



Wayne and Amanda Staehely started Columbia Nursery with one acre, a small can yard and one greenhouse. PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

FOUNDED
2005

OWNERS

Wayne and Amanda Staehely

KNOWN FOR

Rare and unique conifers and Japanese maples

CONTACT

29490 South Jackson Road,
Canby, Oregon 97013
503-263-2623,
Wayne@Columbia-Nursery.com

ONLINE

Columbia-Nursery.com
[NurseryGuide.com](https://www.nurseryguide.com)

86 listings

COLUMBIA NURSERY LLC

BY EMILY HOARD

Wayne Staehely, owner of **Columbia Nursery LLC** in Canby, Oregon, grew up on the family farm in Canby, so it's not surprising that he knew that he wanted a career in nurseries since he was a kid. Growing up with a farming background inspired him to work with plants in the future.

As a kid, he would often visit nurseries down the road from his family's farm and they would give him unique plants to grow. Now, he is known for propagating and growing rare specimen trees.

When he was in high school, he got his first job at a retail nursery selling plants and he learned more about propagating them.

Starting the nursery

After high school and years of working

in retail and managing other nurseries, he started his own wholesale nursery with one acre, a small canyard and one greenhouse.

"It started small, and I have been growing it ever since," Wayne said. He gave the nursery his own name initially, and then after a few years of doing business he changed its name to Columbia Nursery. He added a second greenhouse in the first location before moving the business to a larger location.

In 2013, he moved the nursery a third time to expand its operations with more property.

Amanda, his wife and co-owner of the nursery, said the business really did start from the ground up.

A partnership

"I've always supported him on the sidelines," Amanda said about when the nursery first started. "We got married"



From left: Sebastian Morales, Jimena Casas and Caludia Hernandez trim evergreens in the can yard at Columbia Nursery in Canby, Oregon.
PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

and as the nursery grew and started to shift and become a substantial business, someone had to be here on a daily basis to organize trucks and the paperwork.”

Amanda said she chose to be that person to run those day-to-day operations.

“It made sense for me to be here to run it on a daily basis and we had little kids, so I could be here with them,” Amanda said. The couple has three children they raised at their home on the nursery.

“The nursery really is his dream and his passion, and then I helped take it into the business portion of it,” Amanda said. “I’m who the customers talk to on the day-to-day, and it’s very much his baby for sure.”

How they developed their specialty

Columbia Nursery specializes in growing rare and unique conifers and Japanese maples.

Wayne said his nursery offers a variety of unique types of Japanese maples and other different varieties of maples and specialty varieties of spruces.

“And then we have a lot of cultivars under those species,” he said.

Amanda added that the nursery has a lot of large plants that are relatively old compared to what other nurseries carry. “One of our slowly growing dwarf varieties is one foot wide but is eight years old,” Wayne said.

Amanda said when her husband decided to start the plant nursery in 2008, he already knew the material he wanted to grow was a long-term investment.

“He knew then that the material he wanted to grow himself would not turn over in three to five years. He wanted a larger specimen project that would be about 12 years, so it was a lot of time and

money and effort at the beginning,” she said. “It’s been a slow process to grow into what it is now, but we knew that at the beginning.”

Wayne talked about how he developed his nursery’s specialty.

“I like landscaping and I like plants in general so when I was doing retail, I’d see varieties I liked and didn’t like,” he said. “And when I joined the American Conifer Society, I would look at different landscapes. With my friends, I would go look at different nurseries in Canada and down south.”

“To sum it up, he’s a plant nerd,” Amanda said.

“When you start a nursery in 2008, everybody looks at you like you’re crazy and you’re not going to be here very long,” Amanda said. “But it has grown and our sales reflect that as well, so it’s

exciting to see it grow to what it is now.”

Most of what they grow is shipped out of state.

“Over 90% of our finished product leaves the state of Oregon,” Amanda said. “The majority is on the East Coast. Our largest international market is in Canada and we also sell to Japan as well.”

Wayne said most of their customers are re-wholesalers, but they also sell to some high-end retailers as well.

Successes and challenges

Amanda said the challenges of running a nursery have come with successes.

“Things come up when we don’t expect them, like repairs on equipment or infrastructure,” she said. “Some devastating repairs hit us two years in a row.”

But she said they keep a good perspective when those challenges arise: “Today is a bad day and I get the right to



Over 90% of Columbia's finished product is shipped out of state. PHOTO BY VIC PANICKUL

be upset, but we take the good with the bad and think, ‘Do you still love it at the end of the year?’”

Amanda said some of those hurdles have helped the couple take a step for-

ward with their business and try things they might not have otherwise.

“Our structure came down with an ice storm, but now it’s beautiful,” she said. “We redid all the electrical tiling” ➤



**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

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.



and it really is in the best shape it has been, and the plants show it too.”

Wayne said the propagation process and the growing of new cultivars that haven't been done before can be experimental. “Any time we have a propagation error, we see what varieties were successful, and some years they fail and there's a list of challenges,” he said. “As time progresses, and the plants get bigger we find successes.”

Once, a customer called and asked what the ending height of a certain variety is expected to be. Wayne said he didn't know because it was the first of its kind.

Amanda said the nursery grows many varieties and some are hard to propagate, so sometimes the process can be about guessing and checking what works.

The Staehelys enjoy hearing customers remark upon the unique varieties that Columbia Nursery offers.

“When we hear customers say, ‘I've

never seen that before,’ or ‘I haven't seen it in that size,’ that's really cool,” Amanda said. “People from across the United States send us photos of the plants. Having people be happy about something you spent time growing, it means we're doing something right.”

A look ahead at the future

As he looks toward the future of Columbia Nursery, Wayne said he plans to just to keep being able to grow and supply the numbers of plants to keep customers happy.

“We try to speculate for the future to grow the nursery and we want our customers to grow as well,” he said. “We look at what our customers' needs are and our strengths.”

As he considers adding new varieties to his repertoire, he also considers deleting some varieties that don't work as well.

“Those are things we're always looking at, what to add and what to take away,” Wayne said.

Amanda added that customer satisfaction is a huge priority.

“My goal would be to be better known,” she said. “I want to introduce the material, and I want every corner of the U.S. to know us. That'd be fun.”

She said she and Wayne love the amazing plants they grow and they have strong relationships with their clients.

“It's a great industry to be a part of,” she said. ☺

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.

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

1/25