infested nurseries are required to enter compliance agreements, which require inspection and treatments.”

NEW DETECTIONS OF SUDDEN OAK DEATH IN OREGON

The U.S. Forest Service provided an update on sudden oak death (SOD) in Oregon recently to a working group comprised of scientists, Oregon Department of Forestry officials, Oregon Department of Agriculture officials and Oregon Association of Nurseries.

There are new detections outside of the quarantine zone areas. Bureau of Land Management, private landowners, ODF and USFS are worried about the Elk River area as sudden oak death makes it way towards Port Orford. These areas on the

Oregon Coast are still hundreds of miles away from prime nursery production areas in the Willamette Valley.

State Sen. David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford) was not successful in obtaining additional funds to fight SOD during the legislative session, but will work toward funding during the September emergency board meeting. (The Oregon Association of Nurseries will also be seeking funds to fight the Japanese beetle during that time).

U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) reports that \$1.5 million has been secured for SOD survey and detection work. Out of that amount, \$1.1 million will go to the ODF.

AMERICANHORT MEMBERS ELECT NEW BOARD

The new slate of AmericanHort board officers for 2025–26 includes Ken Fullmer of Fullmer’s Landscaping (Ohio) as the incoming board chair and Derek Clark of South Central Growers (Tennessee) as the board vice chair. Ed Overdevest of Overdevest Nurseries (New Jersey) will become immediate past chair, and J. Harvey Cottin will continue to serve as treasurer in a non-voting position. Other new board members include Scott Valentine of Express Seed Company (Ohio), Bradd Yoder of Star Roses and Plants (Pennsylvania), Patricia Dean of Wadsworth Control Systems (Colorado) and Joe Allio of Petitti Family Farms (Ohio).

Current board members include Tom Fessler of **Woodburn Nursery &**



Azaleas (Oregon), Brian Lloyd of Olsen's Greenhouses (Utah), Emily Showalter of Willoway Nurseries (Ohio), Ken Altman of Altman Specialty Plants (California) and Christine Fortman of Berridge Nursery (Arizona).

OREGON NURSERIES AMONG 2025 TOP 100 INDEPENDENT GARDEN CENTERS

Portland Nursery (No. 19), Cornell Farms (No. 47) and **Farmington Gardens** (No. 82) are the Oregon nurseries among *Garden Center* magazine's 2025 Top 100 Independent Garden Centers List.

The list is based on the garden centers' 2024 retail revenue for the single largest or flagship location as reported by garden centers in North America.

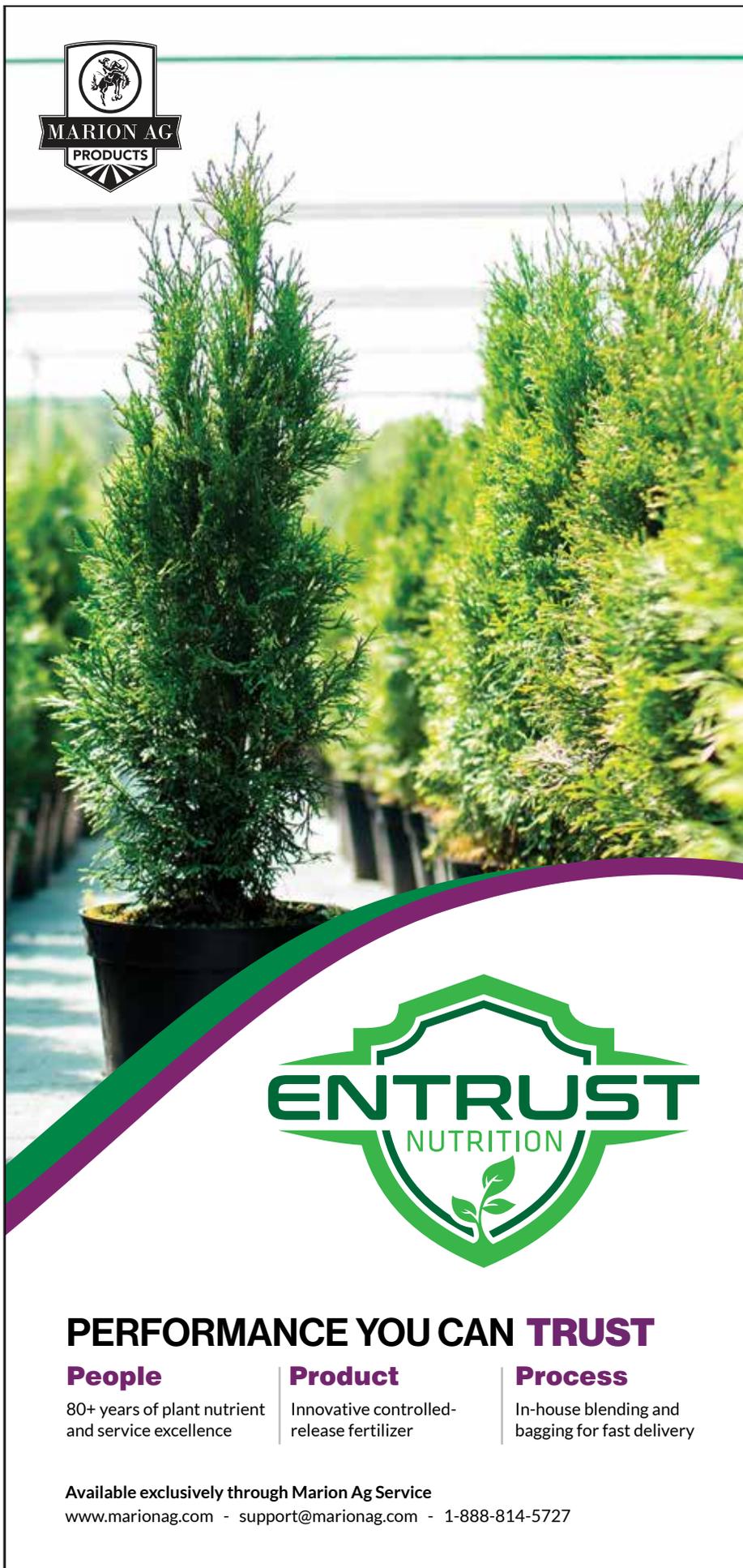
AMANDA STAEHELY, ANDREA AVILA-ARAGON NAMED TO HRI LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Horticultural Research Institute has announced the HRI Leadership Academy Class of 2026 and OAN members Amada Staehely (**Columbia Nursery**, Canby, Oregon) and Andrea Avila-Aragon (**Smith Gardens**, Aurora, Oregon) are among the 10 participants.

The HRI Leadership Academy is a business and leadership program that guides participants through a concentrated curriculum designed to develop the skills the green industry needs to perform better, grow faster, and prepare for the future.

Leigh Geschwill (**F&B Farms and Nursery**, Woodburn, Oregon) is the immediate past president HRI and the inaugural class of the HRI Leadership Academy in 2023 included Kyle Fessler (**Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc.**, Woodburn) and Jonathan Jasinski (**Microplant Nurseries Inc.**, Gervais, Oregon). Crystal Cady (**Northwest Nursery Buyers Association**, Welches, Oregon) was in the class of 2025.

Other members of the class of 2026: Fred Higgenbotham (Millcreek Gardens LLC, Millcreek, Utah), Tom Hughes (Hughes Nursery & Landscaping, >>



PERFORMANCE YOU CAN TRUST

People

80+ years of plant nutrient and service excellence

Product

Innovative controlled-release fertilizer

Process

In-house blending and bagging for fast delivery

Available exclusively through Marion Ag Service

www.marionag.com - support@marionag.com - 1-888-814-5727

Cedar Rapids, Iowa), Colin Jones (Manor View Farm, Monkton, Maryland), Kaitlyn Larson (Larson's Garden Center, Burlington, Connecticut), Rebecca Lusk (Dummen Orange/Vaughan's, New Windsor, Maryland), Emily Mason (Syngenta Flowers, Gilroy, California), Hilliary Metzger (Home Nursery, Albers, Illinois), and Leland Toering (Ball Flora Plant, Arroyo Grande, California).

Announcements

BAILEY APPOINTS NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Amanda Flint has been appointed as the new product development manager at **Bailey Nurseries** (St. Paul, Minnesota). Flint joins Bailey with over a decade of product leadership in the industry. Flint will be responsible for breeder relations

globally, product trialing, and go-to-market planning for Bailey Intellectual Property. This includes genetics targeted for Bailey

Consumer Brands Endless Summer® Hydrangeas, First Editions® Shrubs & Trees, and Easy Elegance® Roses.

This leadership change comes as Debbie Lonnee, who had led the team for over 30 years, prepares for her retirement at the end of 2025. To support a smooth transition, Lonnee has moved into the role of senior product developer where she will share valuable insights, relationships, and decades of experience with Flint and the team.



Amanda Flint

ENVU APPOINTS NEW HEAD OF U.S. TURF & ORNAMENTALS UNIT

Jeff Kwiatkowski has joined **Envu** to lead the U.S. Turf & Ornamentals business and support the North America leadership team, the company said in an announcement.

Kwiatkowski brings more than 20 years of strategic focus on sales and commercial operations leadership in the green industry. Prior to joining Envu, he served as president at a small privately held company. He spent 23 years at Scotts Miracle-Gro



Jeff Kwiatkowski

The best cedar boxes and trellis options in the industry.

Bowers Forest Products has been manufacturing and supplying the best cedar boxes to the nursery industry for over 20 years. Our quality and service has been proven over time. Visit bowersforestproducts.com and woodwayproducts.com today.

Other products we manufacture:
Nursery Boxes • Shipping Dunnage • Stakes
Lath • Gate Material • Tilt Stickers • Lattice • Trellis
Post Caps • Balusters • Fence Toppers

BOWERS
FOREST PRODUCTS

WOODWAY

info@bowersfp.com | (503) 631-4408

First Class Customer Service with Integrity

where he led multiple business units in the Americas and Europe.

RIMOL GREENHOUSE SYSTEMS APPOINTS NEW SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER

Bill Rowohit has been named special projects manager, joining an expanded sales team at **Rimol Greenhouse Systems** in Hooksett, New Hampshire.

Rowohit has worked for two greenhouse manufacturers and one of the largest horticultural suppliers.



Bill Rowohit

In memoriam

BILL VAN BELLE

The Oregon Association of Nursery is saddened to report that **Van Belle Nursery** founder Bill Van Belle passed away in Abbotsford, B.C., Canada on July 5.

Even in the last few weeks before Van Belle passed away, his passion for plants and the thrill of being part of the nursery industry was as strong as ever, the nursery said in a tribute to him on its website. In between his treatments for the cancer that eventually won



Bill Van Belle

out, he would feel strong enough to tour around the nursery by car or in his golf cart, still marveling at the magic of plants rooting out in early spring. “It still gives me a thrill,” he would say. After reading a trip report from a Van Belle staff member talking about long travel days, diner food and the promising grower visits, he commented, “it still makes my adrenalin rush!”

He lived out that passion for more than 50 years since founding Van Belle Nursery with his wife Grace in 1973. And that passion helped create a thriving business with a North American wide reach and a team of hundreds of industry professionals continuing to build the business, fueled by their own passion and wits. A fulfillment of Bill’s dream.

Bill was born March 2, 1945 and was 80 years old. Grace, his wife of 55 years, passed away in February 2025. >>



Our team of experts are committed consultants that deliver next level results.

We provide a full line of superior products and solutions all designed to grow vibrant plants that are second to none.

Contact your Simplot Turf & Horticulture representative to learn more, or visit us at www.th.simplot.com

Call our new Hubbard office number (971) 361-2934

Thank you for your continued support.





ALPHA
NURSERY



AT ALPHA... WE BUILT OUR BUSINESS BY TAKING THE TIME TO KNOW OUR CUSTOMERS AND THEIR NEEDS. ALL OF US APPRECIATE YOUR BUSINESS AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED LOYALTY. CALL US AT 800.293.1286, OR COME VISIT AND LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN SERVE YOU.

5050 HAZEL GREEN RD. NE • SALEM, OR 97305
WWW.ALPHANURSERY.COM

Northwest News

JIM YOUNGSMAN

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to report the passing of Jim Youngsman, the founder of Skagit Gardens. Youngsman passed away peacefully on July 18 at the age of 87.



Jim Youngsman

Youngsman founded Skagit Gardens in Mount Vernon, Washington, which primarily sold bedding plants and perennials to retail garden centers, landscapers and wholesale growers in the U.S. and Canada, according to his obituary.

Skagit Gardens grew over the years to become one of the most successful wholesale greenhouse operations in the United States. Jim attributed his company's success to his wonderful employees, customers and suppliers. When Jim and Ruth sold Skagit Gardens in 1998, the business encompassed over 11 acres of greenhouses and 38 acres of open field and had upwards of 250 employees in the peak season. Skagit closed in 2024 and was sold to Smith Gardens.

VERNON JOHNSON

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to report that **Johnson Brothers Garden Center** announced on its Facebook page that founder Vernon Johnson had passed away after his courageous battle with cancer, surrounded by his loved ones at home. "Vern leaves behind a lasting legacy of inspiring garden living and a life rooted in faith and family," the garden center said. ©



Vernon Johnson

HORTICULTURAL PUMICE

Quality Pumice for all your Potting Soil Requirements

- Added Drainage
- Increased Yields
- Promotes Root Health
- 3/8" - 1/16"
- 3/8" - 1/4"
- 3/8" Minus
- 1/4" Minus

(Additional Sizes Available!)

SUPER SACKS/TOTES. SEMI. RAIL...
WE DELIVER!



Delivery available throughout North America - 7 days a week!

(458) 205-8749 - Direct
(888) 345-9085 - Main Office
lfdispatch@laneforest.com



LANE
FOREST PRODUCTS

The company to grow with

laneforest.com



Double duty

Foodscaping incorporates edibles into ornamental landscapes

The foodscaping trend grew out of the necessity for homeowners to make the most out of small home lot sizes. PHOTO BY BRIE ARTHUR

BY EMILY HOARD

Stephanie Mack, the yard buyer at retailer **Portland Nursery** in Portland, Oregon since 2003, was inspired by her grandparents' vegetable garden when she was growing up.

"I remember there being garlic and onions planted in the ornamental beds and a sunflower hedge next to the driveway growing up," Mack said. "In my own garden, I love incorporating food crops into the landscape and in containers. I don't love to eat eggplant, but their flowers are so pretty that I often add them to summer containers. I often tuck gorgeous lettuces into tight spots and use gold marjoram as a groundcover."

This concept of incorporating edible plants into ornamentals is known as foodscaping. It's of interest not just to consumers, but the retailers and growers who serve them.

Dealing with HOAs

Brie Arthur, a gardening expert and author, studied landscape design and horticulture at Purdue University. When she bought her first house that came with foundational landscape beds on the property, she began to grow vegetables and ran into difficulties with her new homeowners' association.

"It was through that process of trying to avoid getting fined and not making my neighbors angry that I joined the HOA board," Arthur said. "My argument was simple: If you integrate vegetables with ornamental plants like hydrangeas, camellias and daylilies, you can compensate for the seasonality of what vegetables provide."

She began advocating for other individual gardeners too, becoming their representative and helping them navigate their own HOAs so they could grow vegetables mixed with ornamentals. ➤

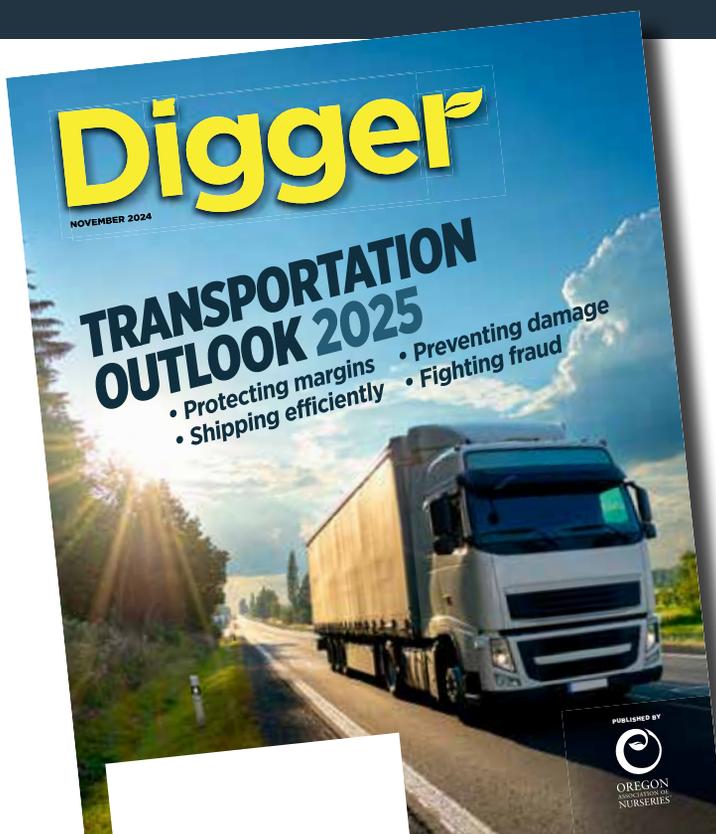


Herbs like basil can be easily tucked into flower beds and their blooms contribute to the beauty of the beds. PHOTO BY ALANNA LAMBERT



Taller vegetables like this heirloom tomato can be tucked in the back with shrubs. PHOTO BY BRIE ARTHUR

SPECIAL ISSUE: All about transportation



Advertise in the November 2025 Transportation Issue

Looking ahead to 2026, this special issue covers the latest developments in moving plants around the nursery and shipping them to market. Place your brand where it will be noticed!

Reserve your display ad by
October 1

Contact:

Curt Kipp, Director of Publications

CKipp@OAN.org

503-582-2008

www.OAN.org/Ads



Even in patio gardens, herbs can be combined with annuals and perennials in pots. PHOTO BY ALANNA LAMBERT

A natural fit for landscapes

Alanna Lambert said the nursery she manages, **Durant at Red Ridge Farms** in Dayton, Oregon, has grown and sold lavender and herbs since opening over 20 years ago. The farm has leaned into carrying Pacific Northwest hardy olive trees the past several years.

“Foodscaping has come naturally just in the nature of the plants we offer,” Lambert said.

“I’ve always liked working in the garden growing my own crops, especially tomatoes,” said Henry Wilhoit, manager of retailer **Farmington Gardens** in Beaverton, Oregon, who is a third-generation filbert farmer. “During Covid, I learned more about how to do it.”

He experimented with adding native shrubs into his vegetable garden.

Peter Eastman has been an avid gardener, including edibles, for 50 years, starting in his parents’ garden and then in his own. He is the tree and shrub buyer for **Al’s Garden & Home** in Woodburn, Oregon.

“I personally have incorporated fruit trees, fruiting vines and edible shrubs into my landscapes along with having a dedicated ‘vegetable garden’ for food produc-

tion,” he said.

Recommended plants

“Foodscaping is about taking advantage of the best plants of all categories and growing them together in a way that matches your lifestyle needs,” Arthur said. She recommends growing what you like to cook.

“Growing your own potatoes is a really easy process,” Arthur said. “If you grow them in containers, harvesting is much easier.” She suggested growing ten 7-gallon pots of potatoes, which will produce up to six months’ worth of potatoes.

“Garlic is another really easy crop to grow, and the advantage is that animals don’t like the smell. You can harvest a lot so you don’t have to buy it,” Arthur said. “Grow it along bed edges, because it’s not taking up space anyway. In a 10-foot long bed, you can grow enough garlic to have a clove a day for four months.”

Mack recommended growing heat-tolerant plants as a response to climate change.

“Figs and mulberries are low maintenance fruit trees that don’t mind the heat,” Mack said. “Artichokes are beautiful and very dramatic in a garden. Goumi berries have fragrant flowers and produce fruit >>

YEAR ROUND AVAILABILITY

Loen Nursery

Wholesale Growers & Suppliers of High Quality Plants for over 35 Years

One Stop Shop

2,000+ varieties.
Delivery throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho
(26'-48' trucks)

QUALITY PLANT MATERIAL

- Japanese maples: 80+ varieties
- Shade & flowering: 20,000 in prod.
- Fruit trees: 10,000 in prod.
- Perennials, ferns and grasses
- Broadleaf and deciduous shrubs
- Roses: Shrub, groundcover
- Conifers: Grafted, seedling
- Groundcovers
- Rhododendrons and Azaleas
- Natives and vines
- Berries: Blueberry, Logan, Raspberry
- Contract growing
- Yes, we have it!
- And yes, we can find it for you!

CONTAINER-GROWN AND CONTAINER-ESTABLISHED PREFERRED

Let us quote your COMPLETE plant list.

Wholesale Sales/Growing Facilities
(Real people will answer your call)

503-982-6300

Woodburn, OR

Local Contractor's Yard

503-625-5454

Sherwood, OR

www.loennursery.com



Various varieties of lettuce can add texture and color to flower beds in addition to being edible. PHOTO BY BY NTDANAI

that when ripe are sweet and yummy.”

She also suggested Sunshine Blue blueberry (*Vaccinium* ‘Sunshine Blue’ Southern Highbush), which is a small heat-resistant variety.

Wilhoit is a fan of growing herbs, including sage, oregano and bay laurel.

“Lavender and rosemary are great additions to any garden and they’re deer resistant and grow beautifully,” Wilhoit said. “You can get varieties that are low growing or a variety of creeping rosemary for a cascading effect.”

For families with small children, he sug-

gested adding strawberries into a garden.

“It’s a good way to get them excited and pass on the love of gardening to a new generation,” Wilhoit said.

Edimentals

Lambert said she recommends using “edimentals,” or plants that are both edible and ornamental.

She listed some of her favorite edible landscape varieties with ornamental characteristics, including Negronne (*Ficus carica* ‘Negronne’) and Black Spanish (*F.c.* ‘Black Spanish’) figs; Picual

(*Olea europaea* ‘Picual’), Boutellian (*O.e.* ‘Boutellian’) and Empletre (*O.e.* ‘Empletre’) olive trees; and blueberries like *Vaccinium* ‘Pink Lemonade’ and Cabernet Splash™ (*Vaccinium corymbosum* ‘VacBri1’). Lambert also suggested pomegranates *Punica granatam* ‘Wonderful’ and *P.g.* ‘Favorite.’

“Chilean guava [*Ugni molinae*] and pineapple guava [*Feijoa sellowiana*] are great options for shrubs and herbs that have interesting foliage and flowers like sage, thyme and oregano work well for any perennial needs in the landscape,”



Lambert said. “It is always fun to eat your yard, isn’t it?”

Eastman said edible trees, shrubs and vines also add both beauty and a great food source. Modern fruit trees come in a variety of sizes to fit different sized landscapes.

Eastman said blueberries are the number one selling edible shrub, but he also recommended huckleberries, currant and gooseberries.

“Semi-dwarf trees grow larger and are great for someone looking for a large orchard and maximum production where space is not an issue,” Eastman said.

“Dwarf trees work well in gardens where

space is limited.”

“Caneberries like raspberries and blackberries can also be grown in the average garden but do need some additional requirements like wire trellising or other supports along with specific pruning, depending on the variety,” Eastman said.

Compact gardens

The foodscaping concept works well in small home lot sizes or apartments that don’t have the space for a dedicated vegetable plot.

“The trend grew out of this conundrum of how to make the most of the

space a person has, especially renters who aren’t able to control a yard in a way they would like to,” Mack said.

“Any amount of space you have, you can incorporate fruit and vegetables and take advantage of the square footage,” Arthur said. “And containers are the solution to absolutely everything.”

Fruit trees can be trained to grow in a flat two-dimensional pattern against a fence or wall in a growth habit known as espalier.

Wilhoit said espalier takes a bit of planning and it’s helpful to start the process on a younger plant.

“It’s better to start with a smaller >>

Tired of dealing with irrigation wires? Want to get rid of them?

Retrofit to wireless

- ✓ Use any 24V valves & controllers
- ✓ Connect it all with NO wires
- ✓ Works long distance
(measured in miles) via free radio



866-248-2521 (866-AIVAKA-1)
Aivaka.com



**OREGON
NURSERIES
FOUNDATION**

*Your contribution
today helps prepare
the nursery industry
leaders of tomorrow.*

Contact the Oregon Association of Nurseries for more information: 503-682-5089 or 888-283-7219.

The ONF is a nonprofit 503(c)3 corporation. Donations may be tax-deductible; consult a qualified tax attorney or accountant.



F&L LUMBER, INC
WHOLESALE LUMBER BROKERAGE



Specializing in Nursery Lumber Needs!

- **Tilt Sticks**
1x1-8' or cut to your length
2x2-8' or cut to your length
1x2-8' or cut to your length
- **Container/B&B Pallets**
- **Gates/Gate Boards**
1x4-8' or cut to your length
- **Tree Stakes**
- **Shipping Rack Kits**

Call Michelle at 503-803-1175
FLLUMBER@AOL.COM • WWW.FLLUMBER.COM

Where Great Customer Service is a Given!

We accept Credit Cards

Double duty

plant because it's easier to adapt to other conditions and less likely to fail," Wilhoit said.

"So many herbs and vegetables have interesting colors in their foliage that can echo colors picked in ornamental floral choices in seasonal plantings," Lambert said. "Thymes and sages with variegation can be used as edible foliage accents. Veggies like eggplant and some peppers are colorful themselves as well as have wonderful foliage. Many dwarf or 'container' veggie options are available on the market and more seem to become available every year."

Lambert said people with limited growing space can also use hanging baskets.

Dwarf varieties to go in smaller yards or containers include 'Fignominal' fig (*Ficus carica* 'Fignomenal'), 'Top Hat' blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*) and 'Parfianka' pomegranate (*Punica granatum* 'Parfianka').

Eastman added there are dwarf blueberries, figs, raspberries and blackberries, including a dwarf series from Bushel & Berry that are bred to grow in containers.

"One of the coolest new trends is growing super dwarf or 'genetic dwarf' fruit trees," Eastman said. Apples, cherries, nectarines and peaches all come in these super dwarf varieties.

The most important thing, Mack said, is to enjoy the experience and experimentation of foodscaping.

"I think growing food is really rewarding and everyone who can should try it."

It's a great way to get into gardening, Wilhoit said. Plus "when times are tougher, if you know how to grow food and take care of yourself, you're one step ahead." ©

Emily Hoard is an Oregon-based freelance journalist covering business, environmental and agricultural news. She has a background in community reporting and a master's degree in multimedia journalism. You can reach her at Hoarde123@Gmail.com.



A head start

Recipients say ONF scholarships helped launch their horticulture careers

Erika Willis grew up on the family farm, KG Farms Inc. in Woodburn, Oregon, so it's not surprising she decided on a career in horticulture. PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

BY VIC PANICHKUL

The stories may differ, but there's a common theme among five former Oregon Nurseries Foundation scholarship winners that *Digger* magazine caught up with. They all grew up on farms or nurseries, and scholarships helped them get through college, get their degrees and gave their careers a jump start by enabling them to graduate with less reliance on borrowing.

ONF has given 609 scholarships since its beginning, totaling just over \$566,000. The stories of these five former scholarship winners provide an inspiration for the industry and reinforce the value of the ONF and contributions to the foundation from Oregon Association of Nurseries members and chapters.

Erika Willis, 36

Nursery sales agronomist, Wilbur-Ellis Co. Oregon State University, 2011, BS in Horticulture with a minor in Spanish

Willis grew up on the family farm, **KG Farms Inc.** in Woodburn, Oregon, so it's not surprising that she followed the family passion into horticulture. "My family started the nursery when we were really young and the nursery business grew as we got older," Willis said. "As a kid, I loved school. I loved math and science and was super involved in sports."

"I loved the nursery and the nursery industry and was intrigued by many aspects of it, so I decided to get my degree in horticulture at Oregon State University. I saw the realistic need for speaking Spanish, so I had a heavy emphasis on Spanish. I took all of the Spanish courses that I could and took two study-abroad programs, one to Spain and one to Mexico."

"My advice for young people is if you have an interest in travel and studying abroad, whether for the language or the experience, you have to find a way to make it happen," Willis said. "Have that experience. It's such a valuable experience." ➤



**OREGON
NURSERIES
FOUNDATION**

Support the Oregon Nurseries Scholarship Program

Your support and contributions help the students who will become the next generation of green industry professionals achieve their dreams. Scan the QR code to

donate online or contact Stephanie Collins at 503-582-2001 or **SCollins@OAN.org**.



A head start

rience to have when you're young and you're forming your view of the world.”

Willis said the scholarship money she received helped her pay for school. Willis said she was able to use scholarships, including ONF scholarships, and savings to get through college without student loans.

“After school, I had no student loans to pay off and it allowed me to make money and save money from the get-go,” Willis said. It’s hard to put into words how significant it is to be 22 and have a fresh start instead of starting behind. It also made me feel so supported by the industry that I was going into, which was a great feeling.”

Willis worked for her family’s nursery on two separate stints, right out of college and before she started at **Wilbur-Ellis Company** in 2022. In between those stints, she was a high school Spanish teacher.

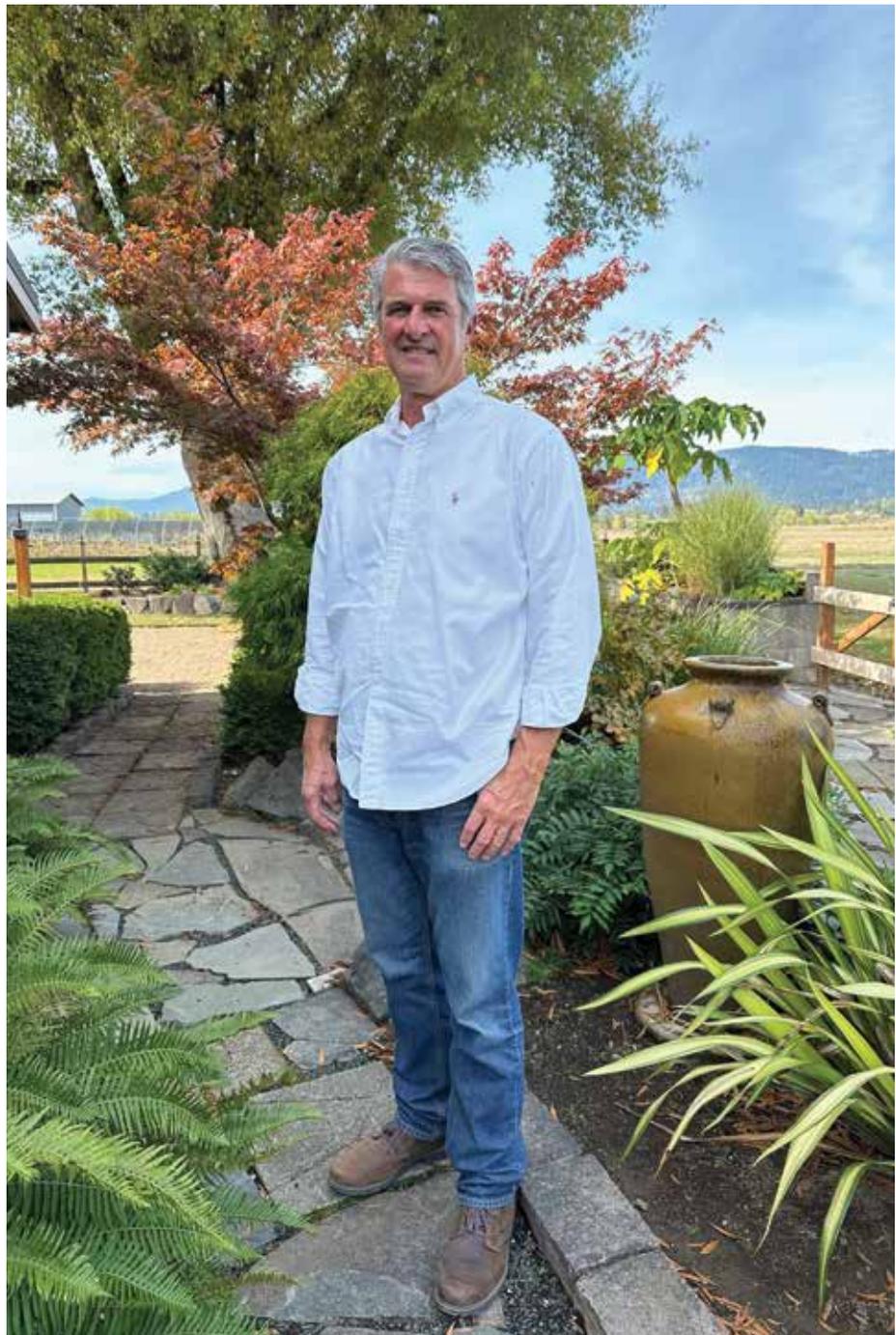
Looking ahead, Willis said she plans to continue growing in the job she’s in now at Wilbur-Ellis. “I love it,” she said. “I want to be working with more accounts. I feel like I’ve found the right spot for me in the industry. I work with people, with plants, with teams that support me. It’s really a wonderful job.”

For Willis, giving back to the industry is an important priority. “I am involved in the industry and in the OAN because it adds so much richness when you’re involved. You get to make connections and learn so many interesting things that help you understand the wider industry.”

Lee Powell, 60

Lee Powell Designs, owner
Louisiana State University, Bachelor of
Landscaping, 1988

Growing up at **Garland Nursery** in Corvallis, Oregon, meant doing whatever his parents needed to have done at the nursery. “I learned about plants through osmosis,” Powell said “Watering, weeding, I think they paid me 50 cents a bucket for weeds at the time. I also grew up going to OAN conventions and the Farwest Show. I got to know a lot of the other kids — the nursery kids. And I still have some of



Lee Powell worked at his family’s nursery, Garland Nursery in Corvallis, Oregon, to help save money for college. PHOTO COURTESY OF LEE POWELL

those connections today.”

At OSU, Powell studied horticulture for a couple of years and took some landscape design classes and decided to pursue landscape architecture. “On the recommendation of an uncle who was a landscape architect, I applied to Louisiana State University and then transferred to LSU.”

As a kid, his parents instilled the value of putting yourself through school. “When I was in middle school, my parents told me that we were responsible for our own education. We had a great opportunity to make money working at the nursery and I

did save a decent amount of money. Then you start looking at everything that costs in college, so I started applying for scholarships as well. The ONF scholarship was very helpful in getting me through college. I worked at the nursery when I was at OSU and when I went to LSU, I worked at a retail nursery down there. I worked the entire time I was in college and any scholarship money was a huge help.”

Powell’s career path is a little different than most people going into horticulture or the nursery business. After graduating, he got a job with Bechtel, an engineering com-

pany founded in San Francisco, California, doing large-scale urban planning and landscape architecture. “I helped design 15 Bay Area Rapid Transit parking lots and plazas. I also traveled to Greece to work on their metro stations.”

Then, he and his wife Linda had their first child, and the allure of living and working in downtown San Francisco changed. “My parents offered us a chance to move back and be a part of the family business, which we decided might be a better spot to raise our kids. Coming back here, my goal was to be able to continue to work in landscape architecture and be involved in running the family business and that’s exactly what happened. I did both and I ended up using the things I learned in horticulture classes at OSU and my landscape architecture knowledge.”

One of the first things he did at the nursery was to redesign the layout of the

nursery. He continued to do both residential and commercial landscape architecture as well as the many functions of managing the nursery with his parents and two sisters.

Last year, the family sold the nursery. Powell continues to consult with the new owner when needed.

“One of the things I enjoy most about landscape design is working with people to help them create their visions for their yards and outdoor spaces — it’s very rewarding to me. It’s something that I can continue to do without abusing my body too much, too.”

His landscape design business has allowed him to come back full circle to his passion. “I can set my own schedule, take the jobs that I want — choosing to have time for myself and my wife when I need it.”

Powell’s advice is to find your passion. “Find an aspect of the industry that

you love and put your time and effort towards that. From my perspective, I really started to excel when I found my passion, which was landscape design.

“My wife Linda has been extremely supportive of coming back here to my family business and accompanying me on my long journey. It would be hard to imagine doing it without her.”

Emily Iverson, 26

Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm, operations manager
Oregon State University, BS in agriculture and food and business management, 2020

Not every kid gets to live in a house surrounded by tulip fields. Iverson did. “I had tulips outside my doorstep every four years,” she said. “I was working on the farm (**Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm**) doing tags and tulip pots, selling lemonade and working the market as soon as I was old enough. I worked the combine on the >>



SAVE SOME GREEN ON ENERGY UPGRADES TO YOUR GREENHOUSE.

Energy Trust of Oregon offers businesses cash incentives to upgrade to more energy-efficient equipment, such as greenhouse covers, heating, insulation and greenhouse controls. We are happy to help answer questions anytime about how your business can qualify. Visit EnergyTrust.org/greenhouse to get started.



Serving customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista.



Emily Iverson spent two years working at other nurseries before coming back home to work at the Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm in Woodburn, Oregon. One of those years, she worked for several Tulip farms across the country and in Australia, learning about their agritourism operations.

PHOTO BY VIC PANICKUL

grass, worked around the farm.”

During college, her spring terms were light, so she would come back to the farm and work the Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival in Woodburn, Oregon.

When it came time to go to college, Iverson chose Eastern Oregon University. “It was the cheapest in-state college, and I didn’t have to write a college essay,” Iverson said, laughing. “Also, they had good ag classes.” She later transferred to OSU and decided to get a business focus with the intention of going into the family business or another ag business.

Getting scholarships was essential for Iverson. “It was a vital piece of getting me out of college debt free. Being a farm kid, we didn’t have a lot. My mom instilled the value of an education in us. The only way to get through college was to get scholarships.”

“We have a family rule that to be a

future owner of the farm, we have to get a college degree and work off the farm for two years before we can come back. I spent the first year learning to farm at a hop and wine grape farm in Silverton. Then the second year, I realized that the tulip fest was ultimately what I wanted to do, so I spent the year travelling to four different states and to Australia to work at different tulip farms.”

“It opened my eyes,” Iverson said. “The first year was great. I learned how family business dynamics work. Not every family business is easy. The second year, I learned a lot about the economics of tourism and got a lot of different ideas from each place where I worked. They were all agritourism businesses.”

Iverson’s first year back on the farm was 2023. “The first year was a lot of learning, a lot of growth.” The last two

years her family likes to call her the “head honcho.” “When it comes to decisions on the tulip festival, it comes down to me,” she said. “I know the operation. What it involves is taking on more responsibility, as my family wants to retire.”

Iverson has been quick to make changes to improve the operation and revenue for the tulip festival. She’s implemented a timed ticketing entry system and online ticket sales. She handles bulb purchasing for the farm, vendor relations and hiring and staffing for the festival.

Her big push this year is Summer Flowers at Wooden Shoe. The event, in its second year, offers 30 acres of annual summer flowers with u-pick opportunities, photo ops, limited food vendors, wine tasting, coffee and local beer and cider. This year, she expects attendance of up to 20,000 people, compared to the 150,000

who usually attend the tulip festival.

“We started from nothing in the ’70s and started to grow tulips and in 1983–84 we started letting people visit. We started from ground zero and built it to what it is today. It took a lot of heart and soul from the family to get it to where it is today. I’m just lucky to enjoy it.”

“I see the farm focusing more on flowers and tourism in 5–10 years,” Iverson said. “Farming in this state isn’t easy.” The third generation is poised to gain ownership of the farm. “We’re going through succession planning now and I work with three other cousins who have their own roles.”

Even though the tulips are probably the most visible crop at the farm, they actually make up the smallest part of the farm in terms of acreage. “Our largest acreage is grass seed. About 10–11 acres is wine grapes and 40 acres is tulips. Out of 1,100 acres, tulips is just a small portion of that.”

But growing the Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival and Summer Flowers is vital to the future of the farm. “The agritourism part of the business is what makes the farming part of the business possible. It sustains our families, our workers, our business. Agritourism is the only reason I’m back on the farm. If we didn’t have the tulip festival, I wouldn’t be here.”

Iverson’s advice to the current crop of scholarship winners is to invest time and energy into the organization awarding the scholarship. “A lot of kids will take the money and run and don’t involve themselves with the organization, but you get so many opportunities involved, to network.”

Bethany Rydmark, 41

Bethany Rydmark :: Landscapes, owner University of Oregon, Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, 2006

Rydmark grew up on the family farm in Woodburn, Oregon. Her dad was a nurseryman who grew grass seed, Christmas trees and ornamental shade trees and owned Cascade Trees and Blue Sky Farm. “I grew up in the country working every summer on the farm,” she said. “The Farwest show was like my Halloween. >>

Chamaecyparis
Sciadopitys
Kalmia
Thuja
Picea



Rhododendron
Boxwood
Prunus
Pieris
Ilex

Container and Field Grown Ornamentals

Phone: 503-663-1200 • Fax: 503-663-5134

www.reardonnursery.com
info@reardonnursery.com

10050 SE 282nd Ave
Boring, OR 97009



Looking for a health plan for your business, employees and family?

Providence Health Plan is proud to work with Leonard Adams Insurance to offer members of the Oregon Association of Nurseries access to quality, affordable healthcare.



Standard features available with our various health plans:

- Multiple plan offerings
- Preventive medications with a \$0 copay
- Chiropractic and acupuncture embedded for each member
- NEW for 2024: Option Advantage Plus plans offering a lab/x-ray benefit with the first \$500 fully covered



Additional member perks are available to cover other aspects of life, including:

- Personal health coaching
- Fitness center and workout video discounts
- Emergency travel assistance
- ID protection
- Savings on thousands of activities like movies, travel, or a night out on the town

Interested in learning more?

Visit lacoinsurance.com or contact Leonard Adams Insurance at **503-296-0077**, or toll-free at **866-907-1850**.



Bethany Rydmark got to see the plants that were specialty plants here, growing wild in the far corners of the world during her year off backpacking. PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

I'd go get candy from every booth."

Even at a young age, Rydmark was a nerdy kid. "I didn't have rock star or movie star posters when I was a kid. I had tree posters from **J. Frank Schmidt (& Son Co.)** on my walls."

She subscribed to garden magazines as a young teen and she wrote to her favorite magazine editor, who ended up going to work at *Landscape Architecture* magazine. "That's how I discovered what landscape architecture was. I Googled it and realized that was my dream."

She spent the rest of her high school years preparing for that and went to the University of Oregon and studied landscape architecture.

The ONF scholarship was a huge financial help. "I worked in college at Lane Community College in Eugene and in the summers, I would come home and work on the farm. I'm very grateful my family also helped me pay for school. The scholar-

ships helped offset the costs of tuition and it was an affirmation from the industry, the community that I came out of. I received scholarships multiple years. It was touching that my aunt had been friends with Martin Holmason, whose memorial scholarship came to me. It was meaningful to receive funds in the name of someone my aunt remembered fondly."

After graduating, she got a job at landscape architecture firm Quatrefoil in Portland and spent six years with them. "I got my apprenticeship there and earned my license in 2010." After that, she quit to go backpack around the world for a year. "I joke that that was my graduate degree. I visited gardens and even went on a nursery tour in South Africa. Things that grow here as specialty items, I got to see growing wild in the corners of the world."

She came back in 2012 and started working for herself in 2013 by launching **Bethany Rydmark :: Landscapes**. The

business works mostly with private residents, legacy estates and some commercial work including Oregon wineries. The business is growing and recently moved into a new office space. It has five staff members now — all women.

"I really enjoy working with a thoughtful team that enjoys working with plants, and being an advocate for thoughtful methods for growing and design. I want to see us touching the world and making it more healthy."

Jessica Gonzalez, 30

Living Habitats LLC, Landscape Designer and Horticulturist
Oregon State University, BS in horticulture with a focus in ecological landscapes and urban forestry, 2017
University of Oregon, Master of Landscape Architecture, 2022

Gonzalez grew up on a hazelnut farm in Junction City, Oregon. "I've always

Nursery Guide

WHOLESALE PLANT SEARCH



FIND



- Hundreds of Growers
- Thousands of Listings
- Millions of Plants

Search NurseryGuide.com  **and find it all!**

Enter Terms ...

- PLANTS
- COMPANIES
- SERVICES

SCAN TO ORDER YOUR
FREE PRINT COPY

*Must be qualified member of nursery industry



PUBLISHED BY



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES™



For Jessica Gonzalez, the Illinois Beach Shoreline Stabilization project was a favorite. It included creation of aquatic and avian habitat in Lake Michigan. PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA GONZALEZ

been surrounded by the Oregon agricultural industry,” Gonzalez said. “My grandfather had hay and cattle and my other grandpa had sheep. I worked at various nurseries in high school and all throughout college.”

“I was in the industry from when I was 16 to 24 so I did everything from retail to propagation. I was always interested in design, even when I was participating in FFA in high school. I was looking for a career shift, found landscape architecture, and applied to a master’s program. It’s the best of both worlds with design but still interacting with the nursery world I know. Landscape architecture allows me to connect people with plants and the outdoors.”

“Getting scholarships helped a lot, especially with the increasing cost of education. It gave me peace of mind knowing

that scholarships were out there in the various fields that I was interested in. One of the OAN scholarships was for my master’s degree and those are harder to find.”

After graduating from Oregon State, Gonzalez worked at **Bailey Nurseries** in Yamhill as a grower. “I did everything from plant health to tissue culture care. It was a little bit of everything and I learned a lot.”

After getting her master’s degree, she started working at Living Habitats LLC, a landscape architecture firm in Chicago.

“One of the reasons I was drawn to Living Habitats is that they were working on creating a local nursery for a project in California and I had the combined nursery experience and landscape architecture degree.”

She collaborated with the nursery manager and shared her expertise. “That was a big draw to this firm initially. I

think one of the great things is our ecological focus here: Aquatic habitat projects, various habitat projects, mostly focused on the use of native species.”

One of her favorite projects thus far has been the Illinois Beach Shoreline Stabilization project that included both the creation of aquatic and avian habitat in Lake Michigan.

Gonzalez’s advice is to continue to learn through all phases of school as well as your career. “It’s very important. I am learning every day on the job and continue to search for educational opportunities. Keeping that in mind is very important in your career.” ©

Vic Panichkul is publications manager at the Oregon Association of Nurseries and managing editor and art director for Digger. Contact him at 503-582-2009 or

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



Leaping forward

Chris Marble collaborates with a team of Florida growers to evaluate the efficiency and accuracy of various herbicide application techniques, aiming to identify affordable, high-quality options for weed control. PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS MARBLE

How a unique research collaboration is shaping the future of nursery production

BY LLOYD NACKLEY

In the nursery industry, challenges are nothing new, but in recent years, the stakes have risen higher. Labor shortages, rising input costs, unpredictable weather, and increasing customer expectations have converged to create an environment where efficiency, precision, and innovation are more critical than ever.

In response, a unique research col-

laboration is working to give the industry the tools it needs to thrive: the Labor, Efficiency, Automation, and Production (LEAP) Nursery Crops Towards Sustainability project.

LEAP is unique, a one-of-a-kind project funded through the highly competitive Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), a federal initiative administered by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). The SCBGP's core purpose is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, which are legally defined as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture."

Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), LEAP brings together researchers, engineers, and industry leaders to rethink how nurseries operate, from potting lines to plant transport to autonomous equipment in the field.

This ambitious multi-year effort focuses not only on developing advanced technologies, but on ensuring those technologies work in the muddy, sloped, or uneven and otherwise variable, real-world conditions nursery growers face every day.

Inside the LEAP Approach

LEAP combines engineering



Growing Knowledge



Karl McKim (left) and Keegan Cole are part of Amy Fulcher's research team at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. They partner with growers like Holden Nursery to compare fertilizer and irrigation strategies, seeking practical, cost-effective approaches that support plant health and production efficiency. PHOTO BY AMY FULCHER

expertise with nursery production knowledge to develop systems tailored for ornamental crops. The project is led by Anthony LeBude, Ph.D. (North Carolina State University) and the University of Tennessee (Amy Fulcher, Ph.D. and team) with major research partners including Oregon State University, Tennessee State University, University of Florida, Texas A&M, the USDA-ARS, and collaborating nurseries nationwide, spanning states including North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Oregon, Ohio and Texas.

The research centers on two threads:

1. Automation and robotics — Machines that can handle pot spacing, pruning, plant transport, and targeted applications, such as precise pesticide delivery, with minimal human intervention.
2. Human-technology collaboration — Tools designed to be intuitive, reliable, and adaptable for diverse nursery layouts, integrating smoothly into crew workflows.

Supporting these are socioeconomic

and behavioral adoption studies, consumer-preference research, and Extension programs to promote successful uptake.

Why LEAP matters now

Nursery production is one of the most labor-intensive segments of agriculture. Skilled workers are essential for plant quality, but finding and retaining them has become increasingly difficult. Meanwhile, costs for water, fertilizer, fuel, and other inputs continue to rise. Every hour of labor matters.

Automation has made the greatest inroads in row crops, fruits, and vegetables, but nurseries — with their diversity of species, pot sizes, and growth habits — pose unique challenges. For example, nurseries manage thousands of different species grown in myriad container sizes and ages, making it difficult for uniform equipment to handle such variability efficiently.

LEAP addresses this gap with a focus on nursery-specific automation and tools that integrate smoothly into existing production systems. As LeBude, LEAP project

lead at NC State University, explains, “The nursery LEAP forward is about finding ways to help people do their jobs more efficiently, more safely, and with better outcomes for plants and the bottom line.”

A recent report suggests that labor accounts for nearly 35% of nursery production costs, covering tasks such as planting, staking, tying, pruning, fertilizing, weeding, labeling, spacing, and transporting plants. These tasks are highly time sensitive. Many are seasonal, and must be performed exactly when plants require them, like planting, budding, grafting, or harvesting.

Labor cannot be spread evenly. Workers must be shifted to these tasks as the season demands. According to reports the LEAP team and others, U.S. nursery labor costs in 2022 reached 170% of 2007 values.

Historically, nurseries could find enough domestic workers for both seasonal and year-round positions. Today, shortages affect both domestic and migrant labor, with nearly 80% of nurseries in one 2018 survey reporting labor as their larg-

est business challenge.

LEAP surveys suggest that the H-2A program has grown sharply, with certified agricultural jobs more than tripling from 2013 to 2021. However, greenhouse and nursery operations represent only about 9% of firms using the program.

Many growers cite concerns over high wages during training, uncertainty that the same workers will return, and mandated wage increases that ripple through their entire workforce. This means that as wages rise for H-2A workers, all other workers expect comparable raises, increasing overall labor costs.

At the same time, demand for specialty crops is climbing. DIY home improvement trends and housing growth fueled sales increases for 87% of garden centers between 2019 and 2020. However, nurseries struggle to meet this demand due to labor shortages and competition from other industries. Those industries — from retail to construction — offer higher wages and more stable work environments, making recruitment even harder.

Some 40% of growers have responded by raising wages, while 25% have adopted labor-saving technology, and 22% have invested in worker training. Others, constrained by capital or risk concerns, have done little, underscoring the need for solutions like LEAP.

Our grower survey revealed sentiments like this: “Last season, we struggled to find enough hands during peak planting. If LEAP’s tech can ease that crunch, it’ll be a lifeline.”

Economic and environmental stakes

The USDA reports that the ornamental horticulture industry generates more than \$348 billion annually for the U.S. economy, with nursery stock alone contributing \$4.55 billion in revenue.

Nurseries supply plants that enhance landscapes, provide ecosystem services, and create jobs across rural, suburban, and urban areas. The term “ecosystem services” refers to benefits such as improving air quality, controlling erosion, providing wildlife habitat, and cooling urban heat islands. The suppliers of fertilizers,



From left: LEAP leaders S. Chris Marble (University of Florida), Alicia Rihn (University of Tennessee Knoxville), Di Hu (CEO Moss Ag.), Amy Fulcher (University of Tennessee Knoxville) and Anthony LeBude (North Carolina State University). PHOTO BY ANNA SENTER

equipment, packaging, and transportation support the impact of nurseries.

Yet the economic engine of nurseries relies heavily on labor. Automation and mechanization can help offset this dependency

Automated nursery technologies (ANTs) — a range that includes potting machines, fertilizer dispensers, plant transport systems, and automated pruning equipment — can improve efficiency, reduce worker strain, and enhance crop quality through consistent task execution. Despite their promise, adoption remains limited, signaling the need for targeted outreach and real-world validation.

Meet the LEAP robots: ANDREW, PIPER, TALI and A-IPM

- ANDREW (Autonomous Nursery Driving Robot for Eliminating Weeds) — Precision navigation and spot spraying for weed control, aimed at commercialization.
- PIPER (Pot-in-Pot Extraction Robot) — Automates harvesting of container-grown trees, using navigation, object recognition, and localization, built on the Farm-ng Amiga platform.



**BIRINGER
NURSERY**

**Wholesale Growers of
Fruit, Flowering, Shade
Trees and Deciduous Shrubs**

Frost Peach ®
Hanna’s Heart ® Katsura

Growing since 1974

360-848-5151
FAX 360-848-5959

Mount Vernon, WA

www.BiringerNursery.com

Growing Knowledge



Dalyn McCauley, research engineer in the Nackley Lab at Oregon State University, shares the advantages of low-cost, open-source, sensor-based irrigation systems during a field day at NWREC in Aurora, Oregon. PHOTO BY LLOYD NACKLEY

- TALI (Terrestrial Automatic Laser-based Inventory system) — Automates tree inventory, measuring height, canopy dimensions, and caliper to replace manual counting.
- A-IPM (Artificial Intelligence Pest Monitoring) — Uses AI and computer vision for early detection of Japanese maple scale, complementing human scouting.

These prototypes are designed to handle real-world nursery conditions — such as gravel, mud, tight spaces — and not just laboratory conditions. Getting farm-ready robots is the real test: we know they can work on a showcase floor or in a lab, but can they hold up at a farm?

“We build these robots in the lab, but they’ve got to be ready for the real challenge is farm conditions — mud, slopes, obstacles. That’s why we’re excited to get them to Oregon next year and test them in the field,” said Billy Hered, a graduate student from the Carnegie Mellon University robotics team.

Progress and engineering foundations

LEAP engineers employ tools like Gazebo (a 3D robot simulation environment) and Robot Operating System (ROS, an open-

source robotics middleware) to simulate nursery environments before field testing.

The Farm-ng Amiga electric tractor serves as a shared mobile base for integrating different payloads. Navigation relies on SLAM (Simultaneous Localization and Mapping) mapping — which helps robots build maps and track their location — and Voronoi-based path planning, which helps robots navigate safe and efficient paths around obstacles.

The A-IPM system has already trained preliminary detection models for Japanese maple scale with encouraging results, research that was presented this year at the American Society for Horticultural Science Annual meeting in New Orleans. Multi-state field partners have completed baseline trials and helped refine workflows for evaluating application uniformity and labor savings.

Shifting demographics: Why labor tech can’t wait

The average age of U.S. farmworkers now exceeds 40, with more than one-third over 55. Replacing experienced workers is harder than ever, making labor-saving technologies essential to sustain production and protect worker health.

Repetitive nursery tasks, such as pruning and tying, place physical strain on workers that increases with age and can lead to injuries. This strain not only affects workers’ health but also makes these jobs harder to fill as younger workers avoid physically demanding roles. Over time, worker fatigue can also reduce the consistency of plant care and quality.

Feedback from growers suggest that “After years on the job, repetitive work takes a toll on your body. Tech that can ease that burden is not just welcome, it’s necessary.”

Technology for people

LEAP prioritizes usability:

- Simple interfaces to minimize training needs.
- Adaptability for varied crops, pot sizes, and layouts.
- Durability in dust, rain, heat, and cold.
- Growers provide feedback at every stage, ensuring designs meet real operational needs.

As one of our advisory board members said: “What we need are controls mean my crew can use with minimal training. And we’re gonna need to be able to fix minor problems if they come up. We

don't want to have to wait for two weeks for tech support to return our phone call.”

Engaging the industry

Outreach has been a cornerstone, with meetings and workshops across the country in this first year and to continue throughout. For example, LEAP team was at Cultivate'25 in Ohio, Container Crop Production and Pest Management Workshops in Tennessee, and Sensor-Based Irrigation Field Days in Oregon.

A grower advisor considering adopting robots stressed that field demonstrations — not just trade-show displays — build true confidence. “Watching the robots in action at field demos are key for adoption. Trade shows just don't show you what these machines can really do in the dirt.”

Early results and lessons learned

Although still in its first year of five, LEAP has already identified key themes:

- Labor reallocation can be as valuable as outright reduction.
- Field validation in realistic conditions is critical.
- Adaptability boosts adoption potential.
- Socioeconomic research informs more effective outreach.

What's next

LEAP will expand multi-state trials of ANDREW, PIPER, TALI, and A-IPM, refine decision-making algorithms, and advance ROI analysis. Extension teams will continue producing demonstrations, videos, and grower interviews to accelerate adoption.

Growers interested in updates can contact me to join the quarterly mailing list.

This work is supported by the Labor, Efficiency, Automation, and Production: LEAP Nursery Crops Towards Sustainability, project award no. 2024-51181-43291, from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. ©

Lloyd Nackley, Ph.D., is a plant physiological ecologist at the Oregon State University North Willamette Research and Extension Center (NWREC) in Aurora, Oregon. He can be reached at Lloyd.Nackley@OregonState.edu.



Digger MARKETPLACE

Tracking Trailer

TT-410

Call **503-873-9872** to order

WURDINGER
MANUFACTURING

WurdingerManufacturing.com

Hostetler Farm Drainage
971-275-3004

Over 100 years of continuous family owned business in providing water management.

Serving the Willamette valley and beyond on projects large and small. Our innovative team installs drainage systems tailored to meet the needs of the farmer.

www.hostetlerfarmdrainage.com

WHOLESALE GROWERS

Motz & Son Nursery

SHADE & FLOWERING TREES
FRUIT TREES
Dwarf, Semi-Dwarf & Standard
COMBINATION FRUIT TREES (4 in 1)
Semi-Dwarf & Standard
ESPALIER APPLES
Semi-Dwarf, Combination & One Variety
WALNUTS & FILBERTS
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS

www.motzandson.com
11445 N.W. Skyline Blvd.
Portland, Oregon 97231
Phone 503-645-1342
FAX 503-645-6856

Schurter Nursery

Arborvitae—Emerald green
Virescens
Boxwood
Japanese Maples
Otto Luyken
Skip Laurel

Various sizes & Varieties
503-932-8006

Digger MARKETPLACE

Small Investment Huge Impact

Reach over 8,000 Digger subscribers with a Digger Marketplace ad

Reserve your space
Curt Kipp, CKipp@OAN.org, 888-283-7219

B&B Spruce 4 to 24 feet
Chamaecyparis • Fir • Pine
Japanese Maple • Poodle Pine
Cut Christmas Trees

(503) 630-4349
FAX (503) 630-7542
PO Box 598 — Estacada, OR 97023

On the Road Again

Willie Nelson is not the only person who can coin the phrase, either in song or in practice.

Over the past several months, our director of marketing, Beth Farmer, and a member of the board of directors have joined me on visits to various members. This is highly rewarding and provides us with incredible insight into the current challenges and opportunities facing the industry.

Closing the distance with members

The OAN office may be situated in Wilsonville, but the heart of the association is out in the heart of Nursery Country. When I first became your executive director, now 15 years ago, I made a commitment to our organization to visit member operations. Over the next two years, the staff visited over 200 members. But life comes at us fast, the industry was mired deep into the Great Recession, and we shifted our focus to preserving the industry's economic health. Our visits to nurseries in large numbers unfortunately became a casualty.

Seeing is understanding

Our best asset on the political front is you, the member. I have shared my perspective with OAN leadership that the single biggest advantage the association has are visits by elected officials to the nursery. We have had cabinet members, U.S. senators and representatives, state-wide elected officials, and state legislators tour all over our great state.

In some cases, it was the first time an elected official has walked an agricultural operation. Others may have visited before, but they remain curious about the issues that confront the largest sector of agriculture. For all of them, a tour provides that individual with a picture in their mind of what the nursery industry is all about.

There are many opportunities for nurseries to host visitors in general, and not just officials. It's beneficial. Chapter events with tours, first aid classes on site, professional groups expanding their knowledge base, and the occasional campaign event all

add to the fabric of our story.

We have been active without drawing much attention to it. The board of directors believes we should be more overt and purposeful about our outreach and activity.

Who we've seen so far

Our current OAN tour of nurseries has 48 stops already in the books over the last three months, with many more visits being scheduled during the fall. Over a third were small growers that log under \$500,000 in sales annually. These serve as a bedrock of the industry.

Midsized nurseries, with sales between \$500,000 and \$5 million, account for half the visits. The largest nurseries, \$10 million and above in sales, were a vast minority in visits. We visited associate members — who are suppliers and service providers, not growers — as well.

What I found amazing and heartening everywhere we went, no matter the size of the operation, was our members' exceptional passion and drive for growing great plants and trees. That is inspiring.

Feedback from members

What did we hear? Quite a lot. I asked each member for an unvarnished opinion on what is going on at their business, and I am so happy that it is exactly what we got.

A few members were not happy with aspects of what the association does. I welcome and expect that. We are, after all, a diverse association in many respects. However, most of the conversations fell into how sales are coming along, concerns about labor and cost inputs, and of course, weather and tariffs impacting markets.

The bottom line? Our industry is cautiously optimistic despite the significant challenges of doing business in our state. By and large, growers large and small are facing many of the same challenges.

I asked every grower, "What keeps you up at night?" Members gave many answers, all quite revealing.

I was surprised to hear that the availability of labor was sufficient for most of the members. There are plenty of storm clouds ahead. In particular, growers shared concerns over agricultural overtime, with the threshold going down to 40 hours in



Jeff Stone

OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2027. Growers will need to cut hours. The workers want to work, and it is very frustrating that the Oregon Legislature cannot support the association's fix.

Challenges also are daunting at the federal level, and the OAN continues to press hard for a solution to our immigration system.

On a broader level, many growers are focusing on mechanization and infrastructure improvements. Interest rates are a big hinderance. Growers want to invest.

While there is cautious optimism for 2026, many recognize the burst in business during Covid was not reality and that the market is back to before 2020. It is a tougher economy now, with cost inputs rising faster than prices than keep up.

Catching the OAN doing things well

I am the type who wants to hear it all — the good and the bad. We have heard that the members are proud of our work on advocacy. They recognize that the association works hard to protect the industry. Members also singled out first aid classes, Member Update, Digger and Nursery Guide as very positive member benefits. We intend to make these and other offerings even better in 2026.

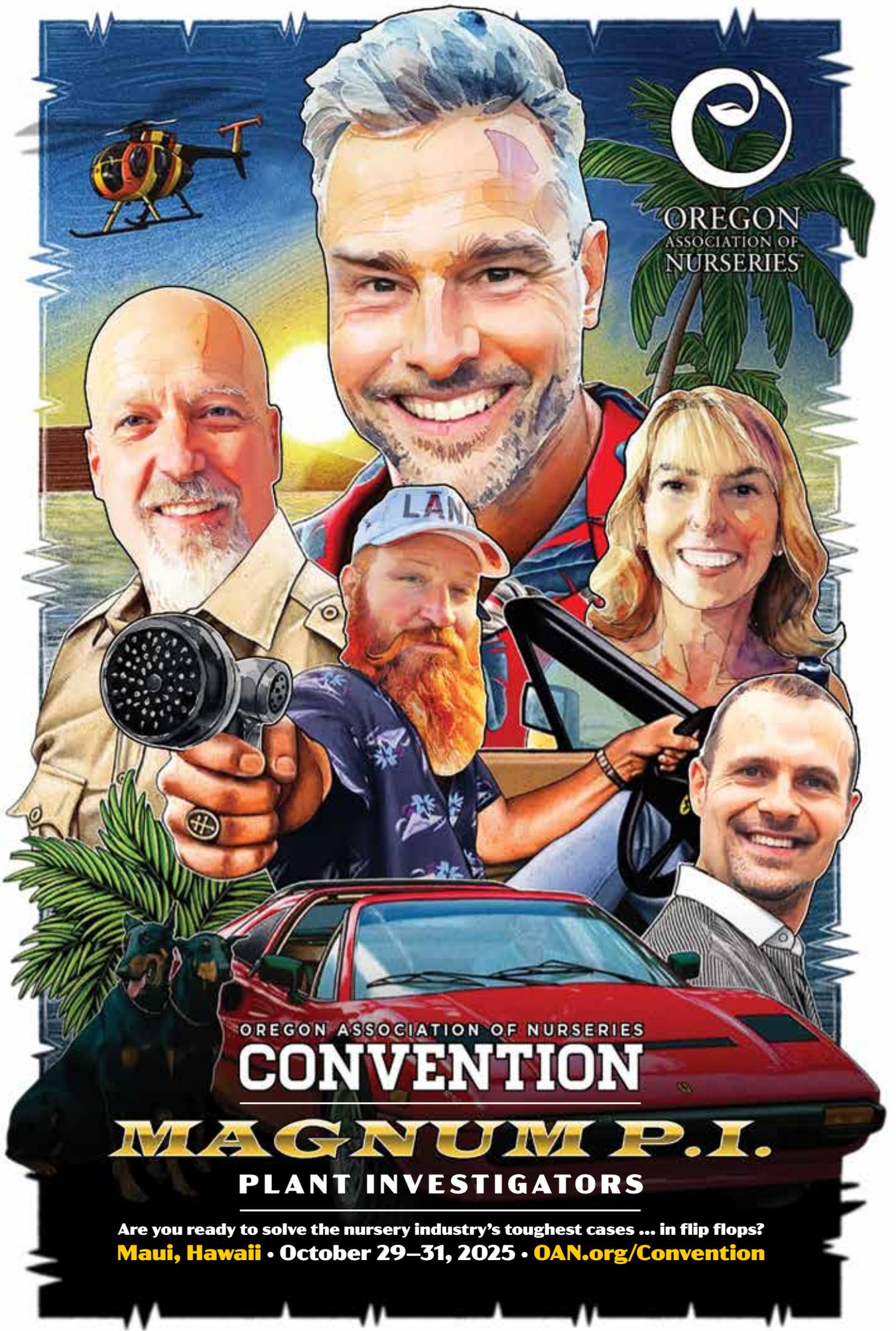
Fall into next year

We will be continuing our visits through the fall. This is not a one-and-done effort, as our incoming president, Patrick Newton from Powell's Nursery, wants to make member visits his centerpiece of 2026.

I am ecstatic about venturing to every corner of our state to hear your story, share your concerns, and work hard on the issues you care about. ☺



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES



OREGON ASSOCIATION OF NURSERIES

CONVENTION

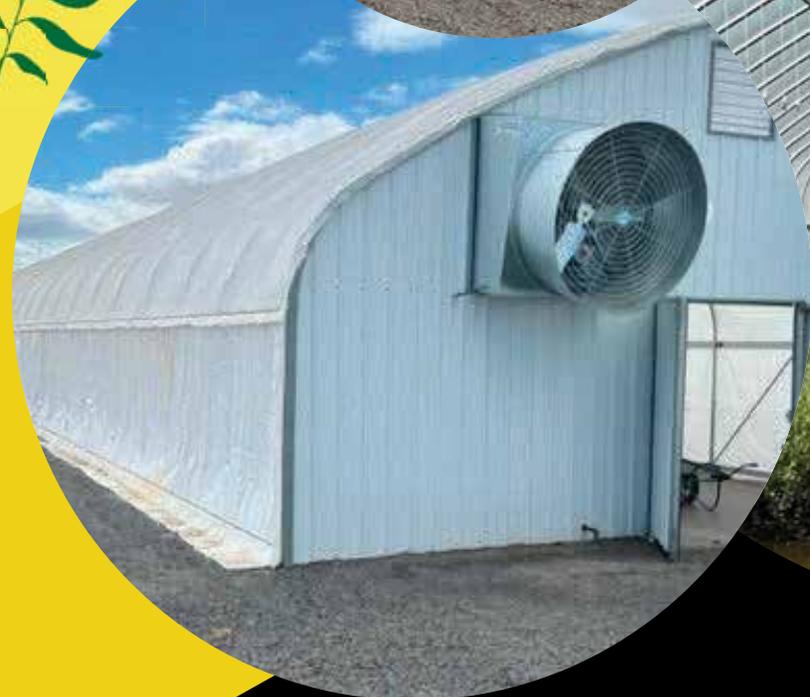
MAGNUM P.I.

PLANT INVESTIGATORS

Are you ready to solve the nursery industry's toughest cases ... in flip flops?
Maui, Hawaii • October 29–31, 2025 • OAN.org/Convention

CREATE YOUR PERFECT GREENHOUSE

All Steel Construction for Lasting Quality



GK constructs greenhouses designed for durability. They are crafted and pre-drilled for efficient setup. GK also offers all the essential accessories for an entire growing solution!

www.GKGreenhouse.com

503-678-5525