

Shining Bright!

The 6th Annual

**40
40
UNDER
40**

**Introducing the horticulture
industry's brightest young
superstars — GPN's
40 Under 40 Class
of 2017**

BY TIM HODSON

I'd like you to meet GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2017.

These individuals are this year's superstars who will be leading our industry into the future — and are in a class by themselves!

These young men and women were nominated by their peers for the contributions they have made to their companies, customers and communities so far ... and for the many contributions they will be making in the years to come.

This is the sixth year for GPN's 40 Under 40 program. The alumni of the previous five classes continue to make a difference across the horticulture industry, and I am sure that this year's class will carry on that tradition.

Our newest crop of honorees represents some of the best and the brightest young minds our industry has to offer. This is your chance to get to know them a little better.

Here is this year's class!

Who's Next?

Do you know someone who you feel could have been a member of the Class of 2017? Will that person still be under the age of 40 on Jan. 31, 2018? If you answered "yes!" to both of those questions, then you should nominate that person for *next* year's class.

We will begin accepting nominations for the Class of 2018 on our website (www.gpnmag.com) in November. Previously nominated individuals who have not been selected in prior years can be nominated again as long as they have not yet turned 40.

Additional nomination details will be provided in upcoming issues of GPN as well as our e-newsletter, GPN Weekly.

The Class of 2017

Aston Arcidiacono

Chad A. Cagle

Todd Cain

Alicain Carlson

David Christakes

Christopher Currey

Mason Day

Tamara Felux

Bruce Galasso

Marta Maria Garcia

Ryan Hall

Scott Hanes

Mark Highland

Jon Huntington

Jessie Jacobson

Lisa Kelderhouse

Ken Klopp II

Drew Koschmann

Kate Mapes

Ben Marchi-Young

Lester Martin

Dustyn Miller

Susan Morgan

Adam Moseley

Emily Neas

J. Brandon Olson

Aren Phillips

Andy Pulte

Rosa Emilia Raudales

Seth Reed

Joseph Roberts IX

Shane Franklin Rogers

Scott Rusch

Lauren Simendinger

Jared Stevens

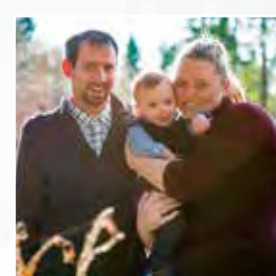
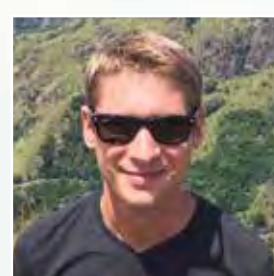
Alicia Suits

Alex Traven

Carrie Ann Wiles

Benjamin Winslow

Jason Witherow



ASTON ARCIDIACONO

HEAD GROWER
GRO 'N SELL
CHALFONT, PENNSYLVANIA



Accomplishments:

- Expanded company's existing IPM program to incorporate beneficials and reduce chemical usage, improve overall plant quality and develop proper scouting and pest identification techniques.
- Leads growing team that produces plant material from 30 breeding companies for display at Cultivate trade show in Columbus, Ohio.

Backyard Hobby:

Aston and her husband have a small "hobby farm" in their backyard where they grow blueberries, brambles, asparagus, field crops and cut flowers. They also raise honeybees and quail, chickens and turkeys for egg and meat production.

In Her Spare Time:

During the winter, she passes the time with knitting and, as soon as she can get outside, she enjoys working in the garden, kayaking and hiking.

ALICAIN CARLSON

TECHNICAL SCIENTIST
SYNGENTA FLOWERS
GILROY, CALIFORNIA



Accomplishments:

- Co-wrote a book on cut flower postharvest called "Postharvest Handling of Cut Flowers and Greens." It will be released later this year.
- Manages a multitude of technical data-collection trials to support new product launches, comparison trials and detailed research on current and new genetics.

Complementary Hobbies:

Alicain's hobbies include running and CrossFit because "my most favorite hobby is eating."

A Desirable Book:

Her favorite book is "Botany of Desire" by Michael Pollan. "Not only do we manipulate plants, but they manipulate us!"



CHAD A. CAGLE

HEAD GROWER — KENTUCKY
COLORPOINT
PARIS, KENTUCKY

Accomplishments:

- Continually looking for new ways to improve production efficiencies by implementing and pushing the boundaries of full sun lighting practices in propagation for faster rooting and improved quality in young plant production.
- Currently developing a direct stick final space program to increase efficiency; the program has now grown to more than 20 acres.

Cheers!

A novice winemaker, one of Chad's favorite places to be is among the vines in the wine country of Sonoma, California.

Who's THAT Guy?

Chad's wife of 10 years has never seen him without a beard, "so I'm afraid to shave it off."



TODD CAIN

GREENHOUSE MANAGER
EAGLE CREEK GROWERS
MANTUA, OHIO

Accomplishments:

- Constantly working to streamline and improve efficiency and quality of work for employees. Company sales continue to increase while keeping labor costs in check.
- Manages the daily operations of the company: setting up work crews, planning production, facilities and grounds management, structure maintenance and managing greenhouse heating system in the winter months.

Talking Turkey:

Last year Todd and his family raised and sold 500 all-natural, non-GMO turkeys. The family project was done as a fundraiser for his children's elementary school.

Escape Place:

To get away from it all, Todd likes to escape to his family's cabin in the hills of West Virginia.



DAVID CHRISTAKES

PRESIDENT OF GREEN GOODS
ALSIP HOME & NURSERY
FRANKFORT, ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for overseeing operations at the largest volume store in the three-location company and planning production for Alsip's 180,000-square-foot production facility.
- A military veteran, his business philosophy is to create and nurture a "dream team" because "nothing gets done without the whole team at its back."

A Lot to be Thankful for:

A cancer survivor since his teen years, David really appreciates life with his wife and 4-year-old son, "who has been the most influential person in my life."

Favorite Flick:

"Rushmore." David notes, "I am a fan of all of Wes Anderson's films."

CHRISTOPHER CURREY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
AMES, IOWA

Accomplishments:

- Chris is a former grower who is now in the academic world with position responsibilities that include teaching, research and Extension.
- He is most proud of seeing former students (undergraduate or graduate) go on to use their education to do something they enjoy or love and contribute to an overall better place.



Author Aficionado:

His favorite writer is Kurt Vonnegut. "He is an excellent writer whose books are dripping with compassion for the human race and our planet."

A Classic Rocker:

Chris played lead guitar in a band (complete with a ponytail down the middle of his back) and has met members of the Grateful Dead and Allman Brothers Band.

MASON DAY

CO-FOUNDER
GROWIT!
CHICAGO,
ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Along with Seth Reed (see page 32) co-founded Grow It! Mobile, a social gardening application, which is designed to inspire current and future gardeners and is “getting over 250,000 people to take notice ... and ACTUALLY TAKE ACTION!”
- Responsible for helping organize and manage one of the largest California Spring Trials locations.

No Place Like Home:

Mason purchased his first home last year. “Now if only I had more time for planting in my backyard,” because he is known for creating “a mean mixed container.”

Z-Y-X ... C-B-A:

Mason can recite the alphabet faster in reverse than he can forward.



TAMARA FELUX

MARKETING AND LICENSING MANAGER
J. BERRY NURSERY
GRAND SALINE, TEXAS

Accomplishments:

- Recipient of the Executive Academy for Growth & Leadership (EAGL) Marketing Rockstar Award. EAGL is an executive education program for growers.
- Manages all aspects of company’s presence at trade shows and has been honored with five different booth awards that “represent a collaboration of ideas and hard work from the entire team, and ... validate our commitment to innovation.”

On Her Nightstand:

“The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho. “The core message is when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”

What’s for Dinner?

Tex-Mex! “Growing up in South Texas, we never had to go far to find it.”

BRUCE GALASSO

GROWER MANAGER
WELBY GARDENS
DENVER, COLORADO

Accomplishments:

- Manages all growing practices and growers at all three of the company’s facilities (1,000,000 square feet of greenhouse production area and 2 acres of outdoor area). Supervises more than 25 key people year-round and is responsible for all growing activities and training.
- As the first member of his immediate family to graduate from college, moved 2,000 miles away from home to begin his professional career in horticulture.

In His Spare Time:

Bruce enjoys hiking in the Rocky Mountains, photography, reading, playing Scrabble and lounging with his dogs, Isaac and Hagar.

Ghoulish Getaway:

Every year, Bruce visits Cozumel, Mexico, for Halloween and Día De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead).



Congratulations!

Thanks, Scott, Lisa, Seth and Mason for helping Ball Horticultural Company to deliver on our promise of “All the Best and Nothing Else”



Scott Rusch, PanAmerican Seed, Product Development Director

Scott has a passion for the work he does in the office and out in the field. He is constantly looking for solutions to grower issues.



Lisa Kelderhouse, Ball Seed, International Freight Analyst

Lisa is a great example of what it takes to keep our industry functioning as seamlessly as possible. She is always ready to help colleagues, vendors and customers.



Seth Reed and Mason Day, Ball Horticultural Company, GrowIt! Co-Founders

Defining innovation and creativity for consumer horticulture, Seth and Mason designed the GrowIt! social gardening app to inspire the next generation of gardeners.



MARTA MARIA GARCIA

MARKETING DIRECTOR
COSTA FARMS
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for developing a team to create multiple, unique branded programs, each with one goal in mind: to inspire and educate consumers of all ages to buy plants. "I have to say the one I'm most proud of is O₂ for You."
- Developed innovative trade marketing programs and helped the company achieve sales goals and projected revenue by implementing strategic marketing initiatives.



Turn Up the Music:

Marta Maria loves music and dance. "I've learned to dance the samba, rumba, salsa, merengue, jive, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, reggaeton, cha-cha. I still need to learn Argentinian tango and Irish dancing, but they are on my list."

TV Show With a Purpose:

Her favorite TV show was "The Oprah Winfrey Show." "I enjoyed watching ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Very inspiring!"



RYAN HALL

SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER
SYNGENTA FLOWERS
GILROY, CALIFORNIA

Accomplishments:

- Instrumental in helping breeding companies launch a number of innovative new varieties into the marketplace — both annuals and perennials.
- Cultivating relationships and developing a network of plant breeders and other professionals around the world and authoring a range of articles on new products, trialing and crop culture.

Good With His Hands:

One of Ryan's hobbies is designing and building things — especially for the home and garden. "I have done a few garden designs and built a number of pieces of furniture for our home."

Saddle Up!

His family is full of ranchers and cowboys. "My grandfather was a cowboy for William Randolph Hearst and rode bulls in the rodeo. I always thought that was pretty amazing."

SCOTT HANES

TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE
ERNST BENARY OF AMERICA
PELL CITY, ALABAMA/WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA



Accomplishments:

- Graduated magna cum laude from Auburn University with a Master of Science degree in horticulture.
- Brings a personal passion for gardening and plant genetics to work with growers, brokers, retailers, merchants and gardeners to provide technical and sales support for the company's entire product assortment.

Takes His Work Home:

Scott enjoys urban gardening, compost teas and his earthworm bin. "We have a hydroponics system incorporated into our living room and have even used a hydroponic tomato plant for a Christmas tree."

An Extended Family:

He has lived in seven states and has family across the United States, Canada, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Ireland and other parts of the world.



**Syngenta Flowers congratulates Alicain Carlson and Ryan Hall
on making GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2017!**



ALICAIN CARLSON
TECHNICAL SCIENTIST



RYAN HALL
SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER

MARK HIGHLAND

CEO/PRESIDENT
ORGANIC MECHANICS SOIL CO.
MODENA, PENNSYLVANIA

Accomplishments:

- Received the Louise Roselle Fellowship while working on his Master of Science degree and educating people on the benefits of organic gardening through hundreds of lectures and workshops.
- Founded Organic Mechanics Soil Co. in 2006 with "a philosophy that embraces environmental sustainability, first and foremost."

**Inspirational Read:**

His favorite book is "In Defense of Food" by Michael Pollan. "Its documentation of food sustainability is sobering yet inspiring."

One for the Gipper:

Mark's great grandfather was good friends with legendary Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne. "They came over on the boat from Norway together."

JON HUNTINGTON

LOGISTICS MANAGER
PLEASANT VIEW GARDENS
LOUDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Accomplishments:

- Consistently creates new and advanced processes to maximize efficiencies for his team in the company's logistics department.
- Implemented an innovative alpha sort program for pulling and arranging plant materials for delivery to customers.

**Daily Vitamin C:**

Jon can't live without his daily glass of orange juice. His favorite food is an eggs-on-everything bagel sandwich.

Debating With the Stars:

Paul Newman was a regular at the Huntington family's farmstand in Connecticut in the 1960s and 1970s. The politically liberal actor "would often have friendly debates with my conservative grandfather, Jonathan Huntington, who founded Pleasant View Gardens."

**JESSIE JACOBSON**

PRESIDENT, OWNER, GARDENER
TONKADALE GREENHOUSE
MINNETONKA, MINNESOTA

Accomplishments:

- Provides vegetable starts and seeds to community gardens, a not-for-profit teaching farm and school gardens. These gardens produce up to 20,000 pounds of produce annually.
- Named to Minneapolis/St. Paul magazine's 2016 Home & Design 100 that recognizes those individuals who "add style and wow" to the Twin Cities.

Can't Live Without:

Coffee, a legal pad and a sharp pencil.

Bow Queen:

Jessie has a black belt in tying bows. "I have tied tens of thousands of bows in my career. Customers often ask if I went to school to learn this skill. I say, 'Of course!' I invented pine cones on a stick."

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UNDER

Celebrating the next
generation of horticulture

ColorPoint
Congratulates Chad Cagle
on his selection to GPN's
2017 Class of 40 Under 40!


COLORPOINT
www.colorpoint.us



Chad A. Cagle, Head Grower, is continually looking for new ways to improve production efficiencies by implementing and pushing the boundaries of full sun lighting practices in propagation for faster rooting and improved quality in young plant production.

LISA KELDERHOUSE

SENIOR INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS ANALYST
BALL HORTICULTURAL CO.
WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for importing and exporting the company's plant material and hard goods. "Each year is a new adventure in creating the success of transit for plants."
- Ensures that all plants are in compliance with USDA/APHIS requirements.



Aspiring Globetrotter:

Lisa loves to travel and experience other cultures. "I had a great opportunity to live in The Netherlands when I was in college and the desire to see more of the world has not diminished."

Play Ball!

Lisa grew up outside of Cleveland as an Indians fan but now lives in the Chicagoland area and is married to a Cubs fan. The 2016 World Series was a bittersweet moment, but she's hoping for the same matchup in 2017!



KEN KLOPP II

OWNER
MARKETING GARDEN
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Accomplishments:

- Developed the Perfect Plant for garden centers — an interactive kiosk that provides customers with a personalized guide to find plants and other products in a garden center.
- Building a business that helps other family-run businesses be more successful. Partners with garden centers to help them navigate challenging areas and solve problems.

Rocky Mountain High:

During his "down" time, Ken enjoys camping and hiking Colorado 14'ers (mountains higher than 14,000 feet elevation.)

Delicious Dessert:

His favorite food is grandma's tapioca pudding.

DREW KOSCHMANN

HEAD GROWER
WALTERS GARDENS
ZEELAND, MICHIGAN



Accomplishments:

- Responsible for managing young perennial liner growing in 12 acres of greenhouses and more than 1,000 varieties of perennials in various liner sizes.
- Uses his creativity to develop new protocols and processes to grow over 100 new varieties that the company introduces every year.

Great Dogs:

Drew is fascinated by the Great Lakes, and has even given his dogs Great Lakes-inspired names — Fitz, as in Edmund Fitzgerald and Huron, as in Lake Huron.

In the DVD Player:

His favorite movie is "Garden State" for its "quirky characters and amazing soundtrack."

CONGRATULATIONS, CHRIS CURREY!

At Fine Americas, we're proud and grateful to work with Chris Currey of this year's 40 Under 40 class. As assistant professor of horticulture at Iowa State University and a member of the e-GRO team of leading university specialists, Chris's research has contributed to our advancements in PGR technology for greenhouse and ornamental production.

To learn more about Fine Americas and how we work with university researchers to advance the PGR industry, visit fine-americas.com today.

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UNDER
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KATE MAPES

TEAM SUPPORT AND SPECIAL PROJECTS
QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Worked in the Living with the Land greenhouses at Walt Disney World and learned about plant presentation, showmanship, attention to detail and how to provide guests the best experience possible.
- Along with the head gardener, is responsible for maintaining the plants in the facility's Children's Garden and ensuring they are interesting and relevant to kids, including a fully functioning mock-up of the Mississippi River.



Black and White Menagerie:

Kate has a love of black and white animals, including cows, pandas, orcas and especially penguins. She even got to meet a penguin at Sea World last year.

Dairy Contrariety:

Her father, Bob DePauw, is a lactose-intolerant dairy farmer who cannot consume his own product. He raises Dutch Belted Cattle, which are black with a white band around the middle.

DUSTYN MILLER

ORNAMENTAL GROWER/RETAIL GREENHOUSE
AND NURSERY MANAGER
MILLER PLANT FARM
YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

Accomplishments:

- As a fifth-generation member of the family business, he helped contribute to the planning of the newest garden center, which was studied carefully for 28 months and constructed in only 160 days.
- After graduating from college, he was the driving force to get the business online with a website and has always recognized the importance of the internet in the company's future.



Nothing Like Home Cookin':

His favorite meal is lasagna "made with tomato sauce from Miller Plant Farm Roma tomatoes, of course!"

Tuned In:

Dustyn likes to watch documentaries like Ken Burns' "The Roosevelts: An Intimate History." He says, "I find American history to be highly engaging, and admire Teddy Roosevelt immensely."



BEN MARCHI-YOUNG

SALES & MARKETING MANAGER
SBI SOFTWARE
PORTLAND, OREGON

Accomplishments:

- Specializes in helping the company's customers solve complex problems by asking the right questions to discover underlying challenges, diagnosing issues, then finding the appropriate software solutions for them.
- Received national design award for a marketing postcard that he created.

That's What Friends Are For:

Ben has kept a core group of friends from early childhood through adulthood — "Although we are not all together anymore, we are in constant communication."

Creativity Runs in the Family:

His dad designed concert merchandise from the late 1970s until the early 1990s for artists like Ozzy Osbourne, Primus, Steve Miller Band, Huey Lewis, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nirvana and more.

SUSAN MORGAN

HORTICULTURIST AND OWNER
THE HORTICULTURAL LINK LLC
ROCKWELL, TEXAS



Accomplishments:

- Does therapeutic horticulture work with disabled and wellness populations to help (re)connect people with plants/gardening regardless of their life circumstances — notably in vocational and rehabilitation programs with incarcerated men, resettled refugees and older adults living with memory loss.
- Lived and studied abroad at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in London, England.

Mother Nature Lover:

Susan can't live without nature for its inspiration and to stay grounded.

Horticulture is in the Family Tree:

As a second-generation horticulturist (her father was a horticulture Extension specialist), Susan jokes that she got her start in horticulture as a child model posing in photos standing next to plants like large hostas to show their real-life scale.

LESTER MARTIN

OWNER/GENERAL MANAGER
MARTIN'S HOME AND GARDEN
MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE



Accomplishments:

- Purchased 25+-year-old business from family at the age of 28 and developed a team of employees who produce the highest quality plants and make each customer feel like they are a family friend.
- Garden center has been voted Middle Tennessee's Favorite Garden Center for 14 years in a row.

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Montana. "This is the state where I met my beautiful wife Marlene. I enjoy going there each year to spend time with my in-laws."

R&R Time:

Lester likes to relax by snowboarding and skiing.



ADAM MOSELEY

NEW PLANT IDENTIFICATION MANAGER, R&D
PLEASANT VIEW GARDENS
LOUDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for introducing new plants to help build a consumer brand, overseeing the trialing procedures and developing a well-rounded program to help consumers be successful.
- While studying at the University of Florida, he initiated a direct basil breeding program and was the recipient of the GPN/Nexus Intern of the Year scholarship.

Making Music:

When he's not working in the greenhouse, Adam says he "can play a pretty mean mandolin when I have the time to noodle around."

Great Escape:

He likes to vacation anywhere on the water or in the mountains. Some of his faves include Rome, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wyoming, Canada and the Florida Keys.

EMILY NEAS

PLANT HEALTH SPECIALIST
HOFFMAN NURSERY
ROUGEMONT, NORTH CAROLINA

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for the company's integrated pest management program and works with each of the operations departments, and is always respectful of and committed to employee safety and regulatory compliance.
- Organized a company yard sale that helped raise money for a local food bank.



A Book with a Connection:

Emily is an avid reader. "Prodigal Summer" by Barbara Kingsolver has always been a go-to book for me. This book explains ecological relationships in a way I think many people can appreciate. It's such a beautiful story of the interconnectedness between people and the natural world."

What's on Her iPod?

She grew up listening to bluegrass and classic oldies with her parents. "I can't live without music. I love exploring new artists, listening to new albums and going to shows. Music sets the tone for me every day."

J. BRANDON OLSON

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS
OLSON'S GREENHOUSE OF COLORADO
FORT LUPTON, COLORADO



Accomplishments:

- Played an integral role when the company expanded into a new venture in Colorado in 2014 and has continually increased production efficiencies, sales and profits.
- Successfully completed a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Recife, Brazil.

Fore!

Brandon is a 5-handicap golfer. "I was as low as a 2 but decided I needed to put more time toward my family and career."

Outside the Greenhouse:

When he's not working, Brandon enjoys golf (see item above) and basketball (specifically the Utah Jazz), and he recently took up woodworking.



AREN PHILLIPS

ASSISTANT PROPAGATION MANAGER
SPRING MEADOW NURSERY
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for converting small-scale research tissue lab into an in-house production lab in one growing season.
- Helped ramp up company's automated transplanting machine from installation to full production and increase production rates by 250 percent.

Color His World:

Aren has synesthesia, a neurological phenomenon where his brain links colors and symbols. "For me, A is always yellow, 8 is always orange, Monday is always red, June is always blue, and triangles are always green."

During the Off and On Season:

During the winter season, Aren likes to make botanical specimen orchids out of stained glass. He also enjoys hiking along Lake Michigan, collecting native seeds and filling his small woods and prairie with native plants.

40 Celebrating the next
generation of horticulture

**Congratulations Jared Stevens
on making the 40 Under 40
Class of 2017!**



www.green-fuse.com



ANDY PULTE

SENIOR LECTURER/UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATOR
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

Accomplishments:

- Responsibilities include teaching, advising and coordination of the UT Plant Sciences undergraduate program. He is also the main recruiter for the department, often being the first point of contact for students interested in plant sciences, horticulture and related fields.
- During his career, he has advised more than 100 students who have completed baccalaureate degrees, many of whom now have jobs in the industry.



Passionate Plant Person:

"As part of the green industry it is not only the plants that get me excited. Being around plant people is something I couldn't live without. Every aspect of what I do is made better by being around people who share similar passions."

Likes to Sink His Teeth Into:

"One of the corner pieces from a good tray of lasagna."

ROSA EMILIA RAUDALES

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND GREENHOUSE
EXTENSION SPECIALIST
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
STORRS, CONNECTICUT

Accomplishments:

- Established a well-supported applied-research program focused on water quality for irrigation of greenhouse crops with an emphasis on non-traditional water sources and recirculated irrigation systems.
- Assembled an effective and diverse team of six graduate and undergraduate students to conduct research on water-related issues.



Ride Like the Wind:

Rosa likes to get away from the classroom and greenhouse and ride her bike on Connecticut's narrow roads surrounded by dense forests.

To Be or Not?

"Plötzlich Shakespeare" by David Safier. "It's the funniest book I've read. It's about a woman who travels in time and in the process exchanges bodies with William Shakespeare. They both learn how to live in a different body and separate times, and grow in the process."



SETH REED

CO-FOUNDER
GROWIT!
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Along with Mason Day (see page 20) co-founded Grow It! Mobile, a social gardening application which is designed to inspire current and future gardeners. Responsible for spreading the vision of GrowIt!, building and managing a dynamic team and establishing key partnerships.
- Named as a member of the board of directors of AmericanHort in 2016.

Sweet Tooth:

Among Seth's favorite foods that he likes to indulge in are cookies, cake and ice cream. And he can't live without his coffee.

Vacay Getaway:

"Anywhere that includes a beach, a body of water and a Corona — no lime needed."

JOSEPH ROBERTS IX

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
FOREMOSTCO INC.
WINTER GARDEN/MIAMI, FLORIDA

Accomplishments:

- Received undergraduate degrees in political science and psychology from Virginia Tech and a law degree from the University of Miami. After working as a lawyer, Joe returned to the family business.
- Helped build (and continues to build) a dynamic and culturally diverse team of men and women who work well together to produce and sell high-quality product with exceptional service.



Dizzy, Miles, Wynton ... and Joe:

When he was younger, Joe was a jazz trumpet player. "The band at the high school I went to was too small to act as a marching band so instead we played jazz and I took to it like a fish to water."

High School Sweethearts:

While both of Joe's parents were born in the United States, they met in high school in Buenos Aires, Argentina. "My mother's father was an engineer and my father's father was a geologist/CIA operative, and their jobs took them and their families to South America."

SHANE FRANKLIN ROGERS

ONLINE SALES MANAGER
FOUR STAR GREENHOUSE
CARLETON, MICHIGAN

Accomplishments:

- Built a new e-commerce business selling annuals, perennials, shrubs, veggies, herbs and more through Amazon.com and the Home Depot.



- Along with a team of five others, has consistently grown sales, provided industry leading content and ships all products within one day of order.

Ace in the Air:

Shane is an instrument rated pilot of high-performance planes. He can fly powerful planes and navigate them from takeoff to approach for landing in no-visibility conditions.

On the Bookshelf:

"My favorite book is 'Outliers' by Malcolm Gladwell, an author I truly respect for his ability to look at things both differently and more clearly. I question a lot of conventional wisdom our world embraces ... I challenge myself and my team to question our processes, goals, objectives and everything else with the goal of making things better."



SCOTT RUSCH

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
PANAMERICAN SEED
WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Accomplishments:

- Integral member of the team that successfully introduced Cool Wave spreading pansies for spring and autumn gardens.
- Cultivates and nurtures strategic relationships with growers and breeders to develop supply chain and cultural recommendations to help ensure their success.

Grow. Cook. Shoot. Eat.

Scott's hobbies include growing unusual varieties of tomatoes in his garden, cooking curries, baking desserts and photography.

Fave Flick:

X-Men. "I have always been a big fan of the characters and storylines."

LAUREN SIMENDINGER

PERENNIALS SALES SUPPORT SPECIALIST
EASON HORTICULTURAL RESOURCES
FORT WRIGHT, KENTUCKY

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for managing company's perennial department. Constantly interacting and working with perennial customers, 40+ perennial producers and breeding companies.
- Managed the company's social media presence, increasing reach by over 40 percent in one year, and connecting and reaching industry followers with new products and innovations.



Historic Home:

Lauren's home is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built by Betsy Ross' nephew and later owned by a locally renowned abolitionist in the 1800s.

Hot, Hot, Hot!

She can't live without her Sriracha hot sauce, especially with pizza. "Anyone close to me knows that I don't travel anywhere without a Sriracha to-go bottle in my purse."



JARED STEVENS

SALES REPRESENTATIVE
HENRY F. MICHELL CO.
KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Accomplishments:

- As a broker rep, he has built a successful territory by using his first-hand knowledge of growing and marketing plants to help other growers find the same success he has achieved.
- Along with his brother, he co-owns and operates a successful full-service garden center in Western Michigan.

When He's Got the Time:

As the father of five children, he doesn't have much spare time, but when he does, he can't live without his Mountain Dew and he enjoys playing golf, basketball and hunting.

Time to Chill:

Jared's favorite vacation spot is Fort Meyers Beach, Florida.

ALICIA SUITS

DIGITAL MEDIA MARKETING SPECIALIST
SAKATA SEED AMERICA
MORGAN HILL, CALIFORNIA

Accomplishments:

- Participated in company's SunPatens 10th birthday celebration and promotional campaign that was recognized with a 2016 Marcom Awards Platinum Award.
- Founding chairperson of the company's internal committee, TeamUP, which focuses on charitable contributions, peer-to-peer teambuilding and company-wide camaraderie that benefits the industry, community and greater good.



A Healthy Combination:

Alicia is a huge foodie. "To offset that passion, I enjoy spin class and hiking."

She's a Dog Person:

"When I was younger, I studied a dog encyclopedia regularly, and now can name any dog breed pointed out to me and intelligently comment on specific traits such as demeanor and grooming needs."

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ALEX TRAVEN

HEAD GROWER
PEACE TREE FARM
KINTNERSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

Accomplishments:

- Successfully implemented a complex ecosystem approach to biological pest control. Continually seeking ways to help company become cleaner, more efficient, leaner and more organized.
- He is a team leader who supervises all section growers, determines staffing needs and priorities and oversees all hard good ordering, fertilizers, predator and parasite releases.



A Trip to Remember:

"The most amazing place on Earth that I've ever been is the high Himalaya of Nepal. Great mountains make humble people, and the enduring friendly spirit of the Nepali people was life changing."

He's a Head Banger!

Alex has loved heavy metal music since he was in the third grade.



CARRIE ANN WILES

MARKETING MANAGER
NORTH CREEK NURSERIES
LANDENBERG, PENNSYLVANIA

Accomplishments:

- Responsible for all of the company's marketing activities, including the creation of wholesale catalog and product fact sheets, managing website and trade show presence to name just a few.
- Serves as a board member of the Pennsylvania Nursery and Landscape Association and is the recipient of the PNLA's 2017 Green Achiever Award.

Who Do You Root For?

She is a graduate of Penn State University but also attended Big 10 rival The Ohio State University where she was a member of the OSU Field Hockey Team.

Favorite Place to Vacation:

New Zealand. Carrie is currently planning her third trip to the Kiwi Country.



BENJAMIN WINSLOW

MANAGING DIRECTOR
WINGEN LLC
ALAJUELA, COSTA RICA/AUSTIN, TEXAS

Accomplishments:

- Created his own ideal breeding company to produce ornamental horticultural crops for a number of select clients.
- Is responsible for approximately two dozen commercial introductions during his career as a plant breeder and is listed as the inventor on roughly a dozen plant patents to date.

Nothing but the Real Deal:

Ben considers himself a connoisseur of sushi. "A California roll won't do; I'm looking for legit raw fish."

The Wanderer:

Ben enjoys travel. "I am happiest when I am wandering around new places and meeting new people."



JASON WITHEROW

PRESIDENT
JASON'S GREENHOUSE
YELM, WASHINGTON

Accomplishments:

- Started new business at the age of 16 with less than 2,000 square feet of heated greenhouse space. Over the past 16 years, the company's greenhouse production space has grown to 175,000 square feet.
- The company has grown from one employee and one location in 2000 to 25 full-time (and 30 seasonal) employees at four different locations.

Meat and Potatoes Man:

Jason's favorite meal is a good steak with baked potatoes and a salad fresh from the garden.

Courageous Cinema:

"My favorite movie is Ladder 49. I love how it exemplifies the sacrifices that our first responders make. They are invaluable and this movie showcases it very well."

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