

40 40 40 UNDER MEET THE CLASS OF 2015

THIS YEAR'S CLASS OF TRAILBLAZERS WILL HELP DETERMINE THE PATH TO THE FUTURE.

By Tim Hodson

This year marks the fourth edition of GPN's 40 Under 40 program. Like the previous three classes, the members of the Class of 2015 are truly special.

The 40 individuals in this year's class represent all facets of horticulture, but they all have one thing in common — they are the pioneers for the future of our industry!

These men and women will help determine many of the paths that the growers, retailers, breeders, landscapers and everyone else associated with horticulture travel on into the future.


They are the innovators who will steer the industry into the New Frontier.

Tim Hodson is GPN's editorial director. He can be reached at thodson@sgcmail.com.

COMING SOON: THE CLASS OF 2016

We will begin accepting nominations for the Class of 2016 on www.gpnmag.com in November. Entry details will be provided in upcoming issues of GPN as well as our newsletter, GPN Weekly.

If you think you know someone that belongs in next year's class, be sure to nominate them.

In the meantime, I'd like to introduce you to GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2015. 

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MAGAN AGEE

DIRECTOR OF SALES
HOFFMAN NURSERY INC.
ROUGEMONT, NORTH CAROLINA



Accomplishments:

- Improved and updated internal office processes to be nearly paperless.
- Responsible for developing and implementing seasonal and customer-targeted sales strategies for the sales team that helped increase sales.

Dancing Queen: Magan loves to dance. You can find her dancing at home, at work and doing an occasional pirouette through the grocery store.

Magan's Been on the Fast Track: In 2006, Magan's parents purchased Orange County Speedway, one of the fastest 3/8-mile racetracks in the country where legends like Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon have raced.

ROBERT BETT

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
PLANTHAVEN INTERNATIONAL
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for establishing forward-looking systems for commissioning new breeding programs and bringing them successfully to the market.
- Was honored with a Gold Award and the Horticultural Excellence Award at the New Zealand Ellerslie Flowers Show.



On His Nightstand:

"Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" by J.K. Rowling because, "I like a little magic in my life."

Making the Right Choice: Robert is dedicated to his craft and extremely proud that he selected "a career where I get to interact daily with some of the world's most creative, passionate and interesting people."

CHRIS BERG

PRESIDENT
BLUESKYE CREATIVE INC.
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Accomplishments:

After working in the horticulture industry for more than a decade, Chris says his biggest accomplishment is starting his marketing and product development firm in 2014. "It was a scary moment ... but I've had incredible industry support to make it happen. I'm very proud of the fact that I'm working with all of my previous employers through various projects, and that those relationships have remained strong."



Hey Bartender! For the past 10 years, Chris has enjoyed being an occasional bartender in wine bars and restaurants. "It's like throwing a party for a bunch of fun people that you don't have to pay for. It is also where I've met most of my closest friends and previous employers."

Frequent Flyer: Chris' favorite vacation spot is Belize and he has traveled to more than 30 countries and visited 49 states. Later this month, he plans to go on vacation in Montana — #50!

DAVID BRILL

GENERAL MANAGER
THE FARM AT GREEN VILLAGE
GREEN VILLAGE, NEW JERSEY

Accomplishments:

- Implemented, adapted and enhanced his company's point-of-sale system to help improve operations.
- David is a graduate of the Garden Center University program.

A Man in High Places: When he was a college student at Syracuse University, David studied abroad one summer in a program that took him all the way to the base of Mount Everest on the Tibetan side.

What's for Dinner? Pizza! "It's almost impossible to find bad pizza, maybe it's because my brain thinks I can still eat like I was in college, even though that is not the case."



JUSTEN BENEDEUCE HILES

GENERAL MANAGER
GREAT SWAMP GREENHOUSES
GILLETTE, NEW JERSEY

Accomplishments:

- Instrumental in the development and evolution of the company's current business structure and retail operations.
- Along with her brother (and support from their parents), conceived and established Beneduce Vineyards in Pittstown, New Jersey.

Can't Live Without:

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. "Definitely a weakness!"

A Constant Reminder: Justen has a tattoo on her foot that says, "Be the change" to serve "as a constant reminder to get off my butt and make things happen when I'm unhappy with a certain situation."



AMY BRIGGS-MACHA

TECHNICAL LEAD — SEED SPECIALIST
SYNGENTA FLOWERS, HOME & GARDEN
DENVER, COLORADO

Accomplishments:

- Helped develop growing protocols for new products and programs at Tagawa Greenhouses.
- Works with breeders and marketing team to develop cultural growing guidelines for growers.

Every Day is a Dog Day: Amy and her husband have two Basset Hounds, Daisy and Duke, "who provide us with non-stop love, entertainment and downright stubbornness." If you ask her about them, be prepared to "suffer through countless doggie stories and pictures."

Deep Roots in the Rockies: Amy is a fifth-generation Coloradan. "What can I say? When my family finds a good thing, we stick with it!"



CHRISTOPHER BRUZZI

OWNER/MEMBER
BRUZZI LAWN & LANDSCAPE LLC/GREEN SPOT LLC
NEW MILFORD, CONNECTICUT

Accomplishments:

- A third-generation landscape professional, his company has “substantially grown” every year for nearly 20 years, including during the recession.
- Helped create a local, organic, back-to-basics garden center “with something for all ages and all people; a true destination for our community.”

It’s the Best Medicine: Christopher loves to laugh. “Humor is the spice of life. Laughing is food for the soul.”

Fore! Golf is one of Christopher’s passions. “I see the topography and its challenge ... I am constantly looking at the construction and infrastructure involved with the course. The game helps me to relax and to think — I always have my thinking cap on.”

AMBER DAWN COCH

GARDEN READY SALES SUPERVISOR
FOUR STAR GREENHOUSE INC.
CARLETON, MICHIGAN

Accomplishments:

- Aided in the development of a variety-specific, barcode-driven, pay-by-scan program for independent garden centers.



- Helped develop and enhance a wholesale finished product line that is tailored to the specific needs of the independent garden center.

Can’t Live Without: Family. “My family is very close and always has

been. My parents have instilled in my siblings and I to cherish your loved ones. I am also blessed with great friends that I consider family as well.”

Keeping It In the Family: Amber’s favorite food is her husband’s homemade pizza based on an old family recipe that has been handed down over the years.

BRIAN BURGHARDT

SERVICE MANAGER, GREEN GOODS BUYER,
HEAD DESIGNER, CO-OWNER
ROCKAWAY GARDEN CENTER
JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FLORIDA

Accomplishments:

- Along with his brother and others, created a thriving landscape and garden center business.
- Partnered with a local elementary school to convert an old greenhouse into a productive growing facility for a garden center (the school’s PTA receives a percentage of the sales) where students can learn about horticulture.



Reel Life:

Chris is an avid fisherman. “I don’t get out as much as I would like, but it is something I love to do with my wife and boys, or by myself on my kayak.”

Favorite Vacation Spot: Marathon, Florida, in the Keys. “We stay at an old Keys resort with use of a boat. It’s just a little bit of paradise ... and the fishing is great!”



MICHAEL CREATH

OWNER/PLANTSCAPER
CREATH LANDSCAPE DESIGN
COLUMBUS, OHIO

Accomplishments:

- Successfully designed, built, planted and maintained a 12x18-foot living wall in Columbus’ Italian Village.
- Michael’s work has been featured in multiple issues of Columbus Monthly Home & Garden magazine.

During the Off Season: In the winter, Michael turns into an amateur chef. He likes to create great meals with an emphasis on plating and presentation.

Vacation Destination: The Swiss Alps. “I credit the Swiss Alps with taking my liking for plants and turning it into a love and passion.”

THA CHA

PRODUCTION MANAGER
TAGAWA GREENHOUSE ENTERPRISE
BRIGHTON, COLORADO

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for overseeing more than 20 acres of greenhouse production and increasing overall efficiency.
- In a two-year period, learned how to grow vegetative liners, plugs, bedding plants, bulbs, mums and poinsettias.

All You Need is ...: The Beatles. Tha is a Beatles aficionado. “Hands down, Abbey Road is my favorite Beatles album because, ‘It’s alright.’”

Be Like Mike: One thing Tha can’t live without is his Air Jordan sneakers, “although I never have time to wear them because I am always working.”



ANGELICA CRETU

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
COSTA FARMS
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Accomplishments:

- Helped put together the team and created processes to allow the flow of information from R&D to production, marketing and sales departments.
- Collaborates with breeding companies to make critical product selections for less day-length sensitive plants, disease resistance, heat tolerance and drought tolerance.

007 Fan: Angelica is a big admirer of James Bond films. “I like the action and the fact that reality is combined with fantasy and very interesting and futuristic gadgets.”

What’s Cookin’? “I am Romanian and I love Romanian food. I like to cook and share Romanian dishes with my friends and can make very good stuffed cabbage and stuffed grape leaves.”



TARA DUDLEY

OWNER/PRESIDENT
PLANT LIFE DESIGNS
WINDSOR HEIGHTS, IOWA

Accomplishments:

- Started a landscape design/installation business from the ground up, creating jobs and providing services to people to improve their quality of life.
- Volunteers as a design contributor along with other talented individuals at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens.

Secret Talent: Don't challenge Tara to a game of pingpong — she's an ace.

Break Out the Popcorn:

Tara's a big fan of Wes Anderson's films because of the director's attention to detail and artistic style.



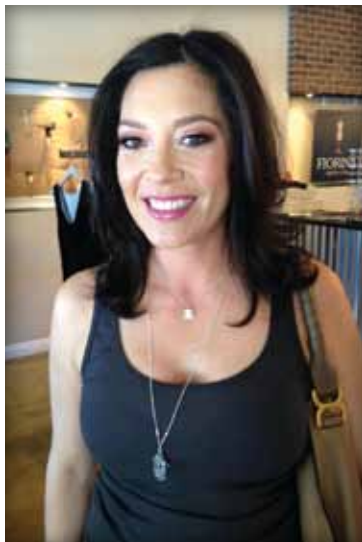
MELINA FERRANDINO

OWNER/PRESIDENT
GLENORA GARDENS INC.
GLENORA, CALIFORNIA

Accomplishments:

- Melina's first job after college was successfully managing a 10-acre retail/wholesale nursery and piloting the business through a recession.
- Responsible for bringing together investors (including herself) to purchase the nursery that she managed for 15 years, saving the jobs of more than 20 longtime employees.

Practice, Practice, Practice: Melina is a trained Reiki practitioner — a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation.



Favorite Read:

"Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Brontë. "I love the spirited vigor of Jane's internal state and how she disliked the hypocrisy in the people around her ... she was loved for her artistry and character rather than wealth and beauty. Qualities that I find more worthy of love."



DANIEL FOERTMEYER

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER/OFFICE MANAGER
FOERTMEYER & SONS GREENHOUSE
DELAWARE, OHIO

Accomplishments:

- Assisted in implementing new and different processes that helped simplify operations and resulted in increased revenue.
- Simplified customer relations side of business by creating "The Customer Journey" to follow company accounts from start to finish.

Card Shark: Daniel is an avid poker player. "People have told me I am very good at reading people so naturally that goes into playing poker."

All Business, Most of the Time:

Daniel likes to read business-related books — "The Total Money Makeover" by Dave Ramsey is one that has been very helpful to him.

JARVIS GREEN

QUALITY MANAGER
C. RAKER & SONS INC.
LITCHFIELD, MICHIGAN



Accomplishments:

- During his 16-year tenure, participated in the company's evolution from plug-based sales to include liner, finished and direct to consumer programs.
- Volunteers his time to speak with local K-12 students, as well as college students, promoting the horticulture industry at career fairs and other events.

The Right Type: Jarvis always donates when the local Red Cross has a blood drive. To date, he has donated eight gallons of blood.

Dining Delight: When it comes to food, Jarvis likes almost anything that is homemade — especially if mashed potatoes are included.

APRIL HERRING-MURRAY

NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT/MARKETING
MANAGER
PACIFIC PLUG & LINER
WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for organizing company's California Spring Trials event and has helped developed three new plant varieties.
- Travels extensively to breeders around the world to help company secure exclusive rights to many new and unique plants.

Commuting to the Greenhouse:

April likes to ride her bike to work occasionally — it's a 20-mile trip one way!

Can't Live Without: "Chocolate and cheese ... I can't stop eating them!" She also likes Mediterranean food, especially hummus.



ANDY HUNTINGTON

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER
PLEASANT VIEW GARDENS
LOUDON AND PEMBROKE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for young plant sales in New England and New York, and is a board member of the New Hampshire Plant Growers Association.
- Named Salesman of the Year two times for largest growth and highest sales while working for a horticultural printing company.

Favorite Vacation Spot: "Anywhere I can shut my phone off. Preferably somewhere warm, serving tropical drinks with umbrellas in them."

What's in a Name? Andy's wife, Alyssa, was named after the Alyssum plant — a fact he did not learn about until after they were married.



BRYCE JOHNSON

GENERAL MANAGER
RED OAK GREENHOUSE INC.
RED OAK, IOWA

Accomplishments:

- Helped company streamline production and implemented labor-saving practices, reducing costs and increasing profits.
- Instrumental in bringing the greenhouse up to date, staying up with the latest marketing trends in plant varieties and adding new growing ranges to keep up with increased sales.



Vacation Location: "When we take our annual family vacation, the location does not necessarily matter, spending time with my family is all that matters."

Loud and Proud: Red Oak Greenhouse is a family business that has been around for 136 years. "When we sing Happy Birthday at our family gatherings we like to sing very loud and off key."

MARK JOHNSON

SALES & MARKETING
RED OAK GREENHOUSE INC.
RED OAK, IOWA

Accomplishments:

- Worked with Red Oak team members to grow sales 30 percent over the past five years and is working to build strong partnerships and relationships with customers "while having a little fun along the way."
- Instrumental in developing new product lines, obtaining new clients, increasing revenue and decreasing costs.



Don't Argue with Him:

Before joining the family business in 2007, Mark spent four years practicing law in the Kansas City area.

Football Fanatic:

Mark likes to attend Iowa State and Kansas City Chiefs football games. "I know both teams are sometimes very painful to watch, but it does build character and test your sanity."

DENISE KELLY

PLANNING AND PLANT TRIALS MANAGER
SMITH GARDENS INC.
BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

Accomplishments:

- Created company's trial program that started with just a few varieties and now has more than 1,000 varieties and a program bringing in money to offset costs.
- With a product line that spans annuals, perennials, shrubs and edibles, she manages the planning of more than 4,700 line items and 32 brands for distribution to six different retailers.



Down on the Farm ... Way Down: Before joining Smith Gardens, Denise was an organic farmer in Hawaii growing lettuce and coffee for local grocery stores and restaurants.

Chef Denise? When she's not in the greenhouse, Denise enjoys cooking. "I love to cook because I love plants and I love to eat. I am a self-proclaimed foodie and fantasize about the culinary arts."



The Westhoff Team congratulates Chris Berg on his selection to GPN's 2015 40 under 40

Chris has a passion for horticulture and eye for design that make him unparalleled in the horticulture industry.

JIM KENNEDY

SALES MANAGER
BALL HORTICULTURAL CO.
WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



Accomplishments:

- Hosted multiple rooting station technical workshops with a focus on practical implementation of best practices in vegetative annuals and geranium propagation.
- Responsible for business development in the North American market of two major breeding companies.

All in the Family: Jim has six sisters, five brothers and more than 30 nieces and nephews. He and his wife, Ann, have four children of their own.

Favorite Book: "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen R. Covey. "The principles are timeless and applicable to all walks of life."

MARTA KEPHART

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER/NURSERY MANAGER
RANA CREEK HABITAT RESTORATION INC.
CARMEL, CALIFORNIA

Accomplishments:

- Has created compelling landscape designs, living walls and roofs and grown plants for major sustainable landscapes and restoration projects throughout the western United States.
- Oversees the production of a wide diversity of native plants for urban greening and habitat restoration.



Sail On Sailor: Marta grew up racing small sailboats all over the world from Sydney, Australia, to St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

Turn the Page: Marta enjoys reading Michael Pollan's books. "Particularly 'The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World', which explores man's relationship and history with plants."



TRAVIS KNOOP

DIRECTOR OF LABOR
METROLINA GREENHOUSES INC.
YORK, SOUTH CAROLINA

Accomplishments:

- Helped redefine the labor/operations side of company's recently purchased perennial farm.
- Implemented a new system that provided insight into the efficiency breakdowns in the field and on loading docks that reduced labor costs and loading time by 15 percent in the first two weeks.

Keeping Track: Travis earned a college scholarship for track and field that allowed him to travel around the world throwing the discus, shot put, javelin and hammer.

Fab Fajitas: Travis was raised in New Mexico in a little farm town full of authentic Mexican flavor. His favorite plate is Fat Boy Fajitas at Irma's Restaurant in Deming, New Mexico.

Pacific Plug & Liner congratulates April Herring- Murray on her selection to GPN's 2015 40 under 40

April brings a great knowledge of plants, high energy and creativity to her job and company every day!



www.ppandl.net



ANGEL LARA

GREENHOUSE MANAGER
THE MARIE SELBY BOTANICAL GARDENS
SARASOTA, FLORIDA



Accomplishments:

- Developed a comprehensive integrated pest management program that reduced pests and diseases while promoting beneficial organisms and improved plant and people health.
- Along with an "intrepid team" of horticulturists,

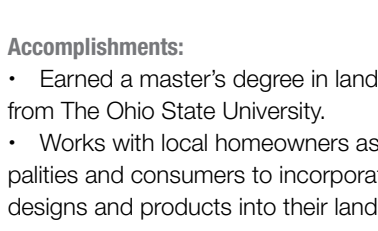
was able to coax the Gardens' *Amorphophallus titanum* to bloom multiple times, even having two blooming at the same time.

Changed His Tune: Prior to earning a degree in agriculture, Angel was a music major focusing on classical piano.

Not Your Typical Boat Ride: Born in Havana, Cuba, when he was 5 years old, Angel's father booked a one-way ticket for his family on the Mariel Boatlift to Miami to escape Communist Cuba.

JIM MELKA

CO-OWNER, LANDSCAPE DESIGNER,
GARDEN CENTER MANAGER
JIM MELKA LANDSCAPING & GARDEN CENTER
MOKENA, ILLINOIS



Accomplishments:

- Earned a master's degree in landscape architecture from The Ohio State University.
- Works with local homeowners associations, municipalities and consumers to incorporate new and unique designs and products into their landscape projects.

He's a Shredder:

Jim is an avid snowboarder and once jumped out of a helicopter in the Swiss Alps.

Tune In:

Jim's iPod is never far away, and attending live music concerts is one of his favorite hobbies.

OLIVIA MORGAN

RETAIL CUSTOMER LEAD
SYNGENTA FLOWERS
GILROY, CALIFORNIA



Accomplishments:

- Responsible for working with major big box retailers and top growers to meet production and marketing objectives.
- Worked on a breeding team that launched more than 150 new cultivars in a three-year period.

Flick Faves: "Kill Bill: Vol. 1" and "Kill Bill: Vol. 2"! "I love the whimsy, the storyline and how the scenes all tie back into the main plot."

Dining Delight: Pizza. "Add Sriracha (hot sauce) and wine for a killer combo!"

Thanks, Jim and Scott, for helping Ball Horticultural Company always deliver on our promise of "All the Best and Nothing Else!"



Jim Kennedy, Ball Seed's Director of North American Sales

His calm demeanor, knowing just what growers need to succeed and ability to inspire our sales team make Jim a terrific leader.



Scott Mozingo, Burpee Product Manager

When it comes to choosing new products, Scott hits the bull's eye again and again for picking what keeps gardeners growing great varieties!





NEIL MATTSON

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR/GREENHOUSE
EXTENSION SPECIALIST
CORNELL UNIVERSITY
ITHACA, NEW YORK

Accomplishments:

- Authored or co-authored 27 peer-reviewed papers, 38 articles in trade journals, 30 newsletters and book chapters and delivered 160 extension presentations.
- Research program focuses on the influence of environmental factors and cultural practices on the physiology, development and biochemical characteristics of greenhouse crops.

Tooting His Own Horn: Neil likes to play his valve trombone at the Cornell horticulture department's annual holiday party.

Down Time: Neil enjoys reading a good book with a cat curled up on his lap — especially books by Garrison Keillor. "I enjoy his folksy Minnesota humor, which I never truly appreciated until I moved out of state."

HEATHER MOISTER

GARDEN CENTER MANAGER
THE BARN NURSERY & LANDSCAPE CENTER
CARY, ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for garden center purchasing, plant care and staff management. Developed and implemented inventory control tools to increase sales and reduce shrink.
- Conducted numerous educational seminars and workshops for the local colleges, garden clubs, retirement communities, Girl Scout troops, etc.

Cruisin': Heather and her family love boating. "When I'm not at work or in my garden, you can find me in, on or near the lake. I love to pack up dinner and a bottle of wine and watch the sunset from the boat."

Scouting: A Girl Scout from kindergarten until she graduated from high school, Heather was chosen to be one of 10 young women to represent the United States at a world-wide jamboree in Sweden.



SCOTT MOZINGO

PRODUCT MANAGER
BALL HORTICULTURAL CO.
WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for identifying new varieties for company's vegetable, herb and flowers lines. Works with plant breeders, trialing new vegetables and sourcing new varieties.
- Helps facilitate a television gardening show for PBS with panelist specialty in annuals, perennials and general horticulture knowledge.

Talk About Experience: Scott has worked on a produce farm, in an independent garden center, a home improvement retailer and a breeding company.

Handy Man: Scott remodeled his kitchen and did 80 percent of the work himself. Reframed walls, installed new windows, electric wiring, tiling, painting and most of the plumbing — "and everything passed inspection on the first try."



Plantpeddler congratulates Jason Sbiral on his selection to GPN's 2015 40 under 40.

Jason's leadership, hands-on management style, innovation and work ethic have been instrumental in Plantpeddler's success as a young plant and finished plant producer.



JASON SBIRAL

FACILITY MANAGER
PLANTPEDDLER GREENHOUSES
CRESCO, IOWA



Accomplishments:

- Responsible for all production areas, greenhouses, field production, support facilities, trial grounds and properties encompassing 400,000 square feet of operations and 36 acres of land.
- Instrumental in the design and construction phase of building company's young plants facility and now directly manages all aspects of the facility.

Life is Like a Box of Chocolates: Jason's favorite movie is "Forrest Gump," because "it shows how ordinary people can do extraordinary things."

Staying in the Neighborhood: Jason built his home in the same location that he built a treehouse as a kid!

JESSE RADEBAUGH

MANAGER
GEORGE W RADEBAUGH & SONS GREENHOUSE
FREELAND, MARYLAND

Accomplishments:

- Steering a fourth-generation business into the 21st century and continually working to update technology, structure and efficiency of business.
- Responsible for new sales and growing the business as well as creating crop schedules, fertilization, chemical applications and assisting with the new greenhouse construction.

Hobbies: In his limited spare time, Jesse likes to hunt, fish, work on the farm and garden.

Goal Oriented

Family: Jesse's father, Doug, was a collegiate All American lacrosse player who went on to compete on two United States World Lacrosse Teams.



REBECCA SIEMONSMA

REGIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE
SHS Griffin
Lisle, Illinois/Brookings, South Dakota

Accomplishments:

- As the tech services manager for a breeding company, she worked closely with growers in North America, Europe and Asia offering technical advice in all cultural aspects of product lines.
- Involved in the development of poinsettia tech support tools like online bulletin boards, webinars and web-based graphical tracking software.

Can't Live Without: Rebecca HAS to have her coffee in the morning.

Movie Classic: "Fargo." "It's very dark humor, but if you've ever spent any time in the Dakotas or Minnesota this movie depicts culture here perfectly."



40 UNDER 40 CELEBRATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HORTICULTURE

Michell's and Green Fuse Botanicals congratulate Matt Willoughby on his selection to GPN's 2015 40 under 40

Matt loves plants, enjoys people and works hard to support growing our industry. His dedication, professionalism and expertise are impeccable.



www.green-fuse.com



www.michells.com

ROBIN RUETHER

MANAGER OF FLOWER TRIALS AND PRAIRIE STAR PROGRAM
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY HORTICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
OLATHE, KANSAS

Accomplishments:

- Manages a flower trial site that provides information to breeders and the regional horticulture industry, and authors a blog on flower varieties tested by KSU.
- Serves as an All-America Selections judge and contributes to the National Plant Trials Database.

Rhyme Time: For special family occasions and other events, Robin puts on her poet's hat and composes rhyming poems.



Ticket to Ride: Robin likes to travel and explore new places. "I've always enjoyed Quebec City since it feels like you're in Europe, but without the long plane ride."

MARK SCHERMER

MANAGER CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
DÜMMEN ORANGE
DE LIER, NETHERLANDS

Accomplishments:

- Built a strong and successful North American marketing organization for a major breeding company.
- Instrumental in the rebranding of DNA Green Group and all of its entities toward one corporate brand name that debuted earlier this year.

Football ... and American Football:

Mark played soccer at the highest amateur level in the Netherlands for several years and is now a big fan of American football especially the Texas Tech Red Raiders.

The Top of Mark's Menu:

"Hands down, the Surfer's Point sushi roll at Sushi House in Ventura, California. An incredible priceless roll that tickles the tonsils!"



KRISTY STANTON

CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM LEADER
C. RAKER & SONS INC.
LITCHFIELD, MICHIGAN

Accomplishments:

- Manages customer service team and oversees all aspects of order processing from start to finish, customer notifications, web order placement and claims.
- Implemented processes and increased efficiencies within company's order processing team to eliminate almost 80 hours per week from the process during peak seasons.



Kristy's Kitchen: Kristy loves to bake. "I enjoy trying out new recipes and so does everyone that I share them with." People often "suggest" recipes to her hoping they can be taste testers.

Power Couple: Kristy met her husband, Casey, at C. Raker & Sons. Casey is a member of GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2014.



Smith Gardens congratulates Denise Kelly on her selection to GPN's 2015 40 under 40

Denise Kelly, Trials and Planning Manager. With her eye for what works for the consumer, Denise has been selected to sit on multiple Grower Councils for bigbox retailers. Denise has a Bachelor's in Horticulture from Kansas State University.

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BOB THEUT III

PART OWNER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
THEUT'S FLOWER BARN
RICHMOND, MICHIGAN

Accomplishments:

- Recipient of the 2015 Cool Product award at the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (TPIE) for company's succulent birdhouses/containers and vertical wall hangings.
- Responsible for developing innovative new products, company expansion and out-of-state sales.



Can't Live With

Without: "If there is a day I cannot be in the greenhouse with a cup of coffee, I am not complete."

Bob, Bob, Bob and Bob:

Bob is number three in four generations of Robert John Theuts. On some Saturdays, Bob will be working with his 82-year-old grandfather, his father and his son — all named Robert John Theut.

NICK ULRICH

PROPAGATION SUPERVISOR
BARTON SPRINGS NURSERY
WESTLAKE, TEXAS



Accomplishments:

- For the past 15 years, has been involved with campus beautification program at an elementary school in Austin planting more than 100 trees and building a butterfly garden.
- Manages propagation department and has spearheaded many new product introductions from

quirky African medicinals to native Texas plants.

Done It All, All Over: Nick has worked in the green industry in three different countries: the United States, Guatemala and Brazil. His jobs have included irrigation, landscape design and install, hardscape, grant writing, education, sales and propagation.

Jammin' In his free time, Nick plays keyboards and manages the cumbia/reggae band Huerta Culture in the Austin area.



JEFF WALLS

HEAD GROWER
KUBE PAK CORP.
ALLENTOWN, NEW JERSEY

Accomplishments:

- Helping to develop "East Coast Fall Trials" at company's open house to show mums from major breeders offering a side-by-side comparison of all major genetics on the market.
- Responsible for improving plant material across the board from its plugs to finished product, and dealing with strict water management and feed regimens to temperatures and IPM strategies.

Tanks a Lot: Jeff and his 10-year-old son are into aquariums. They started with an African Cichlid tank and progressed to where they recently replaced the family room TV with a 75-gallon saltwater tank.

A Slice of Pi: Jeff has memorized the first 22 digits of pi!

MATT WILLOUGHBY

SALES REPRESENTATIVE
HENRY F. MICHELL CO.
AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

Accomplishments:

- As a plant broker, works with grower customers to provide advice on specific crop requirements. Received company's Rookie of the Year award in 2012.
- Named company's perennial product specialist in 2014 and shares his expertise with customers and colleagues to provide better understanding of products.

Music in the Garden:

Matt attended Mississippi State University on a music scholarship but majored in horticulture.

A Down Under Proposal: Matt proposed to his wife, Jennifer, in Sydney, Australia in 2000 on the harbor side of the Sydney Opera House.

