

2025-2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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An unforgettable experience

It's hard to believe my year as president of the Oregon Association of Nurseries is already coming to an end.



Patrick Newton

When I started this year, I knew I was taking on a big responsibility. After 25 years in this industry, I've seen plenty of ups and downs, but I don't think I fully understood how different it would feel to be sitting in the president's chair. There's a lot that comes with it, and there were definitely days when I wondered what the hell I had gotten myself into.

Looking back, I can honestly say I'm extremely proud of the year we had.

The Japanese beetle was probably the biggest scare I've experienced. It was a serious threat to our industry, and I'm proud of the way OAN, our members and everyone involved came together to deal with it. It was a tough situation but we found a way.

One of the best parts of this year was getting out and visiting our members. We set a goal of visiting 50 nurseries, and we got there. I really enjoyed getting out of the office and seeing what people are doing around the state. Every nursery is a little different, and every owner has a different story. It was a great way to spend my year as president, and I'm really glad we made the effort to get out and see so many of our members.

I also made several trips to Washington, D.C., this year and had the chance to meet with our representatives. We also spent time meeting with people at the state level here in Oregon. One of the things I'm especially proud of this year was having my wife, Jaime, and I host a reception for gubernatorial candidate Christine Drazen in our backyard. That's something I never would have thought I'd be doing when I started in this industry. It was a pretty special moment for me and something I'll always be proud of.

Those are the kinds of things I'll remember from this year. Not just the meetings or the travel, but the people I met and the relationships that came from it.

I'm proud that we showed up.

We showed up when the Japanese beetle became a serious threat. We showed up in Washington, D.C. We showed up at the Capitol. And we showed up at our members' nurseries. We made sure people knew who we were, what we do and why this industry matters.

I also want to take a minute to thank the OAN board. Thank you to Darcy, Andrea, Barb, Ben, Blake, Chris, Greg, Jason, Jesse, Jonathan, Noah, Sam, Tyler, Patrick and Vladimir for trusting me with this position and supporting me throughout the year. I appreciate the conversations, the ideas and, most of all, knowing that we were working toward the same goal.

And of course, none of this happens without the OAN staff. They put in the work every single day, and I'm grateful I had the chance to work alongside them.

I also want to thank everyone who has reached out to me about the columns I've written this year. The nice messages mean more to me than you know. It's been a lot of fun putting my thoughts down each month, and knowing that people actually take the time to read them and reach out makes it even more worthwhile.

Now it's time to hand the reins over to Darcy Ruef of Al's Garden & Home. Darcy, congratulations. I'm excited to see what you do with the job, and I'll be rooting for you every step of the way.

Thank you to everyone who gave me the opportunity to serve as your president. It's an experience I'll never forget. ☺