

Digger

JULY 2026



PLUS

■ **NEW
VARIETIES
SHOWCASE**

Focusing on the future

Dialing in your production planning

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Tree-form shrubs

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The box tree moth threat

PAGE 33

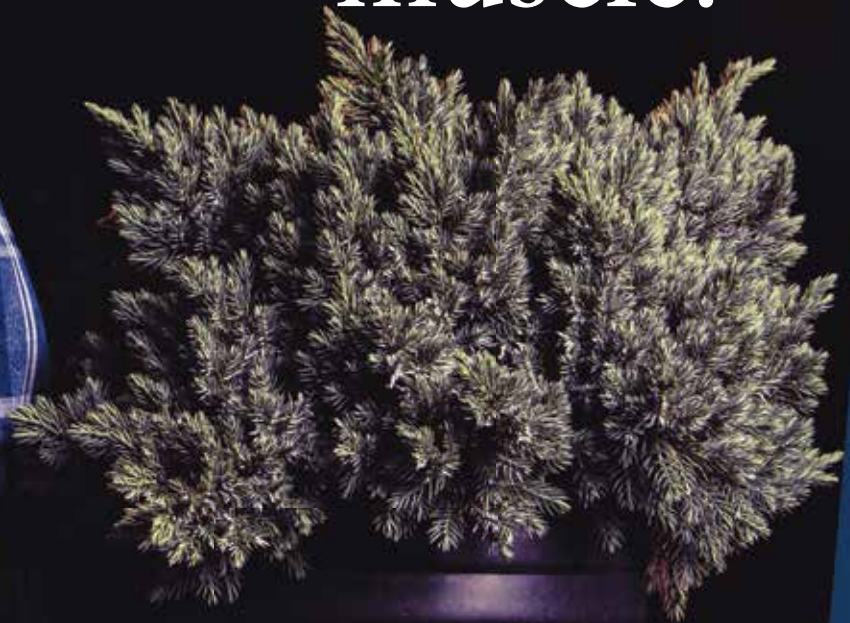
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MORE



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New Varieties Showcase

Presenting the best and most innovative new plant introductions. **AFTER PAGE 20**



Printed in Oregon on domestic recycled paper when available.

On the cover: Rows of Autumn Blaze® Maple (*Acer × freemanii* 'Jeffersred') growing at one of Bailey Nurseries' Oregon farms. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES

On this page: Left: Vanilla Strawberry™ Panicle Hydrangea trained in tree form (*Hydrangea Paniculata* 'Renhy' PP20670). PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST EDITIONS SHRUBS & TREES Right: An adult box tree moth. PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA-APHIS

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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 Pohlshneider CONTAINER GROWER	Pohlshneider Nursery Sam@PohlshneiderNursery.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

When disparate parts join, they make a better whole

**At first glance, a link
between boudin (pronounced
"BOO-dan") and the 250th
anniversary of the United
States might seem like a stretch.**

One is a humble Cajun sausage born out of necessity in the bayous of Louisiana. The other marks two and a half centuries of a nation's history.

But look a little closer and the connection starts to make sense. Both are the result of different parts coming together to create something stronger than any one ingredient on its own.

Boudin is not fancy food. It is rice, pork, liver, spices, onions, and whatever else happens to be available, stuffed into a casing. Historically, it came from the idea that nothing should go to waste. To folks unfamiliar with it, some of the ingredients can sound questionable. Liver turns plenty of people away before they ever take a bite. Rice in sausage does not exactly sound traditional either.

But a good boudin works because the flavors balance each other out. What seems odd on its own becomes something worth seeking out once it all comes together.

In a lot of ways, the United States has worked the same way.

From the beginning, this country has been made up of different people, cultures, languages, and traditions. On paper, it probably should not have worked as well as it has. There have always been disagreements, tensions, and rough edges. Still, over the course of 250 years, the country kept moving forward. Its strength never came from one group or one idea alone. It came from the mixture.

The United States was built by generations of people who brought their labor, skills, beliefs, and traditions with them. Some came willingly in search of opportunity. Others were brought here under terrible circumstances that remain painful parts of our history. Every one of those stories shaped the country we know today.

Ignoring those hard truths would be like pretending boudin is only pork and spices while leaving out the rest of the



Patrick Newton

recipe. You cannot understand the final product without acknowledging every ingredient that went into it.

Most people who hesitate to try boudin focus too much on the individual parts. They think about what sounds unfamiliar instead of what the finished product might become. Then they try it and realize the whole thing works together better than expected.

The same idea applies to this country, especially during difficult times. It is easy to focus on disagreements and divisions. It is easy to wonder whether all these different pieces really belong together. But history shows that America's strength has always come from its ability to bring those differences into something larger than themselves.

As the nation approaches its 250th anniversary, it is worth remembering that this country was never built overnight. It was never built by one kind of person. It was shaped over generations by people adding what they could, often through hardship, sacrifice, and determination to build a better life for the next generation.

Boudin tells a similar story. It is not about perfection. It is about making the most of what you have, trusting the process, and ending up with something better because of the combination.

Two hundred and fifty years in, the United States is still a work in progress. But like a good batch of boudin, its value has never been found in any single ingredient. It comes from the whole. ©



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*.

JULY 7

OAN OPEN HOUSE AT SWAN ISLAND DAHLIAS

Don't miss the next Oregon Association of Nurseries Open House 3:30–5:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 7 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 and to register, go to OAN.org/Events.

JULY 11-14

CULTIVATE'26

Join AmericanHort for Cultivate'26 July 11–14 in Columbus, Ohio, and discover the trends, tools and technologies that fuel growth, spark innovation and build stronger businesses. Attend any of the more than 160+ educational sessions, half- or full-day workshops, or industry production tours to learn new skills and network with your peers so you and your business thrive now and into the future. For more information and to register, go to CultivateEvent.org.

JULY 15

GROWING THE URBAN FORESTS OF TOMORROW: A NURSERY SYMPOSIUM

"Growing the Urban Forests of Tomorrow: A Nursery Symposium" will bring together nursery growers, urban foresters, and tree professionals for a day of conversation and collaboration focused on resilient tree production from 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15 at LaSells Stewart Center at Oregon State University, 875 S.W. 26th St., Corvallis. From best management practices to climate-ready species and supply challenges, this symposium is designed to spark ideas, share knowledge, and strengthen connections across the nursery and urban forestry communities. This event is intended for nursery professionals (including growers, technical specialists, specialty nurseries, production nurseries), arborists and urban forestry professionals, landscape professionals (design, install, architect), utility industry, and others across the tree care and production industry. The symposium will be hosted by the Oregon Department Forestry and Oregon State University in partnership with the Oregon Association of Nurseries. Breakfast, lunch and snacks and refreshments will be provided. Registration is \$25 (scholarship options available upon request); student registration is \$15. Register at TinyURL.com/PDXUrbanForestry.

JULY 16

ALL THINGS POLITICAL

Mark your calendars. Oregon Association of Nurseries Executive Director Jeff Stone is



HILLSBORO HOPS PHOTO

JULY 24

OAN DAY AT THE HILLSBORO HOPS

Oregon Association of Nurseries members are invited to join OAN Day at the Hillsboro Hops on Friday, July 24 for a fun-filled evening. Don't miss a chance to relax, connect with fellow members, and enjoy America's favorite pastime. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. when the Hop Grove opens, catering starts, and the good times begin. Meet up at the Hop Grove, grab some food, find your crew, and soak in the summer vibes before the first pitch at 6:35 p.m. They'll be serving up smoked pulled pork, hot dogs, mac and cheese, coleslaw, seasonal fruit, kettle chips, water and soda. Cost is \$25 per person. Space is limited so register early at OAN.org/Event/OANDay26. The Hillsboro Ballpark is now completely cashless, and parking is \$6. Be sure to bring a credit card or use Apple Pay/Google Pay – cash won't be accepted for parking or concessions. Got questions? Reach out to the OAN office at 503-682-5089 or Info@OAN.org.

putting himself on the spot again and taking all shots and questions at 8 a.m. on Thursday, July 16 for "All Things Political." It's a Zoom call where members can ask him questions about legislative priorities for the OAN and any other political question you've got a burning desire to hurl at him. Check back at OAN.org/Events for more details.

JULY 17

PITCH N' PUTT

Join Oregon Association of Nurseries' Mount Hood Chapter on July 17 for the annual Pitch n' Putt at McMenamins Edgefield Golf Course, 2126 S.W. Halsey St., in Troutdale, Oregon. Registration opens at 1 p.m. and shotgun start time is at 2 p.m. For more details and to RSVP, go to OAN.org/Events.

JULY 27-30

PERENNIAL PLANT ASSOCIATION NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

The 2026 National Symposium is the premier

event for perennial plant industry professionals seeking unparalleled education, networking, and inspiration. Learn from industry leaders, gain exclusive access to tours tailored specifically for professional horticulturists, and engage with industry vendors during the trade show. The show is July 27–30 in East Lansing, Michigan. Learn more at 2026PPA.Sched.com.

AUGUST 11-13

NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE EXPO 2026

Strengthen your network by connecting with peers, industry leaders and new partners; grow your workforce and engage with emerging professionals; and stay competitive by discovering new products, learning at education sessions and gaining insights to help move your business forward, all at Nursery and Landscape Expo 2026. The expo is August 11–13 in San Antonio, Texas at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Learn more at NurseryLandscapeExpo.org. ©



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.



The McCormick & Baxter Superfund site. PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTLAND BOTANICAL GARDENS

Superfund site edges closer to becoming Portland Botanical Gardens

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has entered into a prospective purchaser agreement with the nonprofit organization Portland Botanical Gardens for the future redevelopment of the McCormick & Baxter Superfund site in North Portland, DEQ stated in a release.

Portland Botanical Gardens signed an agreement with DEQ to purchase the site for \$1.195 million. The former creosote wood treatment plant was cleaned up in 2005 and is safe for people, animals and plants, according to DEQ.

The agreement supports the beneficial reuse of the property while ensuring the environmental cleanup remedy remains protective of human health and the environment.

Portland Botanical Gardens plans to develop botanical gardens, roughly 10 acres of public green space, a connection to the Willamette River Greenway Trail, public access to the Willamette River and educational and research spaces.

The nonprofit has 12 months to show it has raised at least \$3 million for initial development and operations before DEQ will approve acquisition of the property, according to the agreement.



The yellow-legged hornet (YLH) is considered a serious invasive species. PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA

SYNGENTA TO DIVEST FLOWERS BUSINESS INTO JOINT VENTURE WITH DÜMMEN ORANGE

Syngenta Group has signed an agreement to divest its Syngenta Flowers business into a strategic joint venture with Dümmen Orange, bringing together two global players in ornamental breeding and propagation. This partnership represents an important step forward for both organizations as they work together to better serve growers around the world, Syngenta stated in a release. Both boards of directors have formally approved the deal, and completion of closing is subject to any necessary regulatory approvals.

The joint venture will bring together both companies' complementary portfolios, combining Dümmen Orange's expertise in cut flowers and Syngenta's leadership in seed varieties, along with annual, perennial and potted plant portfolios that both companies have built over decades. Advanced research and development capabilities, optimized production processes, and expanded commercial networks will be integrated to improve efficiency and better serve customer needs. The combined entity will be renamed at a later date.

ODA ASKS PUBLIC TO BE ON ALERT FOR YELLOW-LEGGED HORNET

The Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Insect Pest Prevention and Management

(IPPM) Program is asking the public to stay alert and report suspected sightings of the yellow-legged hornet, after a live hornet was seen on a boat at the Port of Vancouver on April 30.

The yellow-legged hornet (YLH) is considered a serious invasive species. Native to tropical and in the subtropical regions of Southeast Asia, it has rapidly spread through Europe, where it has contributed to an estimated 30% decline in honeybee colonies and honey production.

In the United States the species was first detected near Savannah, Georgia in 2023 and has since spread into South Carolina. Both states are currently pursuing eradication efforts with support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine. YLH is not known to be present in any other state other than Georgia and South Carolina.

Yellow-legged hornets are smaller than the northern giant hornet. That insect was detected in Washington state in 2019 and declared eradicated in 2024, with no detections ever found in Oregon. Worker hornets measure approximately 0.75 to 1 inch long, with queens being larger. The species is named for its distinctive legs, which are yellow on the lower portion. The fourth abdominal segment is yellow-orange.

If you see a suspected yellow-legged hornet, act quickly: take a photo, add a detailed description of the insect, including size and where it was found, and submit suspect sightings right away at



OregonInvasivesHotline.org/Reports/Create or call 1-866-INVADER (1-866-468-2337). The ODA strongly encourages using the online reporting option with a detailed description and a clear photo, as it allows specialists to respond more rapidly.

EMERALD ASH BORERS HATCHING EARLY DUE TO WARM WINTER AND SPRING

Emerald ash borers (EAB) — an invasive and highly destructive species of beetle — are emerging earlier than normal after Oregon's warm winter, reports KGW-8 TV station in Portland, Oregon. Death rates for trees infested by the beetle can be as high as 99%, and the warming climate skews the odds even further toward the insects.

"The very mild winter and the many warm spring days we've had in Oregon this year has allowed EAB larvae to develop more rapidly into adults," Oregon Department of Forestry Invasive Species Specialist Wyatt Williams said.

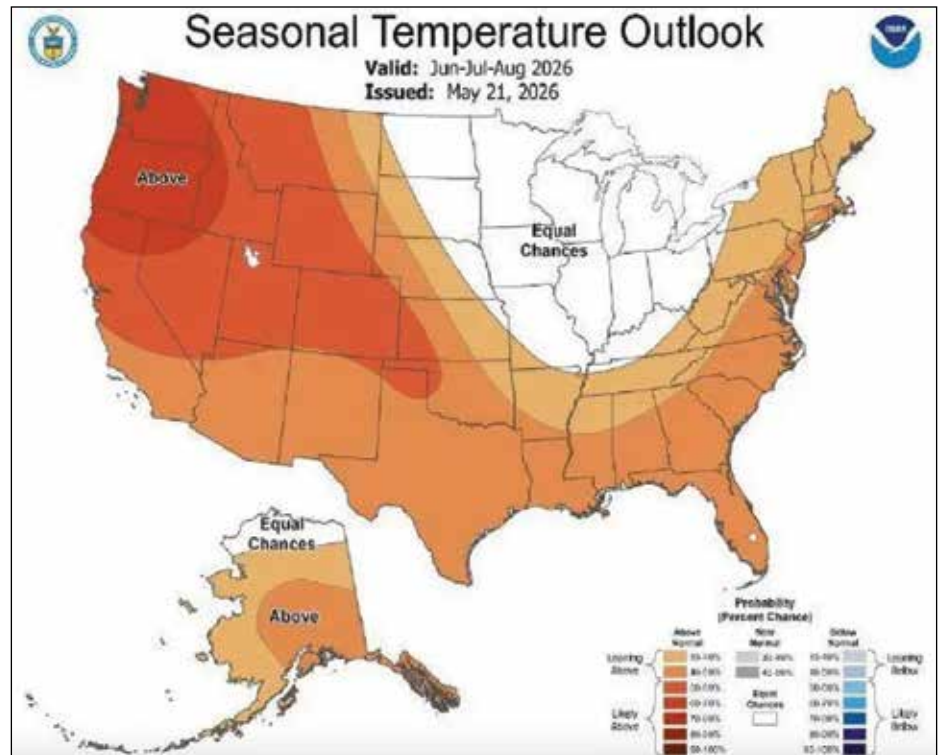
The earlier emergence means that beetles will have more time to breed, officials noted. Drought conditions also stress the trees and weaken their resistance to pests and disease. "These changes in climate favor insect pests," ODF Forest Entomologist Christine Buhl said.

Since its arrival in the United States, the tiny green beetle from eastern Asia has been devastating ash trees nationwide. The beetle's larvae will eat tissues under the bark, eventually killing the tree. It was found in Oregon in 2022 and has since spread explosively across the state.

APHIS RELEASES FINALIZED ROSE FEDERAL ORDER

A finalized Rose Federal Order has been released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The order included language requested by AmericanHort.

The main change, according to AmericanHort, is that *Rosa* spp. plants for planting from Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom



The odds are better than 60% that temperatures in June, July and August will be above normal in the Pacific Northwest. GRAPHIC COURTESY OF NOAA

may continue to enter the United States under post-entry quarantine, but the exporting NPPO must now certify the place of production or production site as pest-free from *Ralstonia solanacearum* Race 3 biovar 2, consistent with ISPM 10 standards.

APHIS will be working directly with the exporting NPPOs to determine what this certification process will look like in practice. APHIS also indicated that they may not require the full extent of ISPM 10; however, those discussions are ongoing.

All standard post-entry quarantine requirements will remain in effect. If your permit was previously not renewed, you should now be able to move forward with renewal under this new framework, according to AmericanHort.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CAN EXPECT HOTTER-THAN-AVERAGE SUMMER

The Pacific Northwest has the best chance among all regions in the U.S. of having a hotter-than-average summer, reports the *Capital Press*, an agricultural newspaper based in Salem, Oregon.

Oregon, Idaho and Eastern Washington already are in a drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The Bureau of Reclamation began rationing water May 21 to irrigators in Central Washington.

Favorable weather could ease the

water shortage, but the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center predicts a hot and dry summer throughout Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

The odds are better than 60% that temperatures in June, July and August will be above normal, according to the climate center.

An El Niño, caused by warm ocean waters, likely will form soon, and El Niños tend to make summers warmer in the northern tier of the U.S., forecasters said.

The odds also favor below-average rainfall in Washington, the Idaho Panhandle and the northern tier of Oregon. It's a tossup elsewhere in Oregon and Idaho.

USDA BRINGS BACK FERTILIZER EXPANSION GRANT PROGRAM

The Trump administration is reviving a Biden-era program to expand fertilizer production in an attempt to address persistently high input costs, according to Agri-Pulse, an agricultural news website. Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins said the Fertilizer Production and Expansion Program would be reimagined to boost U.S. fertilizer capacity.

The program, Rollins said, was "originally conceived with a very good thought in mind, and that is, we have to reshore/onshore our fertilizer production here in America." However, she said it was focused

too much on mitigating climate change and not enough on making fertilizer.

Of 121 projects targeted for funding by the previous administration, “only eight were moved to completion,” Rollins said. “Seven were marked unsatisfactory,” she added, and “in most instances there was zero contact information reported for the awardees. We have now changed that,” she said. “We are in touch with every single one of them. We are talking to them. Those projects that were stalled because of climate requirements are now coming back online.”

Initial reaction from the fertilizer industry was positive. Corey Rosenbusch, president and CEO of The Fertilizer Institute, said he believes USDA is “trying to assess how much of [the funding] has not been allocated, and to see if there’s an opportunity to repurpose that.”

Announcements

AMERICANHORT NAMES NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO

Lionel van der Walt has been appointed as AmericanHort’s new president and CEO by its Board of Directors following a thorough and thoughtful search process, the organization announced.

Van der Walt previously served in leadership roles at organizations such as Nallian, a technology company specializing in data-sharing solutions for the global air cargo industry; the International Institute of Building



Lionel van der Walt

Enclosure Consultants (IIBEC); and Cargo Network Services (CNS), a subsidiary of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). He brings a strong mix of business and association experience, global insight, and a collaborative approach that will serve members and industry well, AmericanHort said.

BIOWORKS INTRODUCES NEW NEMATICIDE FOR SPECIALTY AGRICULTURAL CROPS

TotalNema A_x, a new 25(b) botanical nematicide designed to effectively prevent yield loss, stunted growth and wilting from nematode damage, has been introduced by **BioWorks** (Farwest booth #10028), a leading provider of biological crop protection and plant health solutions.

TotalNema A_x supports commercial production in outdoor specialty crop systems and controls plant-parasitic nema- »



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tode populations through direct contact, disrupting respiratory systems and causing paralysis, BioWorks stated in a release. Formulated with a proprietary blend of botanical oils, TotalNema Ax delivers strong efficacy with 0-hour REI and multiple application methods for maximum operational flexibility for growers, according to BioWorks.

TERRA NOVA LAUNCHES THALICTRUM NOVA SERIES

Terra Nova Nurseries has debuted its new *Thalictrum* NOVA® Series with the introduction of *Thalictrum* NOVA® ‘Star’ (*Thalictrum ichangense*). This delicate-looking yet hardy perennial produces color-changing foliage that contrasts with the plant’s lavender blooms, Terra Nova stated in its release. ‘Star’ is a cousin to ‘Evening Star’ Terra Nova’s first *T. ichangense* introduction.

The foliage of NOVA ‘Star’ is bright peach- and coral-colored in spring; tones of olive and copper appear as the plant matures, forming a mellow palette. Airy puffs of lavender flowers float over the foliage, blooming in July and August.

Terra Nova’s new *Thalictrum* grows most actively in spring, reaching a height of 8”, width of 10” and flower height of 12”. NOVA ‘Star’ should be kept evenly moist during finishing time in the greenhouse. Finishing growers can expect the finish time from a liner to a 4-inch pot to be six to eight weeks; finish time from a liner to a 1-gallon pot is 10-12 weeks. USDA Hardiness Zones for Terra Nova’s new NOVA variety are 5-9.

Finishing growers can contact their Terra Nova Nurseries representatives or email the sales team at Sales@TerraNovaNurseries.com.

EHR NAMES NEW MARKETING DIRECTOR

Chris Berg has been hired as director of marketing by Kentucky-based national horticulture broker **EHR** (Farwest booth #16047).

Berg has built and led market-



Thalictrum NOVA® ‘Star’ (*Thalictrum ichangense*) is a hardy perennial with color-changing foliage that contrasts with the plant’s lavender blooms. PHOTO COURTESY OF TERRA NOVA

ing programs for companies including EuroAmerican Propagators, Dümmer Orange, Altman Plants, PlantHaven International and dozens of horticultural brands through his work at BlueSkye Creative. His background spans breeder relations, grower and broker engagement, national retail programs and consumer-facing brand development, with direct experience supporting major accounts such as The Home Depot, Lowe’s and Walmart, as well as independent garden center networks across North America. He also serves on the Board of Directors for PlantHaven International and previously served on the Board of Directors for the National Garden Bureau.

In memoriam

BOB FESSLER

The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to report the passing of Oregon Nurseries Hall of Famer Bob Fessler. He passed away Sunday, June 7, 2026 at the age of 85, surrounded by family.



Bob Fessler

A rosary was held June 11 with with mass of Christian burial on June at St. Mary Catholic Church, 575 E. College St., Mt. Angel, Oregon.

Robert Fred Fessler was born August 14, 1940 in Hubbard, Oregon to Raymond and Clara Fessler. He grew up on the family farm which nurtured his love of farming, and graduated from Mt. Angel Prep High School. After high school, Bob served in the National Guard.

In 1958, he met his future wife, Martha “Jean” Coleman from St. Paul, Oregon. They married on October 28, 1961 and together, they raised five children. Shortly after their marriage, Bob and Jean started Fessler Farms, raising hazelnuts, cane berries and mink. In 1968, they started Woodburn Nursery, growing azaleas and later adding outdoor nursery stock.

Bob was involved in the day-to-day operations which showed in his love for farming and plants. He was always looking for the next best innovation in the horticultural industry. He was never shy about getting his hands dirty and was quick to lend a helping hand. He had a very strong work ethic, which showed in his businesses. He was very proud of the fact that his family businesses have been carried on to not only to the second generation, but the third generation as well.

Bob had a great sense of humor and always seemed to make others laugh. Bob

and Jean enjoyed travelling many parts of the world with friends and family. Many lifetime friendships were made with employees, customers and fellow nurserymen and farmers within the industries.

Faith was very important in Bob's life and passing this on to his children and grandchildren was a priority for him. Bob was very humble and kind, always giving and expecting nothing in return. He also believed in giving back to the communities and organizations that have supported him. He volunteered for many years and was active in his church, St. Mary Catholic Church. He was also a member of Oregon Association of Nurseries. Many years were spent volunteering for the Oktoberfest. He also served on the following boards: Mt. Angel School, St. Mary's Church, Mt. Angel Community Foundation and NORPAC. Together, Bob and Jean earned many awards and recognition in their local communities: Mt. Angel 1st Citizen Award, Mt. Angel Business of the Year Award, Woodburn Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Farmer, Silver Spirit Award (Legacy Silverton Hospital), and were inducted into the OAN Hall of Fame in 2019.

Bob loved farming, but he also loved fishing, crabbing, clam digging and hunting. He was also very active in his children's lives. Bob and Jean took their children on many camping/fishing trips. He attended many of their school and sporting events. He also loved to attend his grandchildren's sporting events and was a big fan of the Oregon State Beavers.

Bob was married to Jean for 58 years before her passing in December 2019. He is survived by his children: Tom (Debbie) Fessler, Rick (Melanie) Fessler, Karen (Ross) Jaeger, Sandy (Greg) Traeger and Jodi (Lance) Arritola. He is also survived by 19 grandchildren and many great grandchildren. Additionally, he leaves behind his siblings, Ken Fessler and Donna Wagner. Along with his wife, Jean, he was also preceded in death by his parents, Raymond and Clara Fessler and sister Ede Hopkins.

The Fessler family would like to give a special thank you for all the love and

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support during his last few months and to the staff at Mt. Angel Towers and Serene Gardens — your support has been a blessing to his family. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made to St. Mary Catholic Church, Mt. Angel, Oregon.

GARY 'BERT' BERTELSON

The OAN is saddened to report the passing of Gary "Bert" Bertelson on May 27. Gary Bertelson was born December 31, 1953 in Portland, Oregon and was 72 years old at the time of his passing.

He had a long career in nursery



Gary 'Bert' Bertelson

transportation including eight years at Integrity Logistics in Wilsonville, from where he retired in 2025. He previously worked at Pathfinder Logistics, Northland Express Transport and was the owner of Grandview Enterprises. It was through his profession that he met his wife of 17 years, Pam Schmitz, who was also in the nursery industry.

Gary Bertelson was well-loved and liked by many in the industry. He was a fixture at the Farwest Show for many years. "He lived life to the fullest and was loved by many," Schmitz said.

"The guy is an absolute legend," said Dan Gibson, president of Integrity Logistics. "Bert is the type of guy that you will never find a person that doesn't like him. He was always in good spirits, positive, had a great head on his shoulder and had a gift for connecting with people. He's the type of guy you always

want to be around. Kind to everyone and great-hearted."

"Bert was at Northland when we were first made contact, over 15 years ago," said Fred de Boer of Mainland Floral. "We had the same mind set, having both spend significant time behind the wheel of a semi. We understood each other well, we were cut from the same cloth ... and after I did the Farwest Show in a loud blazer, Bert got the drift of that vibe also."

The pair challenged each other to be the coolest dressed guys on the floor at the Farwest Show. "Sadly, that competition is no longer...he will be missed."

Gary Bertelsen is survived by his wife Pam, daughter Dawn Neef, son Eddie Bertelson and twin brothers Jerry and Larry Bertelson.

A celebration of life is tentatively planned for mid-July. The family plans to announce more details at a later date. ☺



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Smaller space, bigger bang

Tree-form shrubs can create large impact in small spaces

BY EMILY HOARD

As the demand grows for container gardening on patios, nurseries are responding by offering shrubs that have been shaped into trees. These

can create a large impact in a small space.

Brothers Chris and Josh Robinson grew up in the nursery industry. In 2008, they officially joined their family's business, **Robinson Nursery Inc.** (Farwest booth #18028), in McMinnville, Oregon. That was right when the Great Recession was starting.

Chris Robinson said it was a tough

time to be starting out their careers. He and his brother had to learn quickly what truly mattered to customers.

However, even when the economy was struggling, Robinson noticed that customers were still buying the nursery's Hydrangea 'Limelight' trees, (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight'). 'Limelight' features huge cone-shaped blooms as an orna- »

Vanilla Strawberry™ Panicle Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Renhy' PP20670). PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST EDITIONS TREES & SHRUBS



Grace N' Grit™ Pink BiColor Rose (*Rosa* 'Meiryezze' PP30844). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY



Minerva Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Minerva'). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY



Smaller space, bigger bang

mental shrub that growers meticulously shape to look like a tree. That became a defining moment for the Robinsons.

"It showed us that people are willing to invest in exceptional plants — especially when the genetics are strong and the form is unique," Chris said.

The Robinsons were inspired to offer more tree-form shrubs. "These are plants traditionally grown as shrubs that we carefully train into a single trunk with a structured canopy — creating that clean, elevated 'lollipop' form," Robinson said.

The nursery went on to develop plants that could stand apart in the marketplace through their growing system and team of growers. They also produce tree-form shrubs for the Proven Winners brand.

Growth in patio gardening

"At the same time, we saw a major shift happening — more people buying

online, smaller living spaces, and a growing number of consumers without traditional yards," Robinson said. "But what most people do have is a patio."

So, he started an additional business called My Patio Tree (**MyPatioTree.com**), an online store selling ornamental flowering trees meant especially for a patio.

Madison House has observed similar trends. As the consumer marketing manager at **Bloomin' Easy** (Farwest booth #12044), thinking about how plants fit into real people's lives and spaces is a big part of her job.

"I'm especially interested in helping make gardening feel more approachable and exciting for younger homeowners and newer gardeners, many of whom are working with patios, porches, balconies, or smaller yards instead of large landscapes," House said.

She said tree-form shrubs bring an

elevated, designed look to an area without taking up a large amount of room. "For patio gardening, that's such a win because people still want that 'wow' factor, even in a smaller area," she said.

Mary Mooney, an account manager at **Eshraghi Nurseries LLC** (Farwest booth #12025), has also seen a higher profile for tree-form shrubs. They have become an important part of Eshraghi's plant offerings. They can play a big role in container designs as well as in the landscape, she said.

"They provide height where a small tree might not be an option," Mooney said. "Or when wanting to create something with more drama, tree-form shrubs can be foundational elements."

Mooney suggested pairing the height of the tree-form shrubs with filler and spiller plants underneath, such as trailing plants, bushes and wispy grasses.

"Personally, I have tried many differ-

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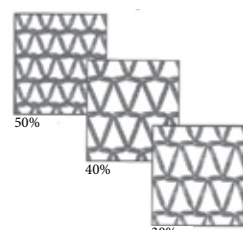


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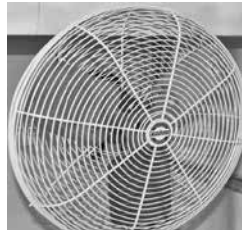
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ent varieties of tree-form shrubs and found them to be versatile and a great focal point in the ground or in a container,” Mooney said.

Purpose and process

House said tree-form shrubs combine beauty and structure in a way that works well in smaller and more styled spaces.

“You get all the charm of a flowering or foliage shrub, but in a form that feels a little more polished and architectural,” House said. “They’re perfect for framing a front entrance, adding height to a container combo, or creating a focal point on a patio.”

Robinson added that a tree-form

shrub creates an impact in a compact space. It can become the centerpiece of an area, providing height and presence without the need of a full yard.

The process of shaping a shrub into a tree form takes time and intention.

“We start with a shrub and carefully train it into a single trunk by selective pruning,” Robinson said. “Over time, we remove lower growth and shape the top into a balanced canopy.”

He said it takes years to get the shape and effect just right.

Origins

According to Mooney, grooming shrubs into tree form has been practiced

since before 2,000 B.C. in China.

“This technique evolved to gain popularity in the Mediterranean because it helped with selecting a stronger rootstock for fruit trees,” she said, giving olives and citrus as examples.

“It was in ancient Roman times that this look became an artistic staple of gardens where a variety of weeping, dwarf and other forms could be experimented with for their visual interest,” Mooney said.

Tree-form shrubs also have a long history of adding structure and symmetry to formal garden designs. Robinson said European gardens have been using them for centuries.

House said over time, the trend has »



Baby Kim® Lilac (*Syringa* × ‘SMNSDTP’). PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBINSON NURSERY



Magenta Chiffon® Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus* ‘Rwoods5’ PP29683). PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBINSON NURSERY



Nitty Gritty® White Rose (*Rosa* × ‘RUIBG0025A’ PP33151). PHOTO COURTESY OF MONROVIA NURSERY COMPANY

Smaller space, bigger bang



Tree-form hydrangeas require more care, including a hard cut back in the fall or early spring, which causes them to grow more new stems. PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST EDITIONS TREES & SHRUBS

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evolved to become relevant for modern gardeners.

“As outdoor spaces have become more of an extension of the home, people want plants that feel intentional and stylish, especially in patios and smaller living spaces,” she said, adding that tree-forms do well to meet that demand. “They add height, softness, and a bit of drama without taking over the whole area.”

Robinson said these uniquely shaped shrubs are more accessible than they had been in the past.

“What used to be more niche or high-end is now something everyday homeowners can enjoy,” Robinson said. “People want something clean, structured and beautiful — and this fits perfectly.”

Tree-form shrubs have gained popularity in outdoor living areas.

Examples

Some of the most popular shrubs to shape into trees include *Hydrangea*, roses (*Rosa*), *Hibiscus* and lilacs (*Syringa*).

Certain evergreens or flowering shrubs, such as flowering cherries, can be trained into a standard, which is another term for tree form.



Flowerfesta Pink Dwarf Lilac (*Syringa meyeri* 'Anny2013-19' PP32908). PHOTO COURTESY OF ESHRAGHI NURSERY

Mooney said Boxwood (*Buxus*) is one popular example of a shrub that can be tree-formed, stemming from the formal European garden designs.

"Boxwood are fairly low-maintenance and only require light trimming to keep their shape a couple of times a season," Mooney said.

She said conifers can provide a similar type of year-round interest as a boxwood without the maintenance. They are easy to grow in general and provide a range of colors and textures to the landscape.

Advice for growing to shape

Mooney said tree-form hydrangeas require more care, including a hard cut

back in the fall or early spring, which causes them to grow more new stems.

"Throughout the season they will need regular dead-heading maintenance as spent blooms finish and new ones take their place," Mooney said. "Hydrangea do like water and will need regular attention paid to their fertilizer requirements."

House's biggest piece of advice is to be consistent on the maintenance to keep the desired shape. "Remove any growth coming from the trunk, keep the head balanced with regular pruning, and stake young plants if needed so the trunk stays straight while it develops," House said.

She also suggested choosing a variety with a naturally strong habit to start »

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Starblast Chiffon® Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Rwoods6' PP30270). PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBINSON NURSERY

Smaller space, bigger bang

with so that shaping becomes easier.

For container gardening on a patio, House said watering and feeding is even more important because the plants rely on the gardener for everything.

Robinson's advice is to keep it simple and not overthink it because the plants are meant to bring joy instead of stress.

"Prune to maintain the shape of the canopy and remove any growth coming from the trunk," Robinson said. "And most importantly—start with a well-grown tree. When the structure is right from the beginning, maintenance becomes easy."

Future of tree-form shrubs

House, Robinson and Mooney all predict this trend will continue to grow as more people garden in smaller spaces. These consumers are leaning toward plants with high visual impact without needing a big backyard.

"Tree-form shrubs fit really well into that future because they feel premium, stylish, and space-smart all at once," House said. "I also think we'll keep seeing more interest in plants that help people create a curated, designed look at home, especially as patios and outdoor entertaining spaces continue to matter more."

Robinson said gardeners are craving beauty and simplicity and want something that feels intentional.

"I also think you'll see more creativity — mixing colors, layering plants and really using these trees as a design element," Robinson said. ☺

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



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Bailey Nurseries has roughly 5,000 acres in Oregon, making it one of the largest growers in the state. It has nurseries in Yamhill, Dayton and Sauvie Island. PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY NURSERIES

Nurseries juggle all kinds of challenges when planning their production cycles

BY JON BELL

J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. (JFS) nursery (Farwest booth #19026) in Boring, Oregon, grows a lot of trees: more than 500 varieties across 3,000 acres with a harvest of more than two million trees every year. Pulling off such a horticultural feat is no small task. It requires copious amounts of planning, adjusting, responding and, sometimes, just a bit of luck.

But even with all those measures in place, the unexpected fluke can sneak in from time to time. Case in point: One season, a freak hailstorm decimated an entire crop of 50,000 honeylocust trees (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), destroying them and rendering them unsaleable.

“We couldn’t give them away,” said Ben Rough, CEO at JFS. “In that kind »



Grafters work on conifers at J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. The nursery grows more than 500 varieties across 3,000 acres with a harvest of more than two million trees every year. PHOTO COURTESY OF J. FRANK SCHMIDT & SON CO.

The best laid plans



At Alpha Nursery, growing a wide variety of plants, as well as propagating a high percentage of their crops in-house, also adds complexity.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALPHA NURSERY

of situation, it's just a loss because we get paid on delivered trees. Our customers don't pre-pay us. They order in that summer timeframe for next spring's sales. If something happens to that tree between then and when we go to harvest that tree, it's our responsibility. There's nothing we can do."

It's the nursery's job to pivot and figure out a solution, which comes with the territory in the industry. In this case, JFS ended up being able to tap into a nearby crop of trees that had managed to survive the hailstorm largely unscathed. These were used to supplement customer orders.

"I wasn't able to supply them with everything that they needed," Rough said, "but we were able to still provide them with trees, because that's important to us, that our customers have a consistent, reliable supplier."

Planning production to meet sales demand isn't an easy thing to do in any business. Doing it in the nursery business takes it to a whole different level. Products can be in the ground for years before they're ready to sell — and random hailstorms can

wipe out entire crops in an afternoon.

But the right mix of data, experience, trend awareness, relationship building, foresight and, yes, maybe a touch of luck, can help nurseries position themselves for success over the long haul.

"With cycle times of three to five years, production planning is as much an art as it is a science," said Blaine Anderson, general manager at **Gold Family Farms** (Farwest booth #20037), a wholesale plant nursery specializing in container-grown conifers and woody ornamentals in Hillsboro, Oregon. "I think the most important advice I would give growers wrestling with this issue is to zoom out as much as possible. Try to avoid putting too much stock in current market conditions. We focus heavily on aspects of the business we can control like efficiency and process improvement. This gives us a better chance to do well in challenging markets."

Challenging factors

What makes production planning so challenging for nurseries is not one single factor, but an array that impacts every

nursery differently. For Anderson and Gold Family Farms, the sheer unknowing is one of the biggest challenges.

"The unknown for sure," he said. "The plants we are selling this year resulted from a decision we made around five years ago."

Chris Lee is the planning and inventory manager for Minnesota-headquartered **Bailey Nurseries Inc.** (Farwest booth #17019), which has roughly 5,000 acres in Oregon, making it one of the largest growers in the state. It has nurseries in Yamhill, Dayton and Sauvie Island. He agreed that uncertainty adds bumps in the road, as do timing and alignment across the company. The challenge with timing is making decisions early enough to influence long-term production but not so early that the nursery is acting on incomplete information. Alignment means having everyone — sales, production and marketing — armed with the best information and working toward the same goals. As for uncertainty?

"We are planning years in advance, but variables like weather, labor availability, input costs and shifting demand



Workers man a potting line at Alpha Nursery. Many nurseries look to prior sales trends and customer buying history to help plan production for the future. PHOTO COURTESY OF ALPHA NURSERY

can all impact outcomes,” Lee said, noting that other external pressures like fertilizer pricing, fuel costs and freight rates also play a role.

Josh Zielinski, manager of **Alpha Nursery** (Farwest booth # 13037), a wholesale nursery in Salem, said growing a wide variety of plants, as well as propagating a high percentage of their crops in-house, also adds complexity. And then, on top of pest and disease concerns, there’s the weather.

“Weather, such as a very hot summer or early spring, can make the actual growth of certain plants a challenge,” Zielinski said. “The weather across the country can affect orders — a poor spring sell-through affects fall shipping, which may have been in the production plan.”

Back to the future

Without a crystal ball to see into the future, many nurseries instead look to the past to help inform their production planning. They examine prior sales trends and customer buying history to help plan production for the future. “We mainly use past ordering and sales information to set a production plan,” Zielinski said. “There are also customer requests, sales representative input and general trends that become obvious for a nursery of our size to take note of and factor into the planning. Of course,

there are new items and unforeseen trend swings ... that can definitely make this production plan feel like it also includes a healthy dose of guesswork.”

There’s also just knowing customers and what they’ve tended to purchase over the years, too.

“We really look to our customers,” Rough said. “We’ve been in the business for 80 years. We have a lot of really great, exceptional customers who rely on us to provide them with products every year. We take their requests, both in quantity and varietal, when we’re putting a plan in place. But still, these are sometimes just informed guesses.”

Informed plans

While there is some guesswork and luck involved in production planning, nurseries don’t really leave anything up to chance. Advances in software and data collection have rendered spreadsheets obsolete and given nurseries valuable information on customer purchases, crop yields and margins, all of which goes into their planning processes.

At Gold Family Farms, a relatively new program for some customers offers better pricing when they pay for a portion of their order three to six months before shipping. That helps the nursery plan more effectively and keeps costs in ➤



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The best laid plans

check.

"The program is new," Anderson said, "but we are pleased with the direction it's heading."

Nurseries also have figured out ways to make informed adjustments to their plans along the way. Lee said if Bailey sees imbalances in what they planned for and what actual sales are, they try and make corrections as early as possible within the production cycle.

For bareroot production, that means reviewing current demand and cutting back as needed; they can also hold back plants if there's not justification to bring them all to market. For container production, they can adjust liner inputs to manage timing and sizing while reducing overall numbers. In some cases, they'll also have the sales and marketing teams work to find alternative customers or markets whenever it makes sense.

"Ultimately," Lee said, "it is about making informed corrections throughout the cycle rather than waiting and reacting too late."

Sometimes, though, chance will play a random card and alter a best laid plan. The COVID-19 pandemic was probably the most prominent example of this in recent years, but it can happen anytime.

Anderson said a few years ago, one customer requested a large order of some sculpted plants that had an eight-year growing cycle and required a significant amount of labor every year. By the time the plants were at last ready for harvest, the customer had filed for bankruptcy.

"We had to scramble to find homes for these special plants," Anderson said. "This event helped us make some course corrections with production, and we shifted to a more universal pallet."

At the end of the day, solid historical

information, accurate trend monitoring and the ability to adjust on the fly will always be key to production planning for nurseries. One of the most important elements will also always be building long-term relationships with customers who will navigate the process in tandem with nurseries.

"Many of our customers are long-time customers, and they count on us to supply them with quality products season after season," Zielinski said. "In return, there is a fair amount of confidence and trust that they will continue to need many of the items if we continue to grow them. Sure, orders change and whatnot, but we are always getting their feedback and adjusting the best we can." ©

Jon Bell is an Oregon freelance journalist who writes about everything from Mt. Hood and craft beer to real estate and the great outdoors. His website is JBellInk.com.

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The next generation

Plants may be the product, but people keep the horticulture industry running. OAN FILE PHOTO

Powering the workforce pipeline through the HRI Scholarship Program

BY JENNIFER GRAY

As experienced growers retire and operations grow more complex, horticulture businesses are asking a critical question.

Who is coming next?

Plants may be the product, but people are the engine of the horticulture industry. From nursery and greenhouse production to landscape design, and plant breeding to plant health, businesses across the green industry depend on skilled, well-trained professionals. As workforce shortages and operational demands grow, building and sustaining a dependable pipeline of industry-ready talent is a top priority.

Investment in the future workforce

The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) Scholarship Program makes a deliberate investment in that pipeline. During the 2025–2026 academic year, HRI awarded \$62,000 in scholarship support to 18 stu-

dents pursuing horticulture-related degrees at institutions across the country. These scholarships, funded by generous donors, are not simply financial aid; they represent a commitment to build industry infrastructure through investments in the people who will make up the green industry in the years ahead.

Scholarships built for industry careers

The HRI Scholarship Program is intentionally designed to empower students pursuing careers in the green industry. That includes students like Ella May, recipient of the Timothy S. and Palmer W. Bigelow, Jr. Scholarship, who is preparing for a career in greenhouse production, with a focus on science-based growing practices that improve efficiency and plant performance.

Others, such as Landon Erbrick, recipient of the Dennis & Harriet Walters Memorial Scholarship, are pursuing advanced horticulture degrees with plans to work in commercial greenhouse and nursery operations where they'll bring technical expertise and management skills directly into production environments.

For James Hines IV, recipient of the

John B. & Elizabeth Wight Memorial Scholarship and a first-year horticulture student at Tennessee Tech, education is directly tied to succession planning. "My goal is to honor my family's legacy by modernizing our business practices and introducing more sustainable solutions for the future," he writes, reflecting the commitment many scholarship recipients bring to strengthening family-owned nursery businesses.

Students pursuing business and market-facing roles are also represented. Paul Crocker, recipient of the Susie & Bruce Usrey Education Scholarship, is preparing for a career in horticultural sales, marketing, and business development, areas that are increasingly critical as companies compete for customers and talent alike.

Reflecting the scope of the industry

The HRI Scholarship Program is supported by a portfolio of endowed funds, each reflecting different priorities within the horticulture industry. Scholarships such as the Carville M. Akehurst Memorial Scholarship, the Bryan A. Champion Memorial Scholarship, the Gunter Mecking Memorial Scholarship, and the Spring Meadow – Proven Winners ➤

The next generation

Scholarship collectively support students across production, plant science, landscape architecture, and business disciplines.

This year's Spring Meadow – Proven Winners Scholarship recipients, for example, include students pursuing woody plant production and plant breeding and improvement, fields that directly influence product quality, availability, and market success. These disciplines play a critical role in helping green industry businesses meet customer demand while adapting to changing production and market conditions.

For Katelyn Boyce, recipient of the Bryan A. Champion Memorial Scholarship and a graduate student in plant breeding at The Ohio State University, that intersection of innovation and application is central to her career goals.

"I'm deeply committed to horticulture because I see it as both an art and a science—one that brings joy to people while also addressing larger environmental concerns," she explains, reflecting the blend of technical expertise and industry awareness that defines many HRI scholars.

Attracting talent to the industry

For students deciding where to commit their time and energy, scholarships send a simple, important message: the horticulture industry wants you. The HRI Scholarship Program reinforces horticulture as a viable, long-term career path by showing students that industry leaders are willing to invest in their success. That early signal plays a real role in attracting talent and keeping it pointed toward careers in horticulture.

By easing financial pressure, HRI scholarships allow students to focus on learning, skill development, and career preparation, ensuring they enter the workforce ready to contribute, rather than simply credentialed. For businesses, that translates into graduates who understand industry expectations and are prepared to step into operational roles with confidence.

Building the future, together

The growth of the HRI Scholarship Program reflects a shared belief among donors



This year's HRI scholarships included students pursuing woody plant production and plant breeding, fields that influence product quality, availability and market success. OAN FILE PHOTO

that workforce development is essential to the industry's future. Reaching \$62,000 in scholarship support this year marks an important milestone; one only made possible by the individuals, families, and companies who believe in investing in people.

The 2025–2026 HRI Scholarship Program recipients represent the next generation of growers, managers, designers, and business professionals who will help shape horticulture in the years ahead. As workforce demands continue to evolve, sustained investment in emerging professionals will remain essential to the industry's long-term competitiveness and growth.

For more information, visit HRIResearch.org. ©

Jennifer Gray is Administrator for the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI), where she leads industry-driven research and workforce development initiatives that connect science with practical industry impact.

2025–2026 HRI Scholarship Program recipients

Each scholarship fund represents more than generosity; it reflects a strategic commitment to ensuring that horticulture businesses have access to capable, motivated professionals who understand the industry and want to be part of it long term.

Carville M. Akehurst Memorial Scholarship: Mona Jones — Cornell University.

Timothy S. and Palmer W. Bigelow, Jr. Scholarship: Ella May — University of Connecticut.

Bryan A. Champion Memorial Scholarship: Katelyn Boyce — The Ohio

State University.

Cultivate the Future

Scholarship: Kathryn Huether — Stephen F. Austin State University.

Gunter Mecking Memorial

Scholarship: Layne Krug — Purdue University.

Mugget Scholarship

- Luke Duncan — California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.
- Freddy Mendez Urbano — The Ohio State University.

Spring Meadow — Proven Winners

Scholarships:

- Tanner Hamerling — University of Georgia.
- Jenna Hoffman — Iowa State University.
- Greg Marshall — NC State University.
- Jesse Potts — University of Florida.
- Ryan Joseph Rey — University of Florida.
- Joseph Romano — University of Delaware.
- Nathan Sims — University of Rhode Island.
- Stacey Thorne — Lake Washington Institute of Technology.

Susie & Bruce Usrey Education

Scholarship: Paul Crocker — California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Usrey Family Scholarship: Luke

Duncan — California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Dennis & Harriet Walters Memorial

Scholarship: Landon Erbrick — Auburn University.

John B. & Elizabeth Wight Memorial

Scholarship: James Hines, IV — Tennessee Tech University. ©

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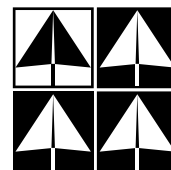
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GROWING KNOWLEDGE

Series content is coordinated by Dr. Lloyd Nackley, associate professor of nursery production and greenhouse management at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon.



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Pretty but pesky

Box tree moths pose
a threat to Oregon nurseries



Figure 1: An adult box tree moth. PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA-APHIS

BY JANA LEE,
NICHOLAS MCDONALD,
AND CHRISTINE DODGE

The box tree moth, *Cydalima perspectalis* (Lepidoptera: Crambidae), is an attractive white moth with brown wing edges (Fig. 1). The caterpillars are a striking, vibrant green with black and white markings. Unfortunately, the caterpillars are devastating pests of boxwood (*Buxus* spp.) and can defoliate entire plants (Fig. 2).

Fast-spreading

Box tree moth is native to eastern

Asia. It was first detected in Germany in 2006 and quickly spread throughout the European continent over the next decade. Their rapid spread was due in part to multiple accidental introductions, and the fact that there are native boxwoods in Europe facilitating the moth's spread in the wild. There are no native boxwoods in the continental United States, but boxwoods are popular ornamental plants and are common in cities and suburbs.

Box tree moth was first detected in North America in Toronto, Canada in 2018 (NAPPO 2019). From 2021 to 2025 it was confirmed in the United States in New York, Michigan, Ohio,

Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Maryland. As of December 2025, there are federal quarantines in place restricting movement of boxwoods from Michigan, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia (USDA APHIS 2025).

While box tree moth has not been detected in Oregon, this pest is of great concern since Oregon is the top producer of boxwoods in the country, followed by California and Ohio.

Life cycle

Box tree moth are the only cat-



Growing Knowledge

erpillars known to feed on boxwood in the United States. This pest takes about a month to complete its life cycle from egg to adult and typically completes between 1–5 generations per year.

Each female moth can lay over 700 eggs in her lifetime. Adults generally live about two weeks and are strong fliers. Their rate of spread is variable, averaging 3–6 miles per year in Europe but with reports of sustained adult flights of over 20 miles.

Box tree moth has also been reported to complete its development on *Murraya paniculata* (orange jessamine). Reported host associations with *Euonymus alatus* (burning bush) and *E. japonicus* are conflicting and inconclusive, but a formal study found *E. alatus* and *E. fortunei* to not be suitable hosts for box tree moth survival or development (Wiesner 2023). Host association with *Ilex purpurea* (purple holly) has been disproven.

Control

If box tree moth is present, what can growers do? Current insecticide options are listed online (Frank et al. 2021). However, this pest is notably challenging to control because the caterpillars may be hidden within webbing or leaves, thus avoiding contact sprays.

Should this pest be suspected in Oregon, the potential life stage (egg, caterpillar, or adult) can be predicted using an online tool based on local weather (SAFARIS 2025). Physical control of picking off caterpillars and pruning infested branches is feasible for homeowners but not commercial operations.

A female pheromone attracts male box tree moths and can be used to monitor their presence/absence. Trials using semiochemical lures based on this pheromone have shown promise for mating disruption in field trials in Croatia and New York; further guidance is still pending.

Biological controls

Microbial biological control of box tree moth has been researched, with bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* or var. *aizawai* and fungal pathogens



Figure 2. Larval damage to boxwood plant. Two box tree moth pupae and one *Eriborus* sp. cocoon are visible. PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA-APHIS

Beauveria bassiana causing mortality in field trials. In addition, scientists have traveled to Asia and collected parasitoid wasps that attack box tree moth with the goal of releasing them in the United States as classical biological control agents.

Biological control would require little effort from growers as the wasps would reproduce and spread on their own to control the pest. Before such releases can be made, however, these potential biocontrol agents are evaluated in quarantine to determine host specificity and confirm that they will not attack non-target caterpillars or result in unintended negative conse-

quences in the ecosystem.

Of the parasitoids collected, the wasp *Eriborus* sp. (Hymenoptera: Ichneumonidae) was the most commonly recovered from the native range of box tree moth in South Korea (Fig. 3). *Eriborus* sp. can attack all instars of box tree moth caterpillars and continues to develop as the caterpillar feeds. When the caterpillar reaches the fifth instar, the wasp will exit and pupate, killing the caterpillar in the process.

The USDA APHIS laboratory in Massachusetts is testing the safety of *Eriborus* sp. and whether it attacks cat-

erpillars of native moths and butterflies in the northeastern United States. This includes charismatic species like the luna moth and monarch butterfly, a variety of common moths across a diversity of families, and other moths in the families *Crambidae* and *Pyralidae*, which are closely related to box tree moth.

To conduct non-target testing, a female *Eriborus* sp. is exposed to a box tree moth caterpillar, then a non-target caterpillar, and then another box tree moth caterpillar in three back-to-back timed trials (Fig. 4). This is replicated at least 15 times for each non-target species tested. The ideal outcome is that the wasp attacks both box tree moth caterpillars, but not the non-target caterpillar. If a non-target caterpillar is attacked, new trials are conducted where wasps are presented with a choice of a box tree moth caterpillar and a non-target caterpillar simultaneously to determine the wasp's preference.



Figure 3. *Eriborus* sp. parasitizing a box tree moth larva. PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA-APHIS

Of 16 different families of caterpillars tested, *Eriborus* sp. was seen to attack several species in the families *Crambidae*, *Pyralidae*, and *Geometridae* but ignored all other non-target species. Importantly, no wasps developed from the attacked non-target caterpillars, and *Eriborus* sp. always preferred box tree moth caterpil-

lars over non-targets.

The USDA APHIS lab is continuing to screen additional caterpillars of a variety of moth species, now focusing on other close relatives of box tree moth. Since they provide wasps with the caterpillar stage, their main challenge is to rear large numbers of caterpillars from cap-



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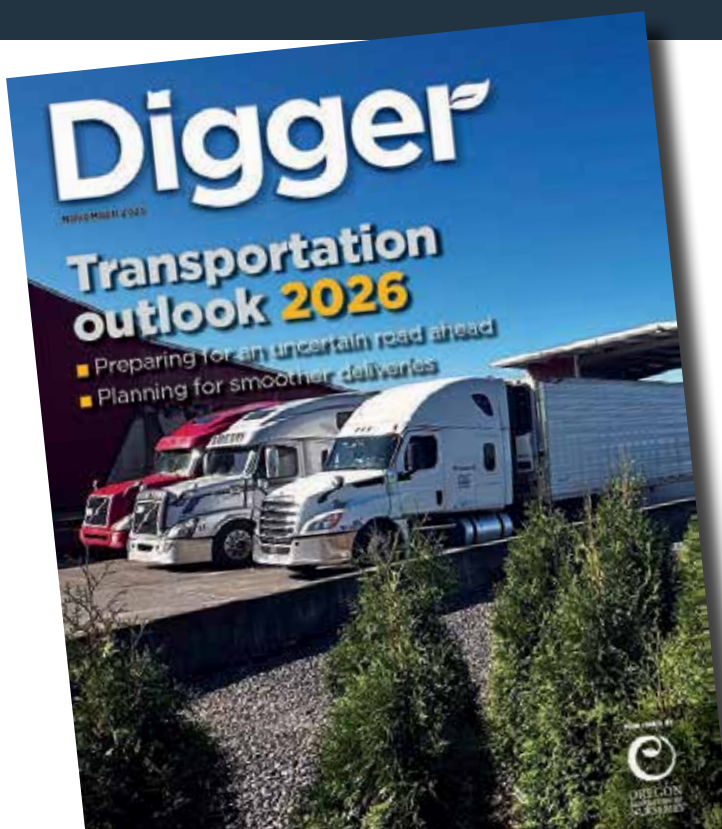
It takes several years to get an imported wasp like *Eriborus* sp. approved for releases in the U.S., and they must consider what will happen in various geographic zones where releases might occur. While box tree moth is not present in Oregon, researchers are proactively checking the wasp's ability to attack native moths in Oregon and the West Coast, specifically those in the related families *Crambidae* and *Pyralidae*.

The USDA APHIS lab is collaborating with USDA ARS in Corvallis, Oregon to obtain local moths. Common Oregon moths are collected by sampling vegetation and via light traps. When adults of related moths are found, they are held together to mate and lay eggs. Thus far, eggs of the California grass-veneer, a crambid, have been shipped to the quarantine lab in Massachusetts to rear out



Figure 4. Host range testing arenas (each row is a replicate). In no-choice trials, *Eriborus* sp. individuals are moved across each row to sequentially encounter box tree moth, non-target, box tree moth. Each encounter lasts 30 min or until attack occurs. PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA-APHIS

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and proceed with testing. Non-target host collection and testing in quarantine is continuing into 2026, so stay tuned for more updates.

If *Eriborus* sp. poses little risk to native moths in the U.S., it will likely be approved for release. Additionally, two more parasitoid wasps have been collected from box tree moth's native range and preparations to evaluate their host range are underway. ©

Jana Lee is a Research Entomologist at USDA ARS in Corvallis, Oregon. Her lab focuses on biological control and sustainable management of nursery and small fruit pests. Nicholas McDonald is a graduate student at Oregon State University who has assisted with collections. Christine Dodge is a Biological Scientist at USDA APHIS in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts. Her lab group develops classical biological control methods for invasive insects.

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A reflection of America herself

As a history nerd without apology, I was reading about the time leading up to the shots fired at Fort Sumter preceding the Civil War.

Out of the chaos and deep-seated acrimony of that time, English philanthropist Joseph Smithson provided a gift to the country — a gift to “establish increased and diffusion of knowledge amongst men.”

You may know it as the Smithsonian Institution.

The story of the Smithsonian is, in many ways, the story of America itself — ambitious, imperfect, curious, inventive, and constantly evolving. For more than 175 years, the Smithsonian has served as the nation's attic, laboratory, library, classroom, and memory bank. It preserves the treasures of the past, while helping Americans understand the present and imagine the future.

Founded in 1846 by an act of Congress, the Smithsonian began modestly in Washington with the construction of the iconic “castle,” a red sandstone building that still serves as one of the institution's symbols today. Over time, the Smithsonian expanded far beyond a single museum. It evolved into a network of museums, research centers, libraries, archives, zoological facilities, and educational programs that collectively attract tens of millions of visitors every year.

Today, the Smithsonian oversees 21 museums, the National Zoo, and numerous research facilities across the globe. Its collections include more than 150 million objects, specimens, and artifacts. Those holdings range from dinosaur fossils and moon rocks to presidential memorabilia, jazz recordings, Native American art, and historic aircraft.

The importance of the Smithsonian lies not merely in the size of its collections, but in what those collections represent. The institution preserves the shared story of the American people. It allows citizens to encounter their history in tangible ways — not as abstract concepts in textbooks, but as real objects connected to real lives.

A jewel of Washington, D.C.

I cannot express how this gift is something that reveals something new every time one visits one of the museums. The great puzzle of American history is one that invites intellectual exploration and more so, a recognition that our imperfect union has so much more to offer than the strife it was born into.

Visitors to the National Museum of American History can stand before the original Star-Spangled Banner that inspired the national anthem. At the National Air and Space Museum, they can see the Wright brothers' airplane, Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis, and artifacts from the Apollo missions that carried humans to the moon.

Education has been central to the Smithsonian mission. Millions of students, teachers, and researchers rely on Smithsonian resources each year. The institution has embraced digital technology to make its collections accessible worldwide, allowing people far from Washington to explore exhibits online, access historical documents, and engage with educational programming free of charge.

That accessibility matters, because the Smithsonian belongs to the public. Unlike many similar institutions around the world, most Smithsonian museums offer free admission.

Of course, like any major institution, the Smithsonian has faced criticism and controversy. Debates have recently reemerged over exhibit content, historical interpretation, funding priorities, and political influence. Yet those debates themselves reflect the institution's importance.

Americans care deeply about how their history is preserved and presented because history shapes national identity. Cultural touchpoints that demonstrate a truth of hardship can be found in the National Museum of African American History, and the National Museum of the American Indian. Not everything that this country has done is something we can be proud of — but it is a greater sin to sanitize history.

In many ways, the Smithsonian represents a uniquely American idea: that a nation can invest in knowledge, culture, and discovery not simply for profit, but for the public good. Its museums remind



Jeff Stone

visitors that innovation, creativity, sacrifice, and curiosity are part of the national character. They also remind Americans that history is not always comfortable.

D.C. is a treasure trove for history nerds

While both the National Archives and the Smithsonian Institution play vital roles in preserving American history and culture, they operate independently of each other. The National Archives focus on government records and historical documents, while the Smithsonian is the curator of our beautiful nation's history.

Every trip to our nation's capital, we visit a few Smithsonian museums, but selfishly, I need to visit the National Archives. I admit when I cast my eyes on the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, I tear up.

At a moment when society often feels divided by politics, technology, and rapid social change, institutions like the Smithsonian provide something increasingly rare. A place where the bridge between the past and present is open to everyone.

James Smithson could scarcely have imagined the scale of the institution his gift would create. Yet his vision endures in every museum hall, research laboratory, archive box, and educational program associated with the Smithsonian. More than a collection of buildings and artifacts, the Smithsonian is a living record of humanity's desire to learn, preserve, and understand. ©



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