

**2025-2026
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- Patrick Newton**
PRESIDENT
Powell's Nursery Inc.
5054 S.W. Boyd Road
Gaston, OR 97119
PowellNursery@gmail.com
503-357-0631
- Ben Verhoeven**
PAST-PRESIDENT
Peoria Gardens Inc.
32355 Peoria Road S.W.
Albany, OR 97321
BenV@PeoriaGardens.com
541-753-8519
- Darcy Ruef**
PRESIDENT-ELECT
Al's Garden & Home
1220 N. Pacific Hwy.
Woodburn, OR 97071
DRuef@Als-GardenCenter.com
503-981-1245
- Chris Robinson**
VICE PRESIDENT
Robinson Nursery Inc.
PO Box 100
Amity, OR 97101
Chris@RobinsonNursery.com
877-855-8733
- Jesse Nelson**
TREASURER
Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery Inc.
31020 S.E. Waybill Road
Boring, OR 97009
JNelson@HansNelson.com
503-663-3348
- Tyler Meskers**
SECRETARY
Oregon Flowers Inc.
PO Box 311
Aurora, OR 97002
Tyler@OregonFlowers.com
503-678-2580
- Andrea Avila-Aragon**
MEMBER AT LARGE
Smith Gardens
23150 Boones Ferry Road. N.E.,
Aurora, OR 97002-9461
Andrea.Avila-Aragon@
SmithGardens.com
503-678-5373

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Patrick Peterson**
ASSOCIATE MEMBER
Simplot Turf & Horticulture
Patrick.Peterson@Simplot.com
541-214-5802
- Greg Elwell**
CONTAINER GROWER
Iseli Nursery
GEllwell@IseliNursery.com
503-663-3822
- Blake Nelson**
CONTAINER GROWER
Bountiful Farms Nursery Inc.
Blake@BountifulFarms.com
503-981-7494
- Sam Pohlschneider**
CONTAINER GROWER
Pohlschneider Nursery
Sam@PohlschneiderNursery.com
503-969-1310
- 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
Sester Farms
Vladimir@SesterFarms.com
503-663-4844
- Noah Fessler**
GREENHOUSE
Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas Inc.
NoahF@WoodburnNursery.com
503-634-2231
- Jonathan Jasinski**
GREENHOUSE
Microplant Nurseries Inc.
Jonathan@MicroplantNurseries.com
503-792-3696
- Barb Iverson**
RETAIL
Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm
Iverson@MonitorCoop.com
503-634-2243

Don't make mountains out of molehills

As we head into the new year, I hope we can all help ourselves make 2026 just a little bit easier.



Patrick Newton

How can we reduce some of the stress we run into every day? It's human nature to take a small, insignificant issue and turn it into something that derails an entire day, or even an entire week. In the end, we are in control of how we handle adversity. We get to dictate our response.

There's a quote that always comes to mind this time of year: "Don't make mountains out of molehills." My dad left me with that piece of advice back in 2007. I was probably venting about an issue that didn't really warrant the reaction I was giving it. At the time, I didn't think much of it. I likely just nodded and said, "Yeah."

Over the years, however, that saying has worked its way into my daily thinking. It shows up in the middle of a hectic day, during tough conversations, or when something small or big threatens to get the better of me.

Running a nursery, and a business, means there's always something going sideways. You could fill a book with all the little fires that pop up in a year.

And that's all before you factor in life outside the nursery. Raising a family, keeping up with friends, and trying to be present at home while the business never really stops moving.

It's easy to feel like the small things are stacking up faster than you can keep up. That's when my dad's words come back around: Don't make mountains out of molehills.

It's not that the molehills don't matter. They do. You still must deal with them.

But perspective matters. A late truck or a missed irrigation cycle can feel like the end of the world in the moment, but a week later it's just another story.

When COVID hit, it felt like a mountain. Every day brought new uncertainty, and it seemed like the climb would never end. But we kept moving forward, one step at a time, and slowly that moun-

tain got smaller. As it turns out, COVID marked the beginning of some good years for the nursery industry.

I also think back to the sudden oak death we dealt with years back. It was a scary, mountainous topic. There was fear and uncertainty. It ended up getting resolved with some workarounds and ended up being a molehill — a large one, granted — rather than a mountain.

With the support and leadership of the OAN and the Oregon Department of Agriculture, we believe we can accomplish the same outcome for the Japanese beetle. Certainly, it feels mountainous now but I'm optimistic that this too shall pass.

Years from now, we'll look back at Japanese beetle the same way we look back at sudden oak death. It was difficult, it forced change, but we figured it out and kept growing.

All this to say, that doesn't mean this year won't be challenging. It will be. But growers are problem-solvers by nature, and we've proven time and again that we can rise to the occasion.

As we move into the new year, I'm trying to keep that mindset front and center. Not every problem deserves to become a mountain. Some days, it's enough to recognize the difference, take a breath, and keep moving.

Here's to a new year of steady growth, a little more patience, and fewer mountains along the way. ☺