

Digger

JUNE 2026

Farwest
Planning
Guide
INSIDE



The Shrubs Issue

The search for
low-maintenance beauties

PAGE 17

Shrubs can be
stars in the garden

PAGE 15

The key to managing
Phytophthora

PAGE 33

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Farm Family was founded in 1954 by farmers and business owners who wanted to protect the land and communities they cared for. That same spirit lives on today as we continue protecting the businesses that keep our landscapes, nurseries, and green spaces thriving.

What's Staying the Same

While our look and logo have changed, everything you've come to trust remains the same: the same knowledgeable agents; the same robust coverage; the same personalized service; and the same commitment to protecting your business and your livelihood.

Looking Ahead

We've valued our partnership with the Oregon Association of Nurseries and its members. As we move forward as Farm Family, we're excited to continue serving Oregon's green industry professionals with the expertise, care, and reliability you deserve.

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17



23

The Shrubs Issue

17 The wow factor

Shrubs are stepping onto the stage as low-maintenance and visually appealing plants.

15 Taking the spotlight

The utilitarian shrub is proving that it can also be a star in the garden.

33 Microscopic threat

Managing *Phytophthora* requires knowing the life cycle and temperature preferences of each species.

23 A pioneering influence

For nearly five decades, Gary English has been rooted in service and committed to excellence.

25 Back to nature

Bailey Nurseries removed dams on Salt Creet at its Yamhill farm to build environmental resilience.

On the cover: Eclipse® Bigleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Bailmacseven' PP34544). PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST EDITIONS SHRUBS & TREES

On this page: Left: Fiber Optics® Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis* 'Bailoptics' PP29475). PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST EDITIONS SHRUBS & TREES

Right: Gary English at the 2019 OAN Convention where he received an Honorary Lifetime Membership award. OAN FILE PHOTO

COLUMNS

- 7 President's Message
- 38 Director's Desk

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 Calendar
- 10 Northwest News
- 29 Classifieds
- 33 Growing Knowledge
- 37 Digger Marketplace

**Farwest
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after
page 20**



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Here's to the next 50 years of Trust Driven Service.

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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

Cammi Froyd CFroyd@OAN.org
JR. STAFF ACCOUNTANT 503-582-2011

Connie Lindsay CLindsay@OAN.org
TRADE SHOW MANAGER 503-582-2005

Jamie O'Brien JOBrien@OAN.org
EVENTS AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR 503-582-2010

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, Debbie Teashon CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

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**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

Striving to be like Dad

Every June when Father's Day comes around, it tends to hit a little differently than other holidays. For me, it's not about gifts or cards. It's about remembering a man who set the standard for how to live, how to treat people, and how to show up every single day.



Patrick Newton

My dad didn't miss a game. Not one. Rain, work, whatever ... he was there. My brothers and I never had to look to the sidelines and wonder if he'd show. He put his wife and his kids first, plain and simple. That was just who he was.

As I got older, our relationship changed in the best way. He wasn't just my dad anymore — he became my counselor and my best friend. He had a way of listening that's hard to find. No judgment, no lectures. Just honest conversation. You could tell him anything, and you knew he'd meet you with understanding, not criticism. That's the kind of man I've tried to be ever since.

We lost my dad on March 30, 2007, to esophageal cancer. He was 57 years old. Way too young. It's still hard to say that without shaking my head. A guy that strong, you don't expect him to be gone just like that.

Looking back, there's a part that sticks with me even more now. My dad had bad acid reflux. Like a lot of guys, he didn't think much of it. He would grab some Tums and keep moving. No doctor, no follow-up, just pushing through. The problem was, that only masked what was really going on.

There are early warning signs with things like that. Conditions like Barrett's esophagus can be caught, monitored, even managed if you take it seriously. But when you don't, when you just cover it up and keep grinding, it can turn into something much worse. In his case, it turned into cancer — a quiet, aggressive kind that doesn't give you much time if it's caught late. From the day he was diagnosed to

the day he passed was three weeks. Three weeks!

And here's the part I'll never forget. He handled those three weeks like a saint. The jokes never stopped. He kept things light, even when everyone around him was struggling to hold it together. He made the time to say goodbye to just about everyone in his life. Friends, family, coworkers anyone who mattered to him got that moment. It was incredible to witness, even in the middle of something so hard.

What stuck with me the most was his grace. He was at peace. A devout Catholic, he truly believed in where he was going, and he was ready. There was no anger, no fear that he showed us. Instead, he made everyone else feel comfortable. Think about that. He was the one facing the end, and he was still taking care of the people around him. That tells you everything you need to know about the kind of man he was.

Father's Day for me is about carrying that forward. It's about striving to be the kind of dad who shows up, who listens, who puts family first. It's about treating friends, coworkers, and strangers with the same respect and decency he did.

And it's also a reminder don't ignore the signs. Take care of yourself. Get things checked out. Pushing through might feel like the tough thing to do, but sometimes the tougher, smarter move is to slow down and deal with what's really going on.

I miss him every day. That doesn't go away. ☺



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*.

JUNE 5

NEXGEN CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

Summer is right around the corner and that means it's time for NexGen's annual Cornhole Tournament. Join the group at 5 p.m. Friday, June 5 at the **J. Frank Schmidt Arboretum** for an evening of food, drinks and a friendly-yet-fierce competition of cornhole. Located in Boring, J. Frank Schmidt is a longstanding tree producer focused on quality and sustainability. If you would like to join, RSVP to [TinyURL.com/NGCornholeTourney](https://tinyurl.com/NGCornholeTourney). You are welcome to sign-up now with your preferred cornhole partner if you already have them locked in or sign-up as a free agent and either find a partner the day of or we can help match you with someone. You'll want to bring your "A" game, as there will be prizes for the top teams. First place will each receive a \$50 Amazon gift card and second place will receive NexGen swag!

JUNE 11

2026 DUFFERS CLASSIC

Join the Oregon Nurseries Political Action Committee for the 2026 Duffers Classic on June 11 at a new location this year – OGA Golf Course, 2850 Hazelnut Drive in Woodburn, Oregon. Registration is \$165 per person (covers your greens fees, cart, and food). Register at OAN.org/Duffers. Reconnect with friends while supporting a strong nursery industry voice in Salem and Washington D.C. Check-in begins at 7:30 a.m., tee off at 8:30 a.m. and enjoy a taco bar lunch at 1:30 p.m. Sponsorships are available at OAN.org/Page/DuffersSponsor26.

JUNE 25-27

AMERICAN CONIFER SOCIETY NATIONAL MEETING

The 2026 American Conifer Society National Meeting returns to Oregon and is being hosted by the Western Region and they're excited to welcome everyone back. Visitors will be reminded of Oregon's beauty and rich plant diversity. Oregon is conifer country – more evergreen landscape plants are grown in Oregon than any other state in the nation. The event takes place at the Holiday Inn Portland South, 25425 S.W. 95th Ave., Wilsonville. For more information or to register, go to ConiferSociety.org.

JUNE 26

NEW PRODUCTS SHOWCASE TIER 1 AND 2

Do you have a new and exciting product to unveil? Innovative new products meet unmet needs, fill emerging niches, inspire gardeners, and improve nursery production. Help your target audience discover your latest innovation at the New Products Showcase at the 2026 Farwest Show, August 26-28! Space is limited for Tier 1 and Tier 2, so submit your new



OAN FILE PHOTO

JUNE 12

NEW VARIETIES SHOWCASE TIER 2

The New Varieties Showcase at the 2026 Farwest Show August 26-28 in Portland, Oregon, is the perfect place to show off your new or improved plants and it's not too late. The deadline for Tier 1 entries has already passed but there's still time for Tier 2. Entry for Tier 2 is \$90, and the submission deadline is Friday, June 12. Tier 2 entries will be featured online at FarwestShow.com and in the New Varieties Showcase on the show floor with a Hip Labels plant tag. To be accepted into the showcase, plants must differentiate themselves from similar offerings on the market. Each submitted variety must be available for purchase for the upcoming 2027 season from at least one exhibitor at the 2026 Farwest Show. New (or improved) plant varieties are vetted by a panel of horticulture industry experts. Fees are only collected upon showcase acceptance. Submit your plant at FarwestShow.com/New-Varieties-Showcase-Submissions. Questions? Contact Trade Show Manager Connie Lindsay at CLindsay@OAN.org or 503-582-2005.

product today. Tier 1 is \$595 and deadline is Friday, June 26. Tier 1 entries can give a 5-minute live presentation at the Solution Center Stage, get their product displayed at the New Products Showcase on the show floor, receive promotional signs, are featured on the cover page of the New Products Showcase section of the Farwest Edition of *Digger*, and an online feature at FarwestShow.com. Tier 2 is \$395, with a deadline of Friday, June 26. This includes a 5-minute live presentation at the Solution Center Stage, a product display at the New Products Showcase on the show floor, print inclusion in the Farwest Edition of *Digger*, and online feature at FarwestShow.com. Enter now at FarwestShow.com/New-Products-Showcase-Submissions.

JUNE 26

TRUCKS TO TRADE SHOWS TO CULTIVATE'26

June 26 is the last day to reserve your space for the OAN Trucks to Trade Shows truck to Cultivate'26 in Columbus, Ohio. The program

allows members to ship booth material conveniently and economically. Space on each truck will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. To reserve space, the OAN needs full payment for each pallet. Pallet pricing does not include drayage or material handling fees. These fees are determined and billed directly by the show management and/or show decorator. Questions? Contact Jamie Moore at JMoore@OAN.org, 503-582-2010. For pricing and to reserve your space, go to OAN.org/T2TS.

JULY 7

OREGON ASSOCIATION OF NURSERIES OPEN HOUSE

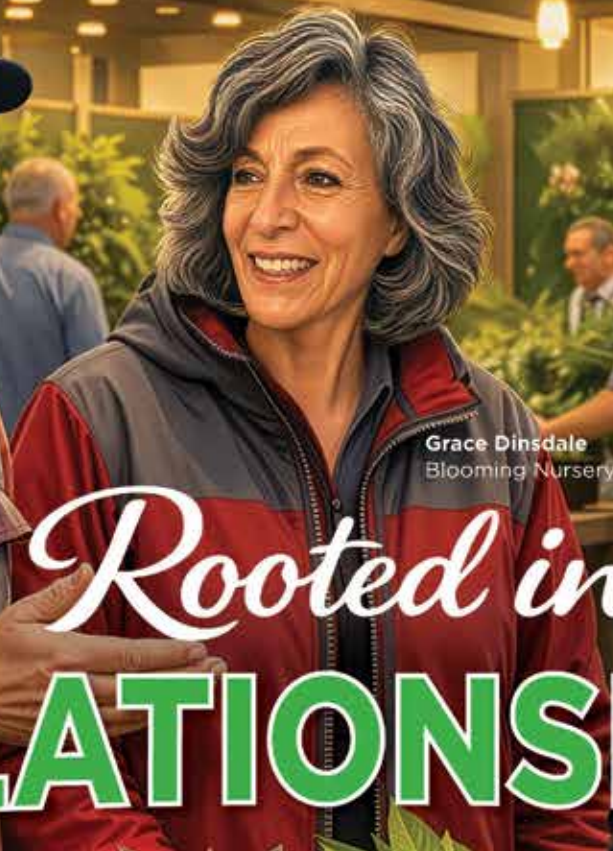
Save the date for the next Oregon Association of Nurseries Open House at Swan Island Dahlias, 995 N.W. 22nd Avenue in Canby, Oregon. Come and learn more about the OAN and the benefits its members receive, network to create new relationships and strengthen existing ones, and tour Swan Island Dahlias beautiful grounds in bloom. For more information, go to OAN.org/Events. ©

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Northwest News

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



Angi Bailey

ODA spotlights Angi Bailey as part of International Year of the Woman Farmer

Angi Bailey — a fourth-generation farmer, president of Oregon Farm Bureau, owner of **Verna Jean Nursery** (Farwest booth #11043) and Oregon Association of Nurseries member — was spotlighted by the Oregon Department of Agriculture to celebrate the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

A leader in Oregon's agricultural community, Bailey's mission is to uphold her family's tradition of excellence and to nurture the next generation of Oregon farmers, ODA stated in the online feature.

She grew up in the nursery that her mother, Verna Jean Hale (her nursery's namesake), established in Gresham in 1967. She believes that her mother's role in the industry broke ground for female farmers, even though her mother didn't see herself as a trailblazer and simply loved growing trees and helping customers.

Bailey encourages the next generation of female farmers to find their community, even if they must build it themselves. She noted that "farming and ranching are hard and complex ways of life, and it's easy to become isolated. Finding people who are in your corner — who mentor, encourage, and support you — is important."



Sabrina Rahz (left) and Esperanza Rios showcase some of the standards at My Patio Tree. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBINSON NURSERY

MORE JAPANESE BEETLE QUARANTINE RESTRICTIONS LIFTED FOR OREGON NURSERIES

Both Arizona and Nevada have agreed to drop quarantine restrictions on Oregon nursery stock that were in place due to Japanese beetle, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Growers may now ship to all states except Colorado without quarantine enforcement. ODA said it is still awaiting a final decision from Colorado.

The changes were made because Oregon has resumed its Japanese beetle trapping program, which had been left out of the governor's budget and not funded by the 2025 Oregon Legislature. The 2026 Oregon Legislature reinstated the program and funded it again.

Oregon has begun treating about 3,100 residential tax lots and 720 acres in the Portland area. They are not located near nursery production areas. However, the lapse in treatment funding concerned officials in other states.

ROBINSON NURSERY LAUNCHES MY PATIO TREE

Robinson Nursery (Farwest booth #18028)

has launched My Patio Tree (MyPatioTree.com), a direct-to-consumer retail site providing the most up-to-date trees grown on a standard.

"We like to say that My Patio Tree is the gold standard of standards," co-owner Chris Robinson said. "Our products are designed to bring flowers and color to eye level — right where people experience them. Whether someone is walking through a garden, stepping onto a patio, or opening their front door, our plants are meant to be the first thing they notice. While the name highlights patio use, our focus goes beyond that. We aim to elevate any space — patios, landscapes, or gardens — by creating focal points that stand out and leave a lasting impression."

The plants featured by My Patio Tree are specifically selected and developed to perform well long-term in containers while maintaining a more compact, manageable size. "We focus on genetics that naturally stay smaller and are well-suited for patio and container growing environments," Robinson said.

All of the plants offered through My Patio Tree are grown by Robinson Nursery.

My Patio Tree operates as a direct-to-consumer brand, which requires capabilities beyond traditional nursery operations. "We've invested in team members and resources focused

on consumer marketing, public relations, and digital advertising — areas that are essential to reaching and serving the end customer effectively,” Robinson said.

In order to manage the cost of freight, the nursery is leveraging industry organizations and partnerships that provide access to discounted shipping rates. “Beyond cost, success in direct shipping also comes down to building the right systems and processes to ensure plants arrive healthy and in great condition. It’s a combination of logistics, partnerships, and operational discipline that allows us to deliver a strong customer experience.”

The goal is to diversify Robinson’s business portfolio while expanding its ability to grow both people and plants in a way that makes a meaningful impact. “Ultimately, we’re driven by a larger purpose — to grow people and plants to change the world,” Robinson said.

SUPREME PERLITE ACQUIRED BY SILBRICO CORPORATION

Supreme Perlite of Portland, Oregon, has been purchased by **Silbrico Corporation**, a family-owned 5th generation perlite manufacturer that has been in business since 1946, the company announced in a release.

Supreme Perlite’s current operations will continue just as before, with no changes planned to its operations or production at this time, the company said. All operating staff will remain the same and are committed to ensuring a smooth transition.


Headquartered in Hodgkins, Illinois, Silbrico has built an international presence as a trusted supplier of perlite solutions, serving markets across the globe. The addition of Supreme Perlite complements Silbrico’s existing operations, including its modern production facility in Easton, Pennsylvania, completed in 2018.

“Silbrico’s mission has always been to provide customers with expertise, reliability, and innovation in perlite products,” said Silbrico President and CEO Steven Garnett. “With the addition of Supreme Perlite, we are strengthening that commitment and expanding our ability to serve customers around the world.”

MARION AG SERVICE CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Marion Ag Service (Farwest booth #15045) is celebrating its 50th anniversary, marking a half-century of service to the agricultural community. What began as a local solution for Willamette Valley growers has evolved into a nationally recognized agricultural retailer built on a foundation of trust, expertise, and deep-rooted relationships.

As a child, Marion Ag founder >>



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Northwest News

Robert Hockett always dreamed of becoming a farmer. Hockett surpassed that dream in 1967 when he broke away from full time farming to become one of the first liquid fertilizer distributors in the Willamette Valley. By 1976, five local farmers (Ersel Christopherson, Phil Wolf, Walt Wilmes, Ray Davidson and Hockett) joined together and formed Marion Ag Service.

The goal was to build a business based on reliability, agricultural expertise, and a deep respect for growers. Initially tasked to fill a void in liming needs for the local community, Marion Ag Service became one of the largest lime distributors in Western Oregon.

Hockett eventually transitioned into full ownership of the company. Half a century later, Marion Ag Service is now one of the few remaining family-owned ag retailers in the industry. “Reaching 50 years is something we’re incredibly proud of,” said John Hockett, CFO of Marion Ag Service. “This anniversary is really about the partners and employees who have made Marion Ag Service what it is today.”

To commemorate this golden anniversary, Marion Ag Service said it will host a year-long celebration featuring throwback pictures on social media, employee gatherings, and honoring the customers and community members who have been part of its journey.

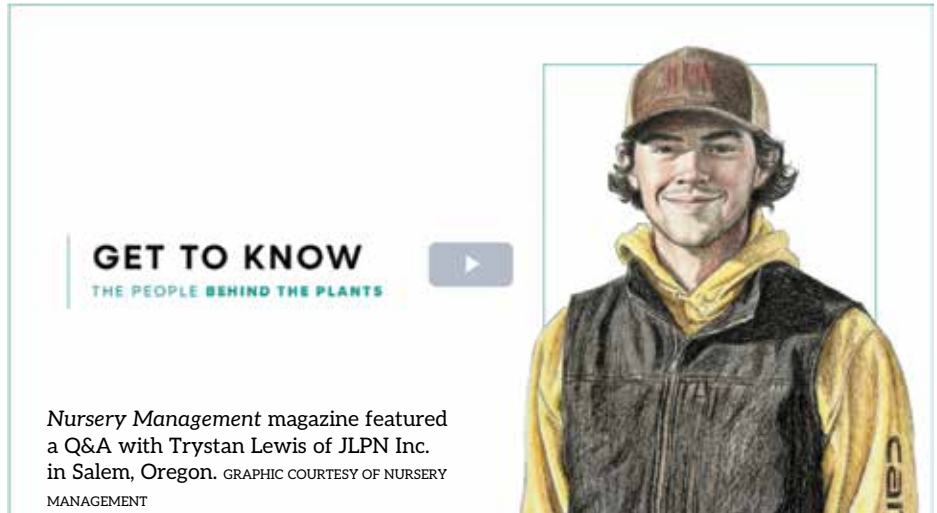
AMERICAN NATIONAL IS NOW FARM FAMILY

American National property and casualty companies has adopted the **Farm Family** (Farwest booth #12049) brand, said Senior Market Manager Janet Brooks.

“This change is more than a new look — it’s a return to our roots. Our company has proudly carried the Farm Family name before, and we’re honored to bring it back,” Brooks said.

Farm Family was originally founded in 1954 by farmers and business owners, who built an insurance company to protect the land, livelihoods, and communities they cared about. That mission of providing specialized coverage continues today.

Farm Family is an OAN member.



Nursery Management magazine featured a Q&A with Trystan Lewis of JLPN Inc. in Salem, Oregon. GRAPHIC COURTESY OF NURSERY MANAGEMENT

“We greatly value our relationship with the Oregon Association of Nurseries, and their members can continue to expect our agents and distribution partners to provide a customized approach to insurance, assessing operation risks and building a coverage plan unique to each individual business,” Brooks said.

“This year, Farwest attendees can once again engage with our team, the only difference is we’ll be exhibiting under the Farm Family Insurance banner,” Brooks said.

NURSERY MANAGEMENT FEATURES Q&A WITH TRISTAN LEWIS OF JLPN

From driving the golf cart through mud puddles as a child to becoming graft manager of the family business (**JLPN Inc.**, Salem, Oregon), Trystan Lewis’s passion for working at the nursery is one he’s had for a long time, according to Nursery Management magazine. Located in Oregon’s Willamette Valley, JLPN is a family seedling operation with Trystan Lewis, graft manager, joining the business as the fourth generation. The family business started with Trystan’s great grandfather, Merriwether Lewis, as a bare root seedling production.

Sold to his grandfather, Bill Lewis, then his dad, John Lewis, the nursery now produces bare root and container grown fruit and ornamental bare root deciduous shade tree seedlings. It also specializes in cultivar rooted cuttings, grafting and budding under stock.

Since Trystan joined, the nursery has added conifer plugs and Stage 3 tissue culture acclimation to the production line.

More at TinyURL.com/TristanJLPN.

APHIS EXPANDS BOX TREE MOTH QUARANTINE IN VIRGINIA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has issued a new federal order expanding the box tree moth (BTM) quarantine in Virginia. Effective immediately, Clarke County, Frederick County, and the City of Winchester have been added to the federal quarantine area, aligning with Virginia’s existing state quarantine established in December 2025. This action follows confirmed BTM detections in all three locations between July and September 2025. Those were the first detections of BTM in Virginia.

Announcements

BAILEY NURSERIES NAMES NEW PLANNING AND INVENTORY MANAGER

Chris Lee has been named by **Bailey Nurseries** (Farwest booth # 17019) as planning and inventory manager, a role focused on strengthening alignment across production, inventory, and sales to support the company’s continued growth, Bailey said in an announcement. Lee was formerly manager at Eshraghi Nursery.

Lee brings a diverse horticultural background shaped by experience across both coasts. A graduate of the University



Chris Lee

of Vermont, he began his career in landscaping before moving into independent garden center management in New Jersey. Since relocating to Oregon 18 years ago, Lee has held key roles in wholesale nursery operations, with experience spanning shipping management, inventory, and production planning. His ability to connect the complexities of growing, sales, and supply chain positions him well to drive efficiency and long-term value across the organization, Bailey said.

“I’m excited to be part of a team that’s focused on aligning production, inventory, and sales in a way that creates long-term value for both growers and customers,” Lee said.

“I have known of Chris for some time in this industry as being knowledgeable, a person of integrity, and carrying a positive attitude,” said Shane Brockshus, chief operating officer at Bailey. “Chris’s depth of experience, coupled with his strengths as a communicator and collaborator, make him an excellent fit for this role. We are already seeing the influence of his leadership on our people and the business — I’m very pleased to have him as part of the team.”

GROWSCAPE LAUNCHES EARTHSafe SUSTAINABILITY PLATFORM

Growscape (Farwest booth #11031) — the horticulture container company formed from the merger of The HC Companies in Ohio and Classic Home & Garden in Connecticut — has launched its EarthSafe sustainability platform, according to *Nursery Management*.

The platform has three components.

ReAssure advances post-consumer recycled material and long-term sustainability.

The expanded ReSource Recycling Program is a scalable, no-cost solution designed to help growers reduce waste across the horticulture supply chain that accepts a broader range of materials — including plastic, corrugate, paper, glass, pallets and metal — with enhanced data and reporting to support grower sus- >>

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Northwest News

tainability initiatives for retailer sustainability scorecards.

ReTerra is a backyard compostable plastic growing container developed through an exclusive partnership and exclusive agreement in the North American horticultural market with Kaimarra Advanced Materials.

BIOWORKS INTRODUCES BIONEX™ INSECTICIDE AND HOPLITE™ MOSS KILLER

BioWorks (Farwest booth #10028), a leading provider of biological-based plant health solutions, announced the launch of two new products to expand their crop protection portfolio.

BioNex™ is a pyrethrins and canola oil-based contact insecticide and miticide that delivers broad-spectrum control with rapid knockdown of some of the most destructive crop pests throughout all

stages of life, the company said. BioNex is labeled for use in greenhouse, shadehouse, nursery, hoophouse and container-grown nursery crops. The broad-spectrum control includes psyllids, thrips, aphids, mites, leafhoppers, scale insects, mealybugs, bugs (lygus, stink, squash), whiteflies and more.

Hoplite™ is a selective herbicide, formulated with potassium salts of fatty acids that provides fast, highly effective control of liverwort, moss, algae and lichens, the company said. Hoplite's mode of action works by causing leakage of cell contents and rapid desiccation of target organisms, resulting in visible yellowing and browning shortly after application. Hoplite is labeled for use in controlled environment agriculture, including greenhouses and nurseries, and targets liverwort, algae, moss, and lichens.

For more information go to BioWorksInc.com/Products/Bionex or BioWorksInc.com/Products/Hoplite.

PROVEN WINNERS INTRODUCES FAIRYTRAIL FRESCO®

Fairytrail Fresco® Cascade Hydrangea® is the latest introduction in **Proven Winners'** (Farwest booth #8055) Fairytrail Cascade Hydrangea® collection.

Fairytrail Fresco is a blooming machine with tons of blue or pink flowers packing the branches. Flower color (blue or pink) will depend on soil pH and aluminum content. The plant grows to 3.5-4 ft tall and 4.5 feet wide.

Cascade Hydrangeas have long, arching branches that cascade, giving the hydrangea a unique garland-like habit. They set flower buds at every node along the branches, rather than just at the tip.

Oregon growers of the Fairytrail series of hydrangeas include **Bauman's Farm and Garden** (Gervias), **Godfrey Nursery** (Aumsville), **P&D Nursery** (Tualatin) and **Sester Farms** (Gresham). ©



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Shrubs can also be stars in the garden



Mike Darcy

Head “plant nerd,” longtime speaker, host of gardening shows on radio and TV, and author of the In the Garden email newsletter. You can reach Mike, or subscribe to his newsletter, at ITGMikeDarcy@Comcast.net.



Cestrum elegans is worthwhile growing because of the long flowering period in the summer.

PHOTOS BY MIKE DARCY

Visiting other gardens and talking with other gardeners is a favorite pastime of mine. Doing so is often a regular item on my calendar, especially during the spring and summer months.

I am visiting other gardens for a multitude of reasons including the interaction with other gardeners, seeing the design of another garden, and perhaps seeing and learning about a new plant or plants.

I hesitate to refer to a plant as “common” because that seems to somehow give it a connotation of being somewhat less than what it may be. *Viburnum plicatum tomentosum* ‘Mariesii’ is often seen in gardens. It may be common, but when in bloom, it is a magnificent shrub.

However, I am often looking for a plant that perhaps is displayed in a way that I have not seen before. Maybe it is in a grouping of other plants and draws the eye to it. Maybe it is a new plant to me — and as the saying goes, “There is always room for one more plant.”

The plants listed in this column are not necessarily unique, but in my garden, they are plants that consistently attract attention from garden visitors.

While rhododendrons are widely used in gardens throughout the Pacific Northwest, the diversity of the genus is amazing. One in particular that makes a colorful shrub all year with the variegation of the leaves is *Rhododendron ponticum* ‘Variegatum’. The leaves have a white variegation along the margins, and a further bonus is the purple flowers that appear in mid spring. It is not a tall grower, reaching maybe 6 feet in 10 years. Because of the colorful foliage, it can brighten up a dark corner and is ideal in a woodland garden setting.

Calycanthus raulstonii ‘Hartlage Wine’ is a vigorous deciduous shrub that is a prolific spring bloomer. The flowers are a wine red, almost brown, which gives it a very distinctive color that is not often seen in flowers. It sometimes goes by the

common name of spice bush, Carolina allspice, or sweet shrub — and with a name like that, one would assume that it is quite fragrant. However, I have never detected any fragrance.

The flowers are the main attraction of ‘Hartlage Wine’. When in bloom, it is very much admired by visitors. I am often asked what the name is which indicates to me that it is not widely grown, which is surprising. As mentioned earlier, it is a vigorous shrub with my plant being probably 12 feet in height and at least 8 feet in width. I do prune it, but evidently not enough! It likes a location with full sun, though I have seen plants growing in partial shade, but the flower production is not quite as profuse.

While not reliably winter hardy in the Portland area, *Cestrum elegans* is worthwhile growing because of the long flowering period in the summer. It has masses of purple-red flowers that are followed by clusters of red berries which are very showy. I have two plants in my garden, one in the ground and one in a pot. Last winter was mild, so both plants survived and have been blooming most of April and there is no sign of them stopping. The red berries that appear after flowering are almost as attractive as the flowers. It thrives in full sun, and the plants have reached about 6 feet in height.

No need to worry about *Citrus trifoliata* ‘Flying Dragon’ being damaged by a cold winter. Often called hardy citrus or hardy orange, it is probably more of a curiosity plant but can be very attractive when covered with small oranges. While referred to as hardy orange, it is not an orange that is edible. The plant itself has contorted, »



Citrus trifoliata 'Flying Dragon' is cold hardy and very attractive when covered with small oranges. PHOTO BY MIKE DARCY

twisty branches and downward facing thorns. These thorns are not tiny and can be 2-3 inches long. This is not a plant to have in a location where people will brush against it! 'Flying Dragon' makes a nice container plant and in the spring has white citrus-like fragrant flowers. It is deciduous and often the orange fruit will still be on the tree with bare branches.

Never a plant that I thought that I would be mentioning as a shrub for



Calycanthus raulstonii 'Hartlage Wine' is a vigorous deciduous shrub that is a prolific spring bloomer. PHOTO BY MIKE DARCY

Pacific Northwest Gardens, but the Brazilian native *Tibouchina* (princess flower), has survived for two years in my garden. It is in a large pot and has no protection. Last winter it had intermittent flowers and no die-back. The previous winter I did throw a blanket over it on freezing nights, and it did die back to the main trunk, but new growth soon appeared. It is blooming now and has been continuously in flower. The royal



Rhododendron ponticum 'Variegatum' has a white variegation along the margins of leaves and purple flowers. PHOTO BY MIKE DARCY

purple flowers are outstanding!

We never know what new plant we might find when visiting another garden or garden center. Even familiar plants can sometimes look different in another setting. I am constantly adding and removing plants. Part of the fun of gardening is trying something new. Be bold, try a new plant. There are many orphan shrubs out there looking for a new garden to shine in. ☺

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From workhorse to wow



Shrubs are stepping into the spotlight as low-maintenance, visually appealing plants

BY ERICA BROWNE GRIVAS

Once the garden's Cinderella — dependable, hardworking, and largely ignored in favor of showier plants — shrubs are finally having their moment in the spotlight.

Designers have long understood shrubs' central role in creating structure and seasonal presence, but gardeners and breeders are seeing their potential to take center stage with a host of benefits. A new generation of cultivars and overlooked performers deliver multi-functionality and beauty, while asking for little in return.

"Shrubs are stepping into the spotlight, the main event, delivering strong visual appeal, long seasonal interest, and adaptability across climates," said Tom Foley Jr., former director of product development at **Everde Growers** (Farwest [»](#))



Clockwise from top: Spring Sizzle® Panicle Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Bailpanthree' PP36526) from First Editions Shrubs & Trees, Banana Split® Daphne (*Daphne odora* 'Monzulzay' PP35,217) from Monrovia Nursery Company and Lotus Moon™ Pearlbush (*Exochorda x macrantha* 'Bailmoon') from First Editions. PHOTOS COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES AND MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY

From workhorse to wow



Sugar Shack® 2.0 Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis* 'SMCOSS'). PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVEN WINNERS

booth #14037), “all while demanding less work from increasingly time pressed household consumers and landscape maintenance firms.

Shrubs are meeting the shared needs of consumers and landscape contractors, Foley noted – reduced maintenance, multi-seasonal appeal with increased flower power, compact size, and offering sustainability benefits like low-water use and pollinator support.

“For growers, retailers, and landscape professionals,” he said, “this translates into better sell through, higher customer satisfaction, and repeat business.”

And buyers seem to be willing to pay a premium for these high performers.

“This spring we’re seeing less price sensitivity,” said Katie Tamony, chief marketing officer and trend spotter at **Monrovia** (Farwest booth #17037). “Consumers are willing to invest in plants and are actively searching for varieties that have a reputation for being high quality. We’re also seeing consumers purchasing in multiples more than in the past.”

Tamony added, “In addition to home gardeners wanting their shrubs to do more than one thing in the garden, our research shows that they’re looking for something



Sweet Cherry Tea™ Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'ZLEBic5' PP31235). PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERDE

unique — a plant that not every neighbor has. They’re looking for bold and bright colors, interesting textures and shrubs that provide for pollinators and birds.”

New definition of low maintenance

As we ask more from our plants in smaller-sized gardens, the definition of an easy, “low-maintenance” shrub expands. Customers are increasingly interested in shrubs featuring disease-resistance, a tight habit needing little pruning, repeat or longer bloom, and multi-season performance.

Could substance be overtaking style as the new selling point?

Breeders are responding with shrubs that can do more than ever.

“I think breeding is becoming less about chasing a single flashy trait, and more about stacking improvements so a shrub feels like a total upgrade,” said Natalie Carmolli, public relations specialist at Proven Winners ColorChoice Shrubs. “Our breeding team has always asked themselves, ‘Does it solve more problems and look better doing it?’ If it doesn’t, we don’t release it.”

Often, she said, Spring Meadow dubs a plant “2.0” to indicate it’s an improved



Golden Child™ Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Mirjam' PP20127). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY

version of the lineage you know.

Here are some qualities and new favorites to watch for.

Foliage takes the lead

Flashy foliage elevates shrub quality above and beyond its flowers, making a variety stand out from the pack in the garden center and the border.

Compared to blooms, foliage is a stronger, lasting presence that offers contrast, texture and depth for months of the growing season — sometimes ending fall with a flourish of new color.

“Foliage carries just as much ‘wow’ as flowers,” said Carmolli. “No matter how long the bloom time, flowers are fleeting. Foliage does the heavy lifting when blooms are done or resting.”

In addition to using shrubs for structure and privacy screening, people are looking for distinctive shrubs that can make a border come to life, Tamony said. “[People are] using them as a statement plant — the one friends come into the garden and say, ‘What is that?!’”

Foley agreed. “One of the most significant trends influencing shrub demand is the rise of foliage driven design,” he said. “Consumers want color that lasts

beyond bloom season, reducing reliance on flowers alone for visual interest.”

Gold, lime, blue and all kinds of variegated foliage continue to grow in popularity. Monrovia’s Banana Split® Daphne (*D. odora* ‘Monzulzay’ PP35217) has creamy bold variegation that almost eclipses its fragrant blossoms.

On top of that, gothy purples and wine-dark blacks are having a serious moment, said Alec Charais, chief marketing and product development officer for **Bailey Nurseries** (Farwest booth #17019). This is seen in plants like First Editions® Eclipse® Bigleaf Hydrangea (*H. macrophylla* ‘Bailmacseven’) and Spilled Wine® Weigela (*W. florida* ‘Bokraspiwi’ PP23781).

Compact revolution meets patio culture

As smaller gardens proliferate with greater population density, shrubs are adding a sense of luxury and permanence to patio and container plantings, said Tamony.

“Planting shrubs in containers is a trend we’re watching for 2026. Patios and decks are now an extension of the living room, designed and decorated with plants to create an elegant oasis. This ‘patio culture’ trend is more than just adding a few annuals to brighten up the space. It’s

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From workhorse to wow

about creating curated gardens in containers and smaller landscape areas. Shrubs play a big role in these outdoor rooms, offering structure and more variety.”

Tamony recommended Butterscotch Baby™ Spirea (*S. japonica* ‘Minspiz02’ PPAF for its kaleidoscopic color-shifting, from emerging a warm, caramel-butterscotch to a bright green in summer, and back to caramel rust in fall — all while staying under 1.5 feet high and 2 feet wide.

Charais highlighted two compact standouts.

“We tend to say that *Distylium* are the best plants you’ve never heard of, and that’s a darned shame,” he said. “For smaller areas, a compact variety of *Distylium* called Swing Low® is awesome. It stays low to the ground, has broadleaf evergreen foliage that always looks good, and is adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions. Another plant that doesn’t get enough attention is [Love

Child® Sweetspire (*Itea virginica* ‘Bailteaone’ PP31318)]. It’s the perfect summer-flowering plant and stays nice and tidy compared to older varieties — and it gets great fall color!”

For Foley, *Thuja* ‘Junior Giant’ “fits this niche well, providing the familiar utility of arborvitae in a more controlled form.” Everde’s *Syringa patula* ‘Violet Uprising’ brings lilac fragrance and bloom, reaching 5 feet tall and wide in 10 years.

Everde, seeing how many hydrangeas performed inconsistently due to chilling hour requirements, developed the Plush® series, which were trialed in Oregon, Northern and Southern California. These plants stay upright and bloom reliably with 200–300 chill hours, eliminating staking. Everde’s *Forsythia* Magical® Gold (*Forsythia × intermedia* ‘Kolgold’), at a compact size, blooms on old and new wood, delivering blooms even if pruned at the wrong time.

Better boxwood options

In the face of boxwood blight, consumers are looking for replacements for privacy screening, evergreen hedging, and topiaries. Everde offers the disease-resistant Better Boxwood® series at heights ranging from 1–2 feet to 6–8 feet tall.

Spring Meadow offers the NewGen boxwood series, which Carmolli said is “selected for its resistance to blight and boxwood leaf miner, two troublesome issues. My favorite is NewGen Independence® — it has a very dense, rounded habit, like ‘Green Beauty’, but with the added boxwood leaf miner resistance.

Both NewGen ‘Independence® and NewGen ‘Freedom® are good choices, the latter having a bit faster growth rate, which results in a larger, looser habit. Of course, proper care is still important — but they are gorgeous, low maintenance choices that look amazing.”

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Happy Face® Orange Potentilla (*Dasiphora fruticosa* 'Minporoug01' PP36116). PHOTO COURTESY OF SPRING MEADOW NURSERY

Ecology moves to the endcap

As climate challenges mount, pollinator support, native plants, water conservation and wildlife value are emerging as mainstream selling points rather than add-ons.

Consumers are looking for plants that offer greater purpose as well as beauty.

“As sustainability becomes more than a buzzword, shrubs adapted to local climates are seeing renewed interest,” said Foley. “Native and regionally appropriate plants bring built in resilience, often translating to lower water use, reduced chemical inputs, and better long-term performance.”

He recommended manzanita as a group to watch. “Few shrubs combine sculptural beauty and drought tolerance like manzanita. *Arctostaphylos coloradensis* ‘Mock’ and ‘Panchito’ offer refined takes on a classic native, with compact forms, attractive evergreen foliage, and striking bark that becomes more ornamental with age. These selections thrive in low water landscapes and require little additional water once established, aligning with consumer demand for water-wise planting.”

At Bailey, Charais pointed out Fiber Optics® buttonbush. “Fiber Optics® is

more compact than the species and is a perfect choice for remediation plantings. Its flowers are full of nectar making it a great food source for wildlife and it couldn’t be easier to grow.” Carmolli echoed the praises of buttonbush with ‘Sugar Shack 2.0,’ which she calls a “pollinator magnet” with vivid red fall color.

Aronia as a group are well adapted to climate extremes. “‘Low Scape Snowfire’ is stunning in spring when it is covered in blooms,” said Carmolli, “and Berry Scape has delightful beadlike summer fruit that transitions from yellow, to orange, to red as they mature. ‘Low Scape Snowfire’ and ‘Berry Scape’ aronia are highly adaptable, drought tolerant, and have wide hardiness zones as well — USDA 3–9 and USDA 4–9, respectively.”

The overlooked overachievers

Some vintage favorite shrubs are gaining new fans with improved breeding.

At Monrovia, Tamony recommended Seaside Swirl™ Rugosa Roses as being exceptionally hardy (Zones 3–9), pollinator-attracting, and featuring a fantastic fragrance. They also top out at three feet tall and wide, unlike the typical rambling habit of many. ➤



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From workhorse to wow

Fragrance was cited by many as a feature consumers are asking for that elevates shrubs to must-haves, from roses to lilacs and daphnes.

Carmolli highlighted potentillas, a cottage garden classic in the rose family, as underused wonders.

“I beat the drum of potentilla a lot, but I think they deserve it,” she said. “*Potentilla fruticosa* (or shrubby potentilla) is tolerant of wind, poor soils, and cold, and has a long bloom time! I love its tiny blue-green foliage and the bright, open blooms that come in many colors. The Happy Face series of Potentilla has a very strong yellow and white — both bloom in my Midwest garden in summer and keep going until frost. There is also a newer ‘Happy Face® Orange’ variety that is fun and unusual. All are hardy in USDA zones 2–7, love the sun, are deer resistant and drought tolerant.”

What the market is telling us

Consumers want more from their gardens, and more from the plants they invest their time and money in. This is especially true when they garden in smaller spaces. Feature benefits can include problem-solving like low-to-no pruning or disease resistance, compact size, extended bloom, and qualities like pollinator support, native origin or breeding, and drought tolerance. Standout foliage, blooms or fragrance add high desirability.

Shrubs offer so much beauty and function to the garden — and never more so than today. By offering selections that deliver on many levels, we can appeal to customers looking for a richer way to experience their gardens. Carmolli said, “This is a slower, more intentional way to enjoy outdoor spaces — one that, I think many gardeners are leaning toward.” ☺

*Erica Browne Grivas is an award-winning journalist and gardener pushing zone boundaries in Seattle, Washington. She can be reached at EricaGrivas.com and *A Gardener’s Path* on Substack.*

A pioneering influence

For nearly five decades, Gary English has been rooted in service and committed to excellence

BY ERICA BROWNE GRIVAS

For more than 30 years, Gary English has been a steady presence in Oregon's nursery industry — arriving early, staying late, and nurturing both plants and people.

English, who started **Landsystems Nursery** in Bend in 1978, just concluded an unmatched 33 years of service on the Oregon Association of Nurseries Board of Directors. He has been president of the Central Oregon Chapter since 2006 and continues in that role. Along the way he earned several awards, including Retailer of the Year, and recognition as an Oregon Nursery Pioneer.

Longtime advocate

Over nearly five decades in the green industry and more than three decades of board service, Gary has been an advocate for representation, relationship-building, and practical knowledge in Central Oregon's challenging growing climate. A longtime proponent of collaboration across the nursery, landscape, and contractor sectors, he forged alliances that strengthened attendance and education in a region with few nurseries.

It all began, English recalled, when OAN's executive director at the time, Clayton Hannon, invited him to lead the Bend chapter. "He asked me if I would do it, and I said yes," English said. "I don't know what was the matter with me, but I did it."

Central Oregon's climate and geography isolated it from Western Oregon's bustling agricultural zone, and English immediately saw the need to build connections.

"They just need representation on this side of the mountains, because candidly, there's not a lot of nurseries over here."

To boost participation, English created a multidisciplinary "Green Industry Group" that incorporated landscape contractors in Central Oregon along with OAN growers and nurseries. "To bridge that gap, we formed an alliance with OLCA, the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association."

Friends and longtime colleagues describe a reliable, determined, wry, and quietly passionate man — who in the



From left: Carson Lord, Gary English, Cindy Lou Pease and Jim Simnitt at the 2019 OAN Convention where English received an Honorary Lifetime Membership award. OAN FILE PHOTO

pre-Zoom era always made trek driving over the mountains to the meetings in the Willamette Valley, usually with his dog in tow. A committed Oregon State University Beavers fan, Rod Park (**Park's Nursery**) said he and Hannon had regular dinner bets about the annual Civil War football game with the University of Oregon Ducks — bets which English largely lost.

"He was able to kind of shore up that almost that whole region. He was the face of Central Oregon," said John Coulter, Western Region manager of **Master Nursery Garden Centers** and an OAN past president now based in Phoenix. "And he had the background because not only did he have retail, but he also had landscape design, and he did some growing of his own. So, he had a multifaceted operation, so he understood the different elements that businesses would go through in our industry, which made him a great board member."

Cindy Lou Pease, owner of **Evans Farms** in Oregon City, has known English through OAN for decades.

"We were on the same side of the fence with a battle with the state over workers compensation, and we managed to get through that one together, and that's when I think I really got to know him," she said. "He's very tenacious, and he's very straightforward, and he's got really high integrity. He's willing to stand up for what he believes in and that is

something I always admire."

A man of humor

English's agreeable personality and humor always came in handy.

"He's just one of those people who's always got a happy smile on his face when you see him," said Coulter. "He expresses concerns or ideas or concepts, but he does it in a manner that's very pleasant to work with. That's an important attribute. In the nursery industry we like to say we are competitors by day and friends by night."

One way they bonded were themed costume nights at the convention, and Coulter said, "Gary always really enjoyed dressing up to fit the theme," even if it meant donning a toga.

"Gary has been a reliable partner in both business and volunteering," said Kathy LeCompte, owner of **Brooks Tree Farm**. "As someone who has volunteered with OAN for many years, I can truly appreciate the time and effort he has spent supporting our industry — and at an inconvenient distance. Gary kept the Central Oregon chapter active long after it would have faded, just by being willing. He was instrumental in building bridges between the grower community and the retail and design talent."

"He's been diligent in making sure everyone connects the dots when we don't always understand each other's point >>

of view. He is going to leave a big hole in that on the board.”

A nursery's evolution

A Bend native son, English credits his mother's love for plants — and getting him working in the garden with his four brothers — with igniting his passion for horticulture and design. After graduating from Oregon State University with a degree in horticulture, he went on to earn a master's degree in landscape architecture from Michigan State University. When he returned home, he opened Landsystems in 1978, building it into a full-service garden center and design/build firm.

Bend's high-desert climate, with high winds, low rainfall and humidity, and 85-day growing season (on average), presented distinct challenges from the start. He quickly discovered that plants shipped in weren't ready for Bend. “Bend is very unique from a plant standpoint. Knowledge is key, knowing what you can and can't grow. There are a lot of things that are zoned for here that won't grow here.”

“Our plant palette is way bigger than most people realize,” he said. He skips gingkoes and hackberries (*Celtis occidentalis*) altogether and uses select varieties like the ‘Jack Frost’ series of Japanese maples and H1 and H2 rhododendrons (hardy to -25 and -15 F).

Among the challenges, he said, “We're at 3,600 feet and we get a lot of late frosts. So that takes out a lot of plant material that isn't acclimated. So that's one reason we raise so much ourselves,” he said. “It was hard to get acclimated material, so we started our own growing operation. And the stuff we bring in, we hold it at least a year.”

Pease, who supplies Landsystems yearly, said, “I've tried to get him to try plant material, like ‘Hazel Smith’ sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum* ‘Hazel Smith’). He said, ‘It doesn't do well here and I'm not gonna do it.’ And I keep thinking, ‘It grows in Boise — it ought to grow,’ but he says, ‘We've tried it, and it doesn't work.’”

That dedication to customer success has earned Landsystems a reputation of trustworthiness. English said often buyers

from big box stores aren't local and their buying mistakes are better than any advertising he could do. Many a lifelong customer has been born, he said, when a new gardener comes to Landsystems for help after buying a big box plant that fails.

Park credits English's persistence and creativity with the nursery's longevity in such a challenging site. “Why it's such a great business is that people trust him because he's experienced their experience,” he said, adding that English excels at engaging his customers. “That's kind of a talent. To be able to get people to want to play with their yard, especially in central Oregon.”

Pease agreed, saying, “Their customer service is high. They'll bend over backwards for a customer. They've got customers they've had for 30 and 40 years.”

Landsystems offers design services to help new residents create gardens in this harsh environment.

Climate shifts are opening new possibilities to try some marginal plants again, he said. “We might give redbuds another try,” for instance. “It's a really popular plant with people from Seattle and elsewhere, but we haven't been able to do it.”

The property comprises 22 acres, of which the retail operation claims four.

After years of trial and error with expansions, he's found the nursery's sweet spot.

“When we got to 75 employees, I was in the process of going crazy,” he said. “I said, I'm not having fun, I'm a glorified babysitter.”

Now, with 35 employees, he finds it much more manageable.

“I'm a workaholic, and it's farming basically,” English said. “Farming plants. And I love plants, especially trees. Then there are many of my employees who have been with me 40 years, so it's like family.”

He says he gets up with the sun and works all day, and repeats it until January, when he heads to Hawaii to recharge. The nursery closes from January through March 15, at which point it's full tilt through Christmas.

Bend's meteoric rise

In 1980, Bend was home to about 17,000 people, according to [BendSource.com](#). Now a popular ski and retirement destination,

Bend has grown 500%, to over 104,000 residents today. Demand for housing and land is only growing.

“Everyone wants to live in Bend,” English said.

But even as Bend grows, English says the community remains intimate. “People are always coming to the nursery and encouraging us not to become a subdivision — because there's a ton of those coming up,” he said.

To keep pace with that growth, Coulter said, “He's had to make sure that the industry that we have over there, whether retailer or landscaper, is also involved in the communities and make sure they have a voice in those communities.”

“He's sitting on some extremely valuable property,” said Park. “He doesn't have to do what he's doing. He wants to. When people do that, it tells you there's something about the business that they love that's beyond dollars.”

A strong future

Looking ahead, Gary hopes the industry can rediscover the connection and camaraderie that once defined it.

“When I started, the leadership focused on relationship-building and growing membership,” he said. “We got up to about 1,200 members. I built a lot of great friends and relationships. Now, the focus has shifted to the political and government arena, because there's so much more going on there.”

Remote meetings, he adds, make connecting in person more challenging.

English, 77, got married to Kathy Temple (English) a year ago, “inheriting” two daughters, Alexis and Tatum — one a landscape designer and the other a container nursery manager — whom he hopes will someday take over Landsystems.

But he's in no rush for retirement. “As long as I'm alive and kicking, I'll be a mentor to the group,” he promised. ☺

*Erica Browne Grivas is an award-winning journalist and gardener pushing zone boundaries in Seattle, Washington. She can be reached at [EricaGrivas.com](#) and *A Gardener's Path on Substack*.*



Return to nature

How Bailey Nurseries removed dams to build environmental resilience

BY LINDA REPPLINGER

On a crisp late-winter morning, Bailey Nurseries Water Resources Manager Jon Estes and Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Projects Manager Jordan Anderson trek through newly established willows — already 8 feet tall — along the banks of Salt Creek in Yamhill County.

A startled great blue heron flies off. The water in the creek is running fairly clear of sediment — all signs that their work is paying off.

Bailey Nurseries (Farwest booth #17019) has been taking strides to create on-farm systems that sustain their operations and the resources that support them. Water and watersheds have been a major focus of these system improvements. “Water will only become increasingly more important,” said Estes.

Through a combination of projects, Bailey Nurseries is caring for the water and fish and wildlife habitat in Salt Creek. Projects like these are important because they add up to improve Oregon’s environment, provide clean water, and provide



Above: Salt Creek before any changes were made at Bailey Nurseries outside of Yamhill. Top photo: A 2024 drone photo showing water flowing through where the North Dam was, and the majority of Bailey's Yamhill operations in the background. ABOVE PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE EARTH TOPPHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES

a win-win for the nursery business as well. In the case of the dam removal projects, Bailey Nurseries partnered with the Yamhill Soil and Water District and a state grantmaking agency, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

About Bailey Nurseries

A fifth-generation, family-owned business based out of St. Paul, Minnesota, Bailey opened its first West Coast nursery at the Yamhill location in 1977. Today, Bailey has three locations in Oregon and one in Washington, totaling over 1,000 acres of >>

Return to nature



Water flows through the area of the creek where the South Dam was. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES

shrubs, trees, and plants on the West Coast that are shipped wholesale across North America. Additional locations in Illinois and Georgia round out the operations.

Dam removal

In 2022, Bailey Nurseries completed two earthen dam removal projects on their property on Salt Creek, a tributary to the North Yamhill River, outside of Yamhill, Oregon. The North Dam was constructed by previous owners in the 1960s to create an instream reservoir for agricultural operations. Bailey added the South Dam twenty-five years ago to catch runoff from the nursery's container yard.

In 2016, Bailey completed an important project that had significant positive water quality benefits and eventually made the dam removals possible. When Bailey Nurseries discovered the creek was listed as essential salmonid habitat for winter steelhead rearing, the nursery constructed an off-stream container yard runoff recovery pond that also allowed irrigation water to be recycled and stored away from thirsty invasive grasses.

Paired with an upgraded irrigation system, the new setup provides greater

control and precision, reducing overall water use and building resilience against seasonal fluctuations in water supply. Drainage tiles were rerouted from both instream reservoirs to the new pond, and the abandoned dams were no longer of use.

"The dams were sitting there free-flowing, often flooding in spring and fall," Estes said.

In 2017, Estes got the ball rolling for dam removal because "it was the right thing to do." He hired an ecologist to identify and map the area's wetland and start the process of obtaining permits and engineering for dam removal.

Completing the permitting process with multiple agencies can be challenging. This is where coordinating with a local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or Watershed Council (WC) can be especially helpful. "Don't be afraid to reach out," Estes said. "It's especially great having local folks to work with — they want to help and support. They know avenues of getting things done that a regular landowner doesn't. "It can feel vulnerable for landowners to open up to agencies. You worry that it will invite unintended visitors or repercussions.



A Bailey employee plants natives purchased at Yamhill SWCD's annual native plant sale. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES

Going through this process, I don't feel that way anymore. Every agency I worked with was supportive and recognized that this is the type of project they hope to see more of.

"What really stood out for me

throughout the whole process was the importance of relationships. For example, the engineer on this project was someone we had worked with several times before. He introduced us to the ecologist who ended up leading us through the entire permitting process. She helped us find the environmental consultants we needed, who had worked with the aquatic construction company that ended up removing the dams. Not to mention our long-standing relationship with Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and how they introduced us to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's (OWEB's) Small Grant Program that helped fund the project. I truly feel that without these relationships, the project would not have been as successful."

Historic aerial photos from the Army Corps of Engineers, taken in 1936, provided a reference for the natural condition of Salt Creek before dams and reservoirs were

constructed. The removal of the North and South dams happened within 2.5 weeks of each other. The North Dam footprint required a stream channel to be constructed through the old pond area, creating a total of 12,520 square feet of wetland.

The South Dam removal created an additional 1,660 square feet of wetland with a combined 2.5 miles of Salt Creek now accessible for fish passage. Enhancements such as contouring the streambank and establishing riparian plants are designed to support and encourage beavers to move in and take over the river engineering. Beaver dams and lodges slow the flow of water while maintaining fish and water passage.

Re-routing the container yard drain tiles to an off-channel pond and removing the dams on Salt Creek has significantly improved water quality by reducing erosion and limiting sediment, fertilizers, and pesticides from entering the stream. Thies

has created healthier conditions for aquatic life and folks enjoying downstream parks on hot summer days. Another benefit is that spring and fall flooding has decreased, keeping local roads accessible for the community.

Bailey's work toward sustainability

Building a sustainable future is something Bailey is working to build as a core part of the company culture. A company-wide committee geared toward sustainability works on projects that help Bailey be a positive influence on local communities and continue to make the right decisions.

Last year's initiatives include participating in Adopt-A-Highway programs at all of their locations, implementing an employee plastic recycling program, and looking into alternative fuels and ways to build resilience for water use.

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Water in the creek flows through the area where the South Dam was and downstream past Bailey Nurseries property towards the North Yamhill River in the distance. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES

Partners in conservation

Soil and Water Conservation Districts work with local landowners to guide them through the process of restoration and conservation projects. Yamhill SWCD has also worked with **Monrovia Nursery Company** and Native Habitat Nursery in the area, utilizing OWEB Small Grants and the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program.

"Yamhill SWCD provides local leadership in conserving, restoring, and protecting water and soil, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources in Yamhill County," Anderson said. "Through technical and financial assistance, Yamhill SWCD helps citizens, landowners, and businesses utilize best practices, find solutions, and realize conservation goals. Over the past decade, the district has worked with nurseries to implement a variety of projects, including dam removal, native pollinator hedgerows, high-tunnel installations, water storage, and irrigation efficiency. In addition, Yamhill SWCD has facilitated nursery educational workshops on plant health and pest prevention."

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is an independent Oregon

state agency that provides grants to help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies. OWEB was created to support the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, which envisions state and local partners working together with private landowners to collaboratively achieve the state's water quality, fish, and wildlife goals. Funding for OWEB grants comes from the Oregon Lottery and other state sources, along with federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

OWEB distributes grant funding through local partners like Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Watershed Councils. If a nursery is interested in completing a restoration or conservation project and exploring grant funding available, the local SWCD or WC is an excellent first point of contact. SWCDs and WCs work together with other local partners to administer the small grants program in each of their communities.

"OWEB's Small Grants Program is meant to help fund 'small acts of kindness,' to improve watershed health," said Theresa

DeBardelaben, OWEB's Small Grant Program Coordinator. Small Grant projects are short, streamlined projects that are easily implemented on the ground — they benefit water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife habitat. These projects can be approved for funding in as little as a month. Recent updates to the program have widened the eligibility for organizations to apply for small grant projects up to \$20,000.

If you are interested in restoration or conservation projects, reach out to your local Soil and Water Conservation District, Watershed Council, or non-profit organization to talk about resource concerns and project ideas. ©

Linda Repplinger has been serving as the publications specialist at the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board since 2022. In this role, she enthusiastically shares the numerous benefits of Oregon's watersheds and is dedicated to highlighting the achievements of grantees and partners who are actively involved in on-the-ground restoration efforts. Her love for Oregon landscapes stems from growing up on a farm in the Willamette Valley. She can be reached at Linda.Repplinger@oweb.oregon.gov

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Qualifications: • Minimum 10 years of hands-on wholesale nursery propagation experience • At least 5 years in a lead or management role within a propagation or greenhouse setting • Proven expertise in seed propagation, tissue culture tip cuttings, and hardwood cuttings • Strong knowledge of greenhouse systems, climate control, and irrigation practices • Demonstrated leadership and team management skills • High attention to detail and commitment to plant quality • Ability to plan, prioritize, and manage multiple propagation cycles simultaneously • Experience with nursery production software or tracking systems is a plus • Bilingual in English and Spanish a plus

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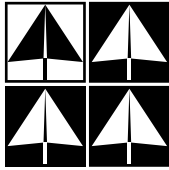
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A microscopic threat

Managing *Phytophthora*: timing, temperature and emerging threats



Figure 1: Rhododendrons with increasing root rot severity (left to right) showing how above ground symptoms lag behind root damage. Despite 30% root loss, the plant on the right showed no obvious above ground symptoms, while the middle plant with 50% root loss appeared stunted but maintained green foliage. Both plants died later in summer when warmer temperatures increased water demand. The plant on the left collapsed more quickly after losing 75% of its roots. PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA-ARS.

BY ALAN PEPPER
AND JERRY WEILAND

Phytophthora root rot is a persistent and economically significant issue in the ornamental nursery industry. Several soilborne *Phytophthora* species attack plant roots at every stage of production — from propagation benches to container systems to in-ground field operations. Unlike aerial *Phytophthora* species that cause visible stem cankers, dieback, and leaf blight, root rot species remain hidden below ground where infection can go unnoticed until plants sud-

denly wilt and collapse.

Phytophthora species belong to a group of microscopic organisms commonly known as “water molds.” As their name suggests, water molds thrive under wet conditions. They produce motile zoospores that swim through water to infect roots. In nursery environments where overwatering, poor drainage, and close plant spacing are common, these pathogens can spread rapidly.

Phytophthora also produce thick-walled survival spores (oospores or chlamydospores) that persist in plant debris and soil for years, withstanding drought

and temperature extremes from below freezing to above 100 F. Once favorable conditions return, these spores resume growth and begin the infection cycle again. Only sustained high temperatures — such as soil pasteurization at 140–180 F for 30 minutes — can kill them. This makes *Phytophthora* extremely difficult to eradicate once established in the nursery.

Adding to the challenge, many *Phytophthora* species have a wide host range and can infect several to hundreds of different horticultural crops. For example, *P. cinnamomi* alone infects over 5,000 plant species and has long been >>

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Growing Knowledge

considered one of the greatest threats to the industry.

The rise of *P. plurivora* in Northwest nurseries

Our research focuses on improving *Phytophthora* root rot management practices, with a particular emphasis on rhododendrons because of their economic importance to the Pacific Northwest nursery industry. *P. cinnamomi* had been considered the primary cause of root rot on this crop. However, our research revealed that *P. plurivora* has become much more common than *P. cinnamomi* in Northwest nurseries. This shift has important biological and management implications.

Unlike *P. cinnamomi*, which primarily infects roots, *P. plurivora* can infect both aboveground (stems and leaves) and below ground tissues (roots). This infection strategy gives *P. plurivora* a competitive advantage, allowing it to spread more rapidly in nurseries than *P. cinnamomi*. In addition, regional populations of *P. plurivora*, but not *P. cinnamomi*, have developed resistance to two commonly used fungicides, mefenoxam and phosphorous acid. As a result, Oregon growers have experienced significant crop losses due to fungicide resistant populations. We are therefore evaluating alternative fungicide chemistries as potential replacements to help growers manage this evolving threat.

Understanding temperature-driven disease patterns

Given that biological differences between *P. cinnamomi* and *P. plurivora* have already affected fungicide control, we were curious whether these two species also differ in their responses to temperature: finding the answer could help growers better time their fungicide applications to minimize disease.

To find out, we ran a series of experiments to examine how different temperatures affected the ability of each species to grow, sporulate, and cause disease.

Our results revealed that although both species grow best at 80 F, *P. plurivora* grows faster than *P. cinnamomi* at cooler temperatures (50–60 F), while

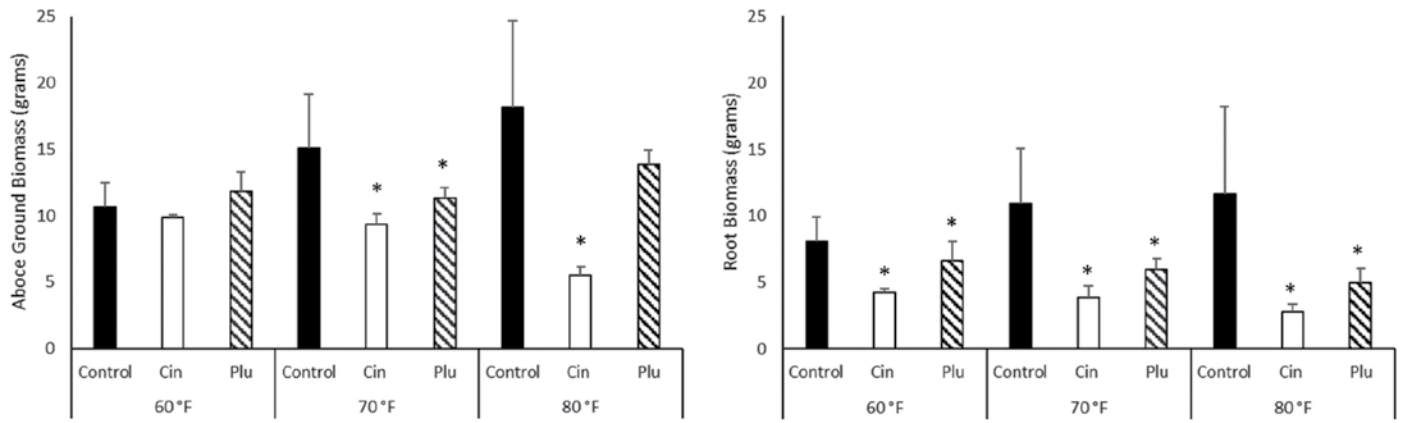


Figure 2. Rhododendron above ground and below ground biomass after infection by *P. cinnamomi* and *P. plurivora* compared to a healthy control. Asterisks (*) indicate a significant difference from the control. Results show that at colder temperature (60 F) there is no difference between the control and infected groups in above ground biomass, however the root biomass is shown to have significant root loss.

P. cinnamomi grows faster than *P. plurivora* at warmer temperatures (near 90 F). Sporulation followed a similar pattern with *P. plurivora* producing more zoospores at cooler temperatures (50–80 F) and *P. cinnamomi* producing more zoospores at warmer temperatures (60–90 F).


These temperature preferences matter because growth determines how fast each pathogen colonizes the roots after infection, while sporulation determines how

many zoospores are produced to infect new plants. Together, growth and sporulation drive infection potential. Based on these patterns, we predicted that *P. plurivora* would cause more disease at lower temperatures, while *P. cinnamomi* would be favored at warmer temperatures.


Our infection experiments confirmed these predictions — with important nuances. Although *P. plurivora* killed more plants at cooler temperatures (60–70

F) and *P. cinnamomi* killed more at 80 F, both pathogens caused similar amounts of root damage across a range of different temperatures. Plant mortality increased with temperature for both species, rising from just a few deaths at 60 F to substantial losses at 80 F. The key finding: both pathogens cause significant disease across a broader temperature range than previously recognized, with considerable overlap in their activity despite *P. cinna-*

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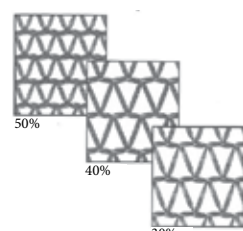


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Figure 3. A disease pocket of *Phytophthora* root rot in a low-lying area where water collects. Plants in the center died shortly after planting, while plants at the outer edge where drainage was better survived longer but ultimately succumbed (scattered brown plants). PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

momi's preference for warmer conditions and *P. plurivora*'s for cooler ones.

These findings have important practical consequences for disease management. Because both pathogens are active across an extended seasonal window — from spring through fall — effective management may require starting fungicide applications earlier in the spring and extending them later into the fall than has been traditionally practiced.

The production environment also influences disease risk. Greenhouses maintain warmer temperatures that may favor *P. cinnamomi* year-round or shift its activity earlier in the year. Black plastic containers and black plastic weed mat also increase soil temperatures: both create warm zones that favor *P. cinnamomi* even when ambient temperatures are more moderate. In contrast, wood chip mulch and light-colored containers keep root zones cooler, potentially favoring *P. plurivora*. Growers should therefore consider how their own nursery management practices may influence temperature when timing fungicide applications for each production area.

The hidden damage problem

One of the most important observations from our temperature trials was the disconnect between below ground damage

and aboveground symptoms. At 60 F, both pathogens caused approximately 25% root loss, yet visible symptoms of wilting, yellowing, and leaf drop were largely absent. Few plants showed obvious above ground symptoms at this temperature even though damage underground was already substantial. This means growers may not realize they have a root rot problem developing when temperatures are cooler.

During cool, wet weather in spring and fall, plants grow slowly and use very little water. Even with compromised roots, they can still supply enough water to keep leaves and stems looking healthy. Meanwhile, *Phytophthora* may slowly be destroying the root system below ground.

The problem becomes apparent when temperatures rise and plants enter active growth. Water demand increases sharply, but the damaged roots can no longer keep up. As a result, plants that previously looked healthy may suddenly wilt and collapse. By the time growers notice symptoms, most of the damage has already occurred. This is why preventative management is critical. Fungicides must be applied before infection occurs to be effective and minimize disease losses.

A new threat

Phytophthora austrocedri, a relatively newly discovered *Phytophthora*

Practical management guidelines

- **Scout for disease** regularly.
- **Test soil and plants** early if problems are suspected.
- **Cull infected plants** immediately and keep cull piles away from production areas.
- **Do not compost** or reuse contaminated soil.
- **Inspect and quarantine** incoming plant material.
- **Avoid overwatering, improve drainage**, and prevent standing water.
- **Disinfect recycled irrigation** water.
- **Use new pots** or thoroughly sanitize before reuse.
- **Clean and sanitize** tools, equipment, and work areas regularly.
- **Store potting media** in clean, dry locations off bare ground.
- **Apply fungicides when** conditions are favorable for disease.
- **Rotate fungicides to** reduce resistance risk.

species, was recently discovered in Oregon and Wisconsin nurseries infecting juniper, arborvitae, and false cypress (*Chamaecyparis*) varieties in 2024 and 2025. In addition to these hosts, this pathogen could be a significant threat to other

native and ornamental conifer species from the cypress family including true cypress (*Cupressus*), Nootka cypress, incense cedar, Port Orford cedar, western red-cedar, giant sequoia, and coast redwood.

Initially, *P. austrocedri* was treated as a quarantine pathogen, resulting in significant losses for the affected growers. However, it has since been delisted and is no longer federally regulated, though its exact extent in the U.S. remains unclear. Research has been limited because the pathogen is difficult to isolate and grow in culture. However, early research suggests that this species has a much lower optimal growth temperature than other *Phytophthora* species, growing best between 55–65 F. If the patterns we observed with other species hold true, *P. austrocedri* likely sporulates and causes the most damage within this cooler temperature range.

For Northwest growers, this means the pathogen would most likely be active during the cool, wet weather that dominates from fall through spring. If *P. austrocedri* is a concern, consider applying fungicides during this time period or for as long as conditions remain favorable for infection.

Conclusion

In summary, temperature plays a defining role in *Phytophthora* growth, sporulation, and disease development. Subtle differences between species translate into meaningful seasonal disease patterns with some species preferring warmer temperatures while others prefer cooler temperatures. By aligning fungicide timing and cultural practices with soil temperature thresholds rather than visible symptoms alone, growers can improve disease control and reduce losses. ©

Alan Peper is a postdoctoral scholar with the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon. Jerry Weiland is a research plant pathologist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Corvallis, Oregon.



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Oregon agriculture is sounding the alarm

Oregon agriculture isn't asking for special treatment. It's asking for a fair chance to compete.

From family nurseries and greenhouse operations to seed growers and generational farms, Oregon's agricultural economy has long been one of the state's defining success stories. The nursery and greenhouse industry alone returns more than \$1 billion annually back into Oregon's economy and remains the state's largest agricultural commodity.

But today, that success is under threat.

Oregon is at a crossroads, and unless lawmakers make serious changes to the state's business climate, we risk losing the very industries that have sustained rural communities for generations. The warning signs are already here: declining competitiveness, rising labor costs, burdensome regulations, workforce shortages, and tax policies that discourage investment rather than encourage it.

The question before policymakers is simple: Does Oregon want agriculture to remain a cornerstone of the state's economy, or are we willing to watch production, investment, and jobs migrate elsewhere?

One of the most immediate concerns facing agriculture is the implementation of Oregon's agricultural overtime law.

Agriculture is not a traditional 9-to-5 industry. Farming and nursery production are driven by weather, shipping windows, seasonality, and biological realities that cannot simply be paused because a clock hits 40 hours. Peak seasons are unavoidable.

Neighboring and competing states understand this reality. Colorado recently adjusted its agricultural overtime rules to recognize seasonal production demands, allowing a 56-hour workweek during peak periods. California, meanwhile, is already seeing the unintended consequences of its overtime mandates, including reduced employee hours and declining productivity.

Oregon growers compete nationally against states operating under the federal minimum wage and significantly lower labor burdens. Layering additional costs onto Oregon agriculture without account-

ing for interstate competition places local farms at a severe disadvantage.

A reasonable compromise exists.

Oregon agricultural groups have proposed freezing overtime thresholds at 48 hours while allowing a 12-week, 56-hour peak season flexibility. This approach would stabilize worker hours, preserve earning opportunities for employees, and help farms remain competitive.

Oregon must also take an honest look at the total cost of employment. Minimum wage increases, paid family leave mandates, payroll taxes, regulatory compliance, housing requirements, and transportation costs all combine to create one of the highest agricultural labor cost structures in the country. Policymakers cannot continue evaluating these policies in isolation. The cumulative impact matters.

Oregon farms are small businesses and family operations working on thin margins in a highly competitive national marketplace. Policies that may appear manageable on paper can become devastating when stacked together year after year. The legislature acted rashly by enacting disconnection from portions of the federal tax code has complicated depreciation schedules and increased costs for many small businesses. Likewise, eliminating the commercial activities tax (CAT) on green goods would help reduce supply chain costs and improve competitiveness for Oregon-grown products.

Oregon also cannot afford to neglect workforce development.

The future of agriculture depends on building strong connections between education and industry. Oregon State University and the state's community colleges play a critical role in research, workforce training, and innovation. Career and technical education programs at the high school level are equally important in introducing young people to agricultural careers and skilled trades.

If Oregon is serious about rebuilding its workforce pipeline, the state must make sustained investments in CTE, higher education partnerships, and industry-driven training programs.

Climate policy is another area where



Jeff Stone

Oregon risks undermining its own economic strengths.

Oregon's nursery and greenhouse industry produces green goods that sequester carbon, improve air quality, reduce urban heat, and contribute directly to environmental resilience. Emerging science is beginning to quantify these benefits, but state policy has largely ignored them.

Similarly, Oregon's Recycling Modernization Act and Extended Producer Responsibility framework have imposed substantial new costs on regulated industries without sufficient alignment with neighboring states or consideration for practical implementation. Environmental progress is important, but policies must also be transparent, constitutional, economically realistic, and coordinated with broader national systems.

What agriculture is asking for is balance.

Policies must reflect economic reality. Regulations must recognize interstate competition. And lawmakers must understand that when farms disappear, they rarely come back.

The Governor's Prosperity Council and state leaders have an opportunity to reset Oregon's trajectory. By modernizing labor policies, reforming tax structures, investing in workforce development, supporting practical climate solutions, and restoring business competitiveness, Oregon can once again become a state where agriculture thrives rather than struggles to survive. Family farms built much of Oregon's economy and identity. Whether they remain part of our future now depends on the choices policymakers make today. ©

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