

The 8th Annual  
**Forty**  
 under **40**

THE CLASS OF  
**2019**

**MEET THIS YEAR'S**

*Fab 40*

The industry is in for a brilliant future as this year's class paves the way to tomorrow.

BY TIM HODSON

I would like to introduce you to GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2019.

Now in our eighth year, GPN's 40 Under 40 program provides a snapshot (actually 40 of them) of what is in store for our industry.

The individuals that make up this year's class represent the entire spectrum of the horticulture industry — from the initial creation of a new plant to its sale at retail to its installation at a consumer's home — and everything in between.

These young women and men are making a difference in our industry today ... and will continue to do so for many years to come.

Each and every one of these individuals was nominated by one or more of their peers for their achievements in their personal and professional lives.

Over the next 20 pages, you will get to know this year's honorees a little better and find out what makes them tick. I am sure you will be impressed with their achievements as well as the potential they have to offer.

So without further delay, can I have a drumroll please?

Meet GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2019!

## GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2019

Nikhil Arora and Alejandro Velez  
 Nate Barker  
 Keith Bemerer  
 Catherine Blaney  
 Ty Boland  
 Sarita Cantu  
 Olivier Clisson  
 George Coombs  
 Anna Cooper  
 Chris Cordrey  
 Vicki Currier  
 David Czarnecki  
 Ori Danziger  
 Dawn Eardley  
 Cheni Filios  
 Dominic Gillooly  
 Donald "DJ" Grandmaison  
 Ockert Greyvenstein  
 Trevor Hilburn  
 David Hoffman  
 Lily Hogue  
 Steffi Hugo  
 Charles Krasnow  
 Laura LeBoutillier  
 Megan Mathey  
 Amanda McAdam  
 Nick McCullough  
 Mindy Money  
 Gregory Nichols  
 Ryan Overdevest  
 Tiger Palafox  
 Elizabeth Riley  
 John Santoro  
 Rachel Schnaitman  
 Dave Stoltzfus  
 Richard Tomlinson  
 Angie VanWashenova  
 James Youngers  
 Allison Zeeb

## The Search for the Class of 2020

Now that you have met the Class of 2019, do you know a young industry superstar who you think should be in GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2020?

If you know someone who you believe belongs in next year's class, we want to know more about that person ... but not just yet.

On Nov. 1, we will begin accepting online nominations for next year's class. Anyone in the horticulture industry under the age of 40 (as of Jan. 31, 2020) is eligible to be nominated.

Previous nominees who were not selected in prior years can be nominated again as long as they are still under 40.

Keep an eye out for additional information in an upcoming issue of GPN or in our e-newsletter, GPN Weekly.

If you have any questions about GPN's 40 Under 40 program, please contact Tim Hodson, editorial director, at [thodson@greatamericanpublish.com](mailto:thodson@greatamericanpublish.com).









## NIKHIL ARORA AND ALEJANDRO VELEZ

CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CEOS  
BACK TO THE ROOTS  
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

### Accomplishments:

- Launched the first tabletop aquaponic system to educate families about ecosystems and growing food in new ways.
- Helped families and classrooms create over 1 million new organic gardens this year!

### Dual Goals:

"We want to build a brand and live a life that leaves the world a bit better than we found it — and we know we can only do that by integrating our team, our community, ourselves (our own health), our families, our environment into everything we do and all decisions!"

### A Common Language:

Both of their fathers spent years in Germany after immigrating from Colombia (Alex's dad) and India (Nikhil's dad). "When they first met at our college graduation, they both hit it off right away speaking German. Sometimes things are just meant to be."



## CATHERINE BLANEY

OPERATIONS MANAGER  
DARWIN PERENNIALS  
WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

### Accomplishments:

- Participated in the initiation of the AutoStix transplant technology with the team at Darwin Colombia to provide labor-saving solutions for producing high-quality perennials.
- Completed her MBA degree while working full time as a regional supply manager for the Ball Seed Co.

### She Practices What She Preaches:

Cat is an avid gardener. "I grow everything from asparagus to zinnias. The garden usually produces a few hundred pounds of heirloom tomatoes, which I make into the best pasta sauce and bruschetta."

### Favorite Book:

"The Power of One" by Bryce Courtenay. "There are so many powerful messages in this story like, 'First with the head, then with the heart. You'll be ahead from the start.'"

## NATE BARKER

DIRECTOR OF PURCHASING  
OLSON'S GREENHOUSE  
SALEM, UTAH

### Accomplishments:

- Championed the company's technological efforts to be more efficient, such as redesigning shipping processes to getting an ERP system developed for the ever-changing mobile environments.
- Helped implement lean flow manufacturing at the company's Utah location. These new practices resulted in a 10% decrease in production labor in the first year. Company is now implementing the new processes at its Colorado facilities.

### Can't Live Without:

Exercise. "Starting my day off at 4 a.m. at the gym might seem like craziness to some people, but it's what makes my day more productive and keeps me sane."

### On a Mission:

Nate is fluent in the Tagalog language and lived in the Philippines for two years as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.



## TY BOLAND

HORTICULTURE MANAGER AND BOTANICAL CURATOR  
THE OREGON GARDEN  
SILVERTON, OREGON

### Accomplishments:

- Created and maintains the assessment program (a database of every plant in the garden) of the more than 80 acres of plants in the 20 specialty gardens of The Oregon Garden.
- Developed and grows the Garden's annuals program and is continually enhancing the greenhouses and propagation areas with better growing capabilities.

### The Music Man:

A single father of three teenaged boys, Ty is also a professional musician with the band, The Standing. He plays both banjo and guitar and writes songs!

### In His Spare Time:

He is "grateful to have grown up in the shadow of Oregon's Mount Hood" and enjoys fishing, nature, arboriculture and motorcycle riding.



## KEITH BEMMERER

DISTRIBUTOR AND REGIONAL SALES  
NEXUS GREENHOUSE SYSTEMS/  
ROUGH BROTHERS INC.  
CINCINNATI, OHIO

### Accomplishments:

- Treasurer of the Cincinnati Flower Growers Association that reintroduced the CFGA scholarship program, to award two \$1,000 scholarships to horticulture students annually.
- Participated in development of the HopsHouse, a hydroponic hops greenhouse for the production of wet hops for the craft brewing industry.

### Mow, Mow, Mow:

Keith can't live without his lawnmower and cuts his lawn every five days up until Thanksgiving. "If my grass is not the greenest on my side of the fence, there is a serious problem!"

### Mechanically Inclined:

"My co-workers and colleagues come to me to help with anything with an engine — cars, motorcycles, power equipment or tools. It's not unusual one weekend to fix a trimmer and the next be working on a skid-steer loader."



## SARITA CANTU

MARKETING MANAGER  
SMITH GARDENS  
BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

### Accomplishments:

- Helped launch the ET Grow app throughout the company as an efficient way to communicate specifications on products and keep track of crop performance.
- Responsible for the company's creative marketing programs as well as website, social media and all major company events.

### Just Try to Slow Her Down:

Sarita has climbed Mount Whitney; ridden in a 50-mile gravel grinding bike race; participated in a Ragnar long distance race; and competed in a 250-mile, three-day relay race over several mountain ranges. And she's a certified yoga instructor.

### A Prodigious Family Tree:

Horticulture runs in her family — her dad was an agriculture teacher, her brother currently teaches horticulture, her uncle was a plant breeder and her grandmother had "the craziest vegetable garden ever!"



CONGRATULATIONS 40 UNDER 40 CLASS OF 2019

# GROWING A FUTURE BEYOND ALL EXPECTATIONS

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of professionals, like you.*

*Thank you for  
your contribution!*

*- The Nufarm Team*

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## OLIVIER CLISSON

**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
SYNGENTA FLOWERS  
ANGERS, FRANCE

### Accomplishments:

- Started career at a German breeding and young plant company where he turned a non-existent sales portfolio in France into almost \$2.25 million in three years.
- In his role as European business manager for Syngenta Flowers, he is responsible for growing market shares of the company's business through sound and fit-for-purpose local strategies for each country.

### Pugilistic Pursuits:

Olivier is a big boxing fan and has been a participant for years. "It's still giving me my fighting spirit in my day-to-day life." It's no surprise that "Rocky" is his favorite movie. "It's a great example of resilience and motivation."

### Off the Clock:

Olivier enjoys running and traveling the world. "There is always something new to discover."



## CHRIS CORDREY

**OWNER/HEAD OF OPERATIONS**  
RSC LANDSCAPING  
MILLSBORO, DELAWARE

### Accomplishments:

- Over a nine-year period, strategically expanded the business from 30 employees to nearly 150; developed management structure that allowed company to grow while ensuring high quality service; increased sales 400%.
- Created a student athlete scholarship at age 16, "to reward others who were dedicated to succeeding in various aspects of their lives and furthering their education and athletics in college."

### A Well-Traveled Passport:

Chris loves to travel and has visited 20+ countries — so far. "I believe that getting a better understanding of different cultures helps you to grow as an individual."

### Favorite Flick:

"Gladiator" — "I admire how even though the main character had absolutely everything taken from him, he did whatever it took to crawl his way back to the top."

## GEORGE COOMBS

**DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE**  
MT. CUBA CENTER  
HOCKESSIN, DELAWARE

### Accomplishments:

- Helped name and introduce new cultivars of native plants like *Coreopsis tripteris* 'Gold Standard', *Coreopsis integrifolia* 'Last Dance', *Oxalis violacea* 'Love in Vein' and others.
- Supervises a staff of more than 25 horticulturists and oversees the Center's master plan as it constructs new facilities to accommodate its growing visitorship and involvement in conservation research.

### George's Fun Facts:

He grew up on a potato farm in New Jersey; his favorite food is blueberry pie; and his preferred travel destination is Spain.

### Ingenuity Is in His Blood:

George's great, great grandfather, Henry Hettinger, invented several machines around the turn of the 20th century including a four-cylinder engine and an airplane only a few years after the Wright Brothers first flight.



## ANNA COOPER

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
HEEMAN'S  
LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA

### Accomplishments:

- Streamlined the company's fall and winter greens production lines. Due to exceptionally strong sales growth in this area, production needed to triple in three years.
- Already a 23-year industry veteran, Anna's experience has provided her with the knowledge to confidently implement ideas and equipment upgrades to increase efficiency while enhancing product output and quality in the company's production area.

### A Good Juggler:

The married mother of three daughters is always on the go. In addition to her busy work schedule, she finds time to volunteer at her daughters' school and also helps run the family's beef and cash crop farm.

### What's for Dinner?

Her top menu choice is a good homemade hamburger.



## DAVID CZARNECKI

**SENIOR BREEDER**  
BENARY  
WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA

### Accomplishments:

- David's Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Florida examined the genetics and reproductive behavior of *Lantana camara* to produce new sterile cultivars.
- Recipient of a 2018 All-America Selections award for marigold 'Super Hero Spry' — the first commercial series he developed while working at Benary.

### Off-the-Clock Activities:

When he's not in the greenhouse, David enjoys brewing his own beer, solving puzzles of all kinds and "discussing the solutions to the world's problems over a drink with my friends."

### Listen Closely:

David's last name is mentioned in the lyrics of the Polish national anthem. Family lore says he is related to the person, Stefan Czarnecki, a 17th century Polish nobleman, general and military commander.

## VICKI CURRIER

**PLANT PROTECTION SPECIALIST/GROWER COORDINATOR**  
PLEASANT VIEW GARDENS  
LOUDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Accomplishments:

- Helped create innovative IPM program using a stop-light system to report sticky card and scouting results. Also developed a pesticide-log database to track chemical usage, create spray reports and compare product costs.
- Developed a virus testing program that can test for six viruses in-house using ELISA tests and produce results in 24 hours. During peak season, she will typically run 200 to 250 tests.

### Video Viewing:

"Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit" is her top movie pick "because what's not to love about somebody turning into a giant rabbit and attacking the town's vegetables? It is cauliflower carnage."

### Gotta Get Away:

Her vacation destination is a warm and sunny beach.





# Forty under 40

Great Work,  
Great Plants,  
Great Harvest.

Monitoring millions of plants over hundreds of field acres is no small task. Thank you for all of your hard work keeping these plants healthy through harvest and congratulations on your Forty under 40 win!





## ORI DANZIGER

DEPUTY CEO  
DANZIGER  
MOSHAV, MISHMAR HASHIV'A, ISRAEL

### Accomplishments:

- Played important role in building the company's new-generation management team. This management team is responsible for creating a committed, fresh and talented team to continue Danziger's success while staying true to the company's roots.
- Helped construct a dedicated internal marketing department that works both independently and in support of the sales team.

### A Young Entrepreneur:

When he was 15, he started his own business building, selling and servicing personal computers. Not old enough to drive, he would take a taxi to deliver the computers to customers.

### Personal Philosophy:

"I strongly believe that passion is the best fuel for every company and every employee. I make sure the people I work with have the same sparkle in their eyes; it is the best motivation you can have."

## DAWN EARDLEY

PURCHASING MANAGER  
MAST YOUNG PLANTS  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

### Accomplishments:

- Expanded company's electronic purchasing partnerships to include multiple breeding companies. Strategically incorporated technological advances into B2B purchasing practices, while managing all purchasing duties without adding any additional staff.
- Responsible for procuring more than 30 million unrooted cuttings a year for young plant production.

### An Arresting Development:

Dawn has a degree in criminal justice. She grew up in the horticulture industry and thought she would pursue a different career than the rest of her family, but the business "just sucked me back in because it's what I love."

### Can't Live Without:

"The three good months out of the year when I can lay on the beach and soak up the sun on Lake Michigan with my golden retriever, Butters."



## CHENI FILIOS

GLOBAL PRODUCT MANAGER — VEGETABLES  
PANAMERICAN SEED CO.  
ELBURN, ILLINOIS

### Accomplishments:

- Since joining the vegetable team at PanAmerican Seed, Cheni has helped to double the company's product portfolio and sales.
- Recipient of the Frerick Dreer Scholarship at Cornell University for plant-related travel experience outside of the U.S. where she completed a year in New Zealand and England learning about their horticulture industries.

### Chef Cheni:

One of her favorite hobbies is cooking, and she keeps her friends and co-workers well fed. Her most recent specialties include pickles, hot sauce and kimchi. She also can't live without Greek food.

### Her Go-To Book:

Cheni's favorite book is "Down the Garden Path" by Beverley Nichols. "The witty humor and plant anecdotes got me hooked on horticulture."

# CONGRATS CHARLIE KRASNOW

for being named one of  
GPN's 40 under 40!

Since arriving at the Syngenta Vero Beach Research Center over two years ago, Charlie and his research have made immediate contributions to better ornamental plant protection. He is diligent in his work ethic to develop new plant protection solutions and finds innovative uses for established products.

**Congratulations, Charlie!**

**Thank you for all of your hard work!**



**Charlie Krasnow**  
Research and Development Scientist  
Syngenta

**syngenta®**






# Congrats John!

It's a real pleasure, for us and our dear clients, to work every day with such a unique and passionate person like you!  
Keep up the good work!



**Forty**  
under **40**

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## DOMINIC GILLOOLY

RESEARCH SPECIALIST  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

### Accomplishments:

- Responsible for managing the ornamental ipomoea breeding program for Craig Yencho at North Carolina State University. Has worked with a NCSU team to release several new ornamental sweet potato cultivars.
- Developing new plant varieties; scheduling and conducting ornamental greenhouse and field trials; and formulating the ornamental breeding program's patents and publications.

### Good with His Hands:

Dominic helped renovate a 110-year-old house in Massachusetts that used to be the headquarters of the local milk delivery service.

### His Must Read:

"Neuromancer" by William Gibson. "It's the novel that started the cyberpunk movement and predicted a lot of the information technology we use today. It's also a story about flawed humans just trying to do their best, which is very relatable."

## DONALD "DJ" GRANDMAISON

SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER  
LËF FARMS  
LOUDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Accomplishments:

- Participant in a startup with the mission to provide hydroponically grown, fresh, healthy and clean baby greens to the Northeast. Product can be found in over 500 retailers in New England and New York.
- After graduating from college, helped launch wholesale arm of a small New Hampshire farm and grow it from 1 acre of production to well over 100 acres of vegetable production in six years.

### In His Spare Time:

DJ enjoys gardening with his two young sons planting ornamentals and veggies galore. He also can play the violin and the viola.

### The Great Escape:

DJ and family like to sneak away for vacations on the coast of Maine — Ogunquit being one of their faves.



## OCKERT GREYVENSTEIN

PLANT BREEDER  
PANAMERICAN SEED CO.  
GUADALUPE, CALIFORNIA

### Accomplishments:

- Helped get the male-sterile patent approved for the company's vinca breeding program and has been instrumental in the program's trialing, evaluation, test production and ultimate product selection.
- Works with and mentors college interns in the company's breeding program to create an exciting, meaningful and educational experience. Has maintained these connections with former interns and continues to support them as they have advanced in their careers.

### Not Only Does He Breed Plants:

In high school, Ockert started a sheep breeding operation selecting sheep with multiple horns. His parents still have some descendants from the original program nearly 20 years later.

### Going Home:

Ockert and his family like to return to his native South Africa "and relax for a few days in the house where I grew up."

# Forty under 40

Celebrating the next  
generation of horticulture

ColorPoint  
**Congratulates**  
**Amanda McAdam**

on her selection to GPN's  
2019 Class of 40 Under 40!

  
**COLORPOINT**  
www.colorpoint.us



**Amanda McAdam**, Director of Marketing & Communications, brings countless levels of contribution internally with our staff, and externally with our retail customers and suppliers. During her first year with ColorPoint, Amanda traveled aggressively, met with Key Stakeholders to understand needs and introduced profitable programs. A quick study, she was selected to join a national supplier council and asked to create a second council from the ground up. Thank you, Amanda for your contributions! – The ColorPoint Team



# *Congratulations* **Mindy Money**

on being selected to be a member of  
40 Under 40, Class of 2019!



*We're so happy and proud of your well-deserved recognition. Your knowledge, enthusiasm and passion for horticulture is inspirational. Thank you for all of your contributions.*

**■ - BASF**

We create chemistry





## TREVOR HILBURN

### SALES REPRESENTATIVE

MCHUTCHISON HORTICULTURAL DISTRIBUTORS  
WAYNE, NEW JERSEY

#### Accomplishments:

- Grew sales territory by 50% in the first full year on the job and is on track to double sales in the second year.
- As a grower, was responsible for production of the company's bedding crops including Easter lily and poinsettia programs that exceeded quality standards, then expanded his growing knowledge to produce perennials and other specialty crops.

#### Never Slows Down:

When he's not working, Trevor enjoys camping, hiking, quilting, reading and traveling — one of his favorite spots is Savannah, Georgia.

#### Flick to Pick:

"Last of the Mohicans" is his top movie. "The imagery of North Carolina where it was filmed along with the colonial America just gets me every single time."

#### Food Favorites:

Coffee and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches (not necessarily together).

## DAVID HOFFMAN

### CHIEF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE OFFICER

HOFFMAN NURSERY  
ROUGEMONT, NORTH CAROLINA

#### Accomplishments:

- Worked as an intern for a German grower and then applied that knowledge to help Hoffman Nursery implement automation and other broad-based initiatives such as installing a water purification and pump system and getting their gutter-connected greenhouses operational.
- Completed the Executive Academy for Growth & Leadership (EAGL) program for business leaders in the nursery and greenhouse production industry.

#### A Man of Many Pursuits:

In addition to completing the EAGL program, David is an Eagle Scout; he speaks English, German and Spanish (and is looking to learn more languages); loves to play Monopoly; and can't live without his Post-It notes.

#### What's on the Menu?

David's favorite food is anything Mexican, especially arroz con pollo.



## LILY HOGUE

### NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER

METROLINA GREENHOUSES  
HUNTERVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

#### Accomplishments:

- Uses a demand-driven approach to data analytics to introduce new categories to the company's customers, grow sales and work efficiently.
- Helped take a group of small teams and develop them into "one amazing unified team of highly talented individuals who have become best in class in execution, merchandising, relationship building and communication."

#### She EARNED Her Degree:

Lily was born in a refugee camp in Indonesia and her parents immigrated to the U.S. from Vietnam. To lessen the financial burden on the family, she worked full-time while getting her college degree.

#### Music and Martial Arts:

When she was younger, Lily played viola in the youth symphony orchestra while also practicing taekwondo at the same time.

# Forty under 40

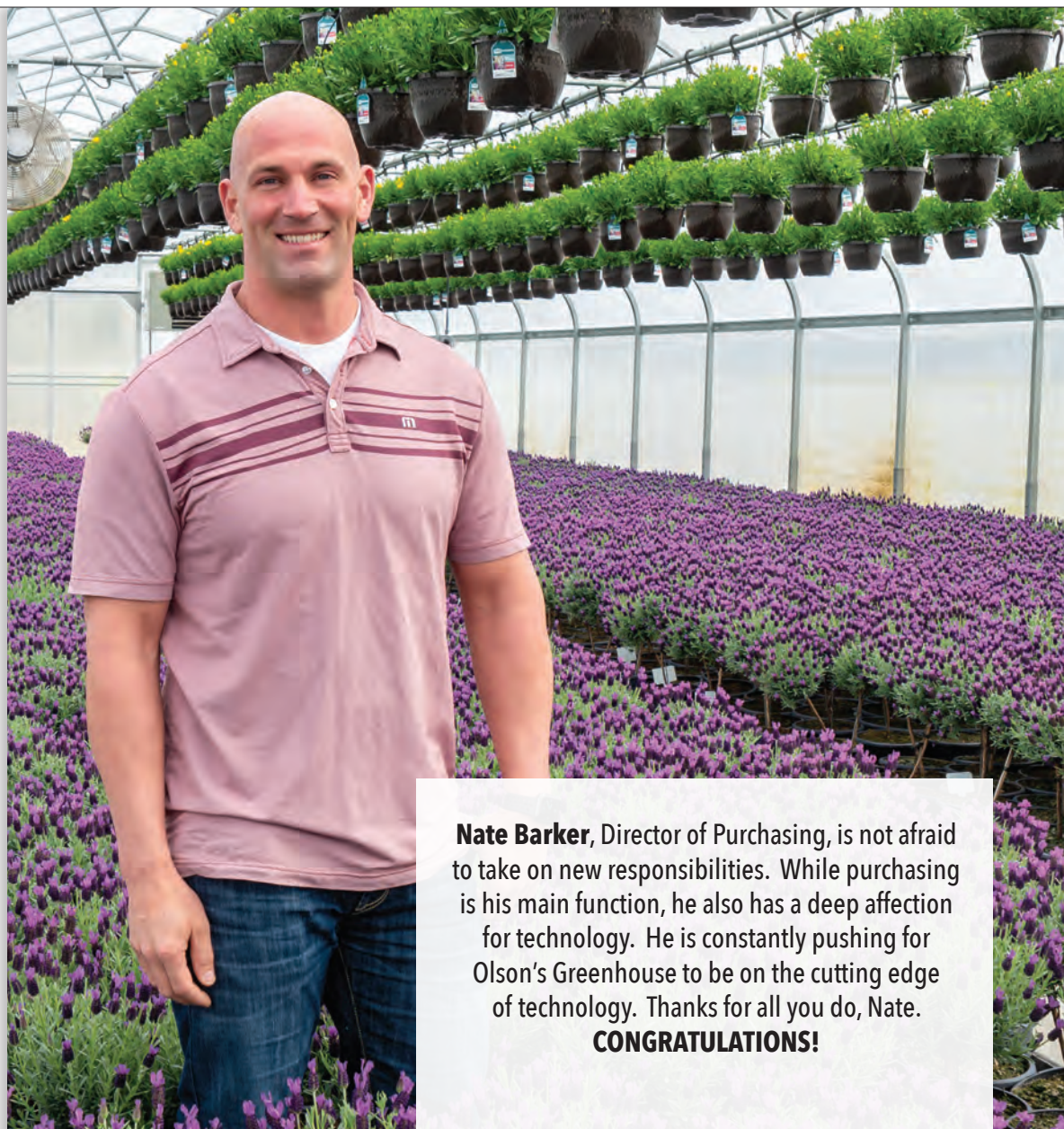
Celebrating the next  
generation of horticulture

## Olson's Greenhouse Congratulates Nate Barker

on his selection to GPN's  
2019 Class of 40 Under 40!



www.ogg.com



**Nate Barker**, Director of Purchasing, is not afraid to take on new responsibilities. While purchasing is his main function, he also has a deep affection for technology. He is constantly pushing for Olson's Greenhouse to be on the cutting edge of technology. Thanks for all you do, Nate.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



# Congratulations **SARITA CANTU!**

**Sarita Cantu**  
*Marketing Manager*

With her great ability to juggle many responsibilities, Sarita has become one of our go-to people at Smith Gardens. Her attitude and energy is infectious, and she inspires action in all projects in which she is involved. We are very lucky to have such a multi-talented individual work for us.

**Thank you for  
being you, Sarita!**



**Forty**  
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[www.smithgardens.com](http://www.smithgardens.com)





## STEFFI HUGO

**GROWER**  
AMERICAN FARMS  
NAPLES, FLORIDA

### Accomplishments:

- Responsible for selecting new varieties for production and developing and implementing innovative production techniques to improve the flowering crop quality.
- Provides leadership and management skills for the production team. Time management and being a team player are her top priorities.

### Her Passport is Always Nearby:

One of Steffi's passions is traveling. "I love researching destinations and then physically seeing those places. I am always on the lookout for the unusual and off-the-beaten-track destinations." Costa Rica is just one of her destinations of choice, and many more are on her bucket list.

### Outside of the Greenhouse:

A proud graduate of Penn State University, in her spare time she enjoys paddle boarding and yoga. Her favorite menu items include a good steak and lobster.



## MEGAN MATHEY

**ORNAMENTAL PLANT BREEDER**  
SPRING MEADOW NURSERY  
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN

### Accomplishments:

- Completed her Master's degree research on phenotyping diverse strawberry germplasm for aid in marker-assisted breeding, and marker-trait association for red stele disease resistance.
- Current research involves evaluating, breeding and researching a very large, unique group of germplasm consisting of more than 70 plant genera.

### Learning the Hard Way:

Megan developed her love for plants in a very limiting growing environment, the U.S. hardiness Zone 4 of South Dakota.

### Everything's Better Outdoors:

Megan loves the outdoors and in her spare time likes to hike and explore in the woods, garden and is into beekeeping. Her favorite food is "anything cooked while camping." She also enjoys brewing her own beer and making mead.

## CHARLES KRASNOW

**RESEARCH SCIENTIST**  
SYNGENTA CROP PROTECTION  
VERO BEACH, FLORIDA

### Accomplishments:

- Responsible for the planning and implementation of plant pathology evaluation trials evaluating fungicides and nematicides and developing disease management solutions for ornamental growers.
- Regularly presents at grower and distributor meetings to demonstrate different methods of controlling plant pathogens and cultivating a network of professionals in the ornamental industry.

### Try to Keep Up:

Charles is an avid runner who belongs to two different running clubs. He even ran a two-mile race in under 11 minutes.

### On His Nightstand:

Charles' favorite book is "Hawaii" by James Michener. "It is a historical fiction saga about the creation of Hawaii, the people, flora and fauna, and the multitude of factors that shaped the state spanning over centuries."



## AMANDA McADAM

**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING**  
COLOR POINT  
PARIS, KENTUCKY/GRANVILLE, ILLINOIS

### Accomplishments:

- After college graduation, managed her family's independent garden center. During that retail season, the IGC generated the highest sales volume and profits to date.
- Selected to participate on the marketing councils for two national retailers.

### Off the Clock:

Amanda likes to spend time with family, friends and her pup, Nala. She also likes to work out, travel and explore new places (anywhere there is a beach tops her list), take photos, watch movies and see live music. Peanut M&Ms, Home Run Inn Pizza and chicken parmesan are her favorite foods.

### She's a Hopeless Romantic:

Amanda's favorite books are anything by Nicholas Sparks. Her favorite movie is "Pretty Woman." She also enjoys Disney movies and the Hallmark Channel.



## LAURA LEBOUTILLIER

**GARDENING SOCIAL MEDIA PERSONALITY**  
GARDEN ANSWER  
ONTARIO, OREGON

### Accomplishments:

- In 2014, along with husband Aaron, created Garden Answer, a series of inspirational, garden-themed videos. Today, Garden Answer has 400,000 YouTube subscribers and more than 2.5 million Facebook followers.
- Created Adopt-a-Pot program for the local community where large concrete pots were placed on each block of the downtown area for businesses/individuals to "adopt" each year for a set fee.

### Who Would Have Thought?

Laura doesn't really like speaking in front of people. "It probably seems like it would be natural for me since I get in front of a camera all the time, but it's a very different thing."

### Tickling the Ivories:

Laura tries to play the piano every day. She took classical piano lessons for 17 years and has been playing the piano since she was 4.



## NICK McCULLOUGH

**PARTNER AND DESIGNER**  
MCCULLOUGH LANDSCAPE & NURSERY  
NEW ALBANY, OHIO

### Accomplishments:

- Serves on the board of directors of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers and in 2018 became a fellow of the APLD. Was also named Young Professional of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association.
- This year he was a featured garden designer at the Philadelphia Flower Show, designing a "flower power" garden for America's biggest garden show.

### Loves and Likes:

Nick says his greatest personal accomplishment is marrying his high school sweetheart, Allison. He can't live without dark chocolate peanut M&Ms ... guacamole is his go-to menu item.

### McCullough. Nick McCullough.

When it comes to movies, Nick is a James Bond fan. His favorite 007 movie is "Skyfall."





## MINDY MONEY

### SALES SPECIALIST

BASF PROFESSIONAL AND SPECIALTY SOLUTIONS  
ETOWAH, NORTH CAROLINA

#### Accomplishments:

- After Hurricane Katrina, worked with the Charleston Horticulture Society to deliver truckloads of plants and trees to replant several parks along the coast and serve food to people still living in shelters.
- Recipient of the William James Bill Reilly Jr. Salesperson of the Year Award from the Tennessee Nursery & Landscape Association in 2017.

#### Place to Vacation:

Either at home in her garden with her four dogs or on any beach.

#### Better to Be S-s-afe than S-s-orry:

Her great-great-uncle was a preacher and snake handler in the mountains of Virginia who died from a rattlesnake bite. "It is no coincidence I have taken classes on snake handling as well, since we had to deal to with lots of snakes in the nursery business."

## GREGORY NICHOLS

### CROP AND FERTILITY MANAGER

WALTERS GARDENS  
ZEELAND, MICHIGAN

#### Accomplishments:

- Along with production staff, he is responsible for the overall quality, production and harvest of more than 500 varieties of perennials on 1,700 acres.
- Continually looking to bring new technology advancements into company's production systems to improve accuracy, consistency, quality and efficiency.

#### Recruiting and Growing Individuals:

Gregory enjoys recruiting, training and being involved with promoting individuals to carry a larger role within an organization. "I enjoy watching others advance in their careers and make significant impacts for their companies!"

#### Determined to

##### Read:

"Lone Survivor" and "Unbroken" are two of his favorite reads. "They are two great survival stories of American heroes that teach that determination and mental toughness can carry you through almost anything."



## RYAN OVERDEEST

### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

OVERDEEST NURSERIES  
BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY

#### Accomplishments:

- Developed new process to streamline the company's weekly plant evaluation process by eliminating double data entry and using wireless tablets.
- Uses his business background to enhance operations and has instituted cost-saving measures at the nursery paying careful attention to freight and labor costs while increasing productivity.

#### A Royal Introduction:

During his senior year at The College of William & Mary, Ryan "very briefly" met Queen Elizabeth II during the college's 2007 Charter Day celebration.

#### Gets His Kicks:

Ryan was a First Team Academic All-American in high school and college soccer. During his senior year of college, he received an award named after famous alum and comedian John Stewart for having the most positive influence on the team's attitude.



**Congratulations to our Texas sales representative Trevor Hilburn for winning GPN's 2019 40 Under 40 Award**

# Well done Trevor.

You've made the  
McHutchison family proud.







## TIGER PALAFOX

VICE PRESIDENT  
MISSION HILLS NURSERY  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

### Accomplishments:

- Helped the garden center diversify by adding a landscape installation and maintenance division. This has helped create a solid baseline of sales, increased revenue and raised visibility to potential customers.
- Oversees day-to-day operations of garden center, landscape installation business and maintenance crews for 100+ properties to ensure they are running efficiently and effectively.

### Finding the Right Work/Life Balance:

Thanks to his wife and two children, Tiger always tries to maintain the right balance of home and work life. Growing up in the industry, this has always been one of his top priorities for his family.

### Surf's Up and Head's Clear:

Tiger can't live without his surfboard. "It allows me to get out and completely remove myself from any stresses and clear my head when I need to."

## ELIZABETH RILEY

DEPARTMENT HEAD OF HORTICULTURE  
TECHNOLOGY/AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY  
ALAMANCE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
GRAHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

### Accomplishments:

- Completed three degrees (B.S., M.S. and Ph.D.) in horticultural science at North Carolina State University and is responsible for developing a college curriculum with courses that reflect current industry practices and emphasize students' exposure to opportunities in horticulture.
- Instrumental in planning and hosting the National Collegiate Landscape Competition at Alamance Community College in 2018.

### Kicking Back in Her Spare Time:

When she's not teaching, Liz enjoys coaching her daughter's soccer team. She also serves as an advisor for the local 4-H club focusing on horticulture.

### Author, Author:

Liz's favorite writer is Nora Roberts. "I love reading anything by Nora Roberts. Her writing allows you to use your imagination, and I can very quickly get lost in her books."



## JOHN SANTORO

DIVISION SALES MANAGER  
BERGER HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS  
SAINT-MODESTE, QUEBEC, CANADA

### Accomplishments:

- Successfully transitioned from grower at two different top 50 greenhouse producers to product sales rep to manager within two years.
- Currently leads a team of five sales representatives in the East and Midwest regions with a focus on customer service and comprehensive product support.

### Two Different Green Industries:

John is the youngest of five children in his family. John pursued his career in one type of green industry, all of his siblings did in another green industry — they all work in corporate banking on Wall Street.

### Committed to the Movie:

John's favorite movie is "Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory." In fact, he has the character tattooed on his arm.

# Forty under 40

## Congratulations David Czarnecki

on being named to the Class of  
2019 of GPN's 40 under 40!

David's hard work and dedication not only led to winning an AAS Award for Marigold Super Hero Spry, he has raised the bar on all the crops he breeds. We look forward to many more innovations from David in the future! **Benaryans worldwide salute you, David, and all your fellow 2019 40 under 40 honorees!**



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## RACHEL SCHNAITMAN

**IPM MANAGER**  
LONGWOOD GARDENS  
KENNETT SQUARE, PENNSYLVANIA

### Accomplishments:

- Responsible for creating management plans, managing pesticide safety and training, overseeing the diagnostic work for gardens and writing all chemical spray rotations.
- Teaches a pest identification course for Longwood's Continuing Education Department geared toward a wide audience. Also gives presentations on various IPM topics outside of Longwood as well as internally to Longwood staff.

### Cooking with Rachel:

Rachel likes to cook and is always experimenting in the kitchen. When she was 12, she appeared on celebrity chef Bobby Flay's TV show, "Food Nation," on the Food Network.

### She's Got the Travel Bug:

Rachel has a wandering spirit and loves to travel, visit new places and experience new cultures, when she can find the time. In the past year, she traveled to Italy.

## DAVE STOLTZFUS

**PRESIDENT**  
ADVANCING ALTERNATIVES  
LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

### Accomplishments:

- A self-employed business owner since he was 18, he acquired Advancing Alternatives in 2014 and expanded product offerings from traditional greenhouse components to the company's line of environmental controls and ventilation solutions.
- The company's motto, "Innovate. Grow. Advance," represents his personal philosophy. Uses his business acumen and creativity to develop products that are cost-effective, intuitive and reliable, and solve customers' challenges.

### He's a History Buff:

History is Dave's favorite subject. "Studying history allows us to create a better world, and hopefully, we can learn from our predecessors to eliminate the possibility of making the same mistakes that were made in the past."

### Cleared for Takeoff:

When he's not working, Dave has his private pilot's license and enjoys flying. He also likes to bow hunt.



## RICHARD TOMLINSON

**VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES**  
BROOKDALE TREELAND NURSERIES  
SCHOMBERG, ONTARIO, CANADA

### Accomplishments:

- As general manager of Valleybrook Gardens, the company had record profitability for three consecutive years and was the recipient of numerous awards and industry recognition.
- After Valleybrook Gardens was purchased by Brookdale Treeland Nurseries, he was promoted to vice president of sales for all of the BTN locations across Canada and became a member of the BTN executive team.

### Hitting the Slopes:

One of Richard's favorite hobbies is skiing "because the whole family can do it together. Seeing my children progress so quickly makes it that much better."

### An Easy Date to Remember:

Both of his and wife Lisa's children were born on the same day but two years apart!

# Congratulations!

Thanks, Catherine, Cheni and Ockert, for helping Ball Horticultural Company deliver on our promise of "All the Best and Nothing Else."



**Catherine Blaney**  
Operations Manager  
Darwin Perennials®

At Darwin Perennials, Cat always ensures operations run as smoothly as possible. You can rely on her highly organized, polished demeanor and her tenacity to resolve issues and improve processes.



**Cheni Filios**  
Product Line Manager-Vegetables  
PanAmerican Seed®

Cheni's passion, knowledge and work ethic has been instrumental in driving PanAmerican Seed vegetables to commercial acceptance through her diligent implementation of seed testing protocols and much more.



**Ockert Greyvenstein**  
Plant Breeder  
PanAmerican Seed®

Ockert demonstrates passion, skill and creativity as a Plant Breeder for PanAmerican Seed. With his outreach to students, he is also a terrific ambassador for ornamental horticulture.





## ANGIE VANWASHENOVA

INTERNAL SALES SUPERVISOR  
FOUR STAR GREENHOUSE  
CARLETON, MICHIGAN

### Accomplishments:

- Helped shaped the company's customer relationship management software to prioritize the information and identify customers' needs for the inside sales team that can be accessed both on the road and at their desk.
- With a background in commercial media sales, adapted media research techniques for use with customers and products that helped develop individual strategies to guide sales efforts.

### A Crush on DMB:

Angie has seen the Dave Matthews Band more than 20 times "and can't wait until we can take our children (ages 10 and 6) to a show to appreciate the experience for themselves!"

### It Runs in the Family:

Her father worked for Frank Smith, the father of Four Star Greenhouse's owner Tom Smith, back in the late 1960s.

## JAMES YOUNGERS

HEAD GROWER  
WALLACE'S GARDEN CENTER  
BETTENDORF, IOWA

### Accomplishments:

- Responsible for all aspects of maintaining two shrub houses, seven perennial houses and approximately 50,000 square feet of annual production space.
- Also responsible for a 2-acre apple orchard (600 trees) and maintains his own beehives on the property. He researched and created a pruning and spray program that keeps the orchard in top condition.

### Motivational Reading:

"My favorite book is 'Born to Run' by Christopher McDougall. I read it every spring to give me motivation after a long, cold Iowa winter."

### Get on Your Bike and Ride!

James rode his bicycle across the state of Iowa. In addition to cycling, other hobbies include trail running and beekeeping.



## ALLISON ZEEB

CUT FLOWER PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT/NATIONAL  
CUT FLOWER PROMOTIONS  
AMERICAN TAKII  
SALINAS, CALIFORNIA/CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

### Accomplishments:

- Travels the world talking to small and large cut flower farmers and advises them on new ways to grow their products. In the past year, she's been to Japan, Holland, Canada, Mexico and South America, where she unites cultures with their growing practices and flower markets.
- Was a key speaker at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show, showing new techniques and inspiration to bring pressed flowers into the 21st century.

### Required Reading:

"The Night Circus" by Erin Morgenstern. "A book never bounded by one narrative, shows a world that's artfully cunning and brings forth a battle where neither opponent can win."

### Jumping and Rolling:

One of Allison's hidden talents is she can Double Dutch jump rope while wearing roller blades. [gpn](#)



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### GPN WEEKLY

Keeping horticulture professionals up-to-date on the latest industry news and advancements.

### CULTURE CONNECTION

Providing access to information that growers need for producing the highest quality crops.

### GREENHOUSE MARKETPLACE

Learn about the industry's latest new products and varieties.

### LET'S TALK

Offering the latest editorial focused on a specific challenge or issue facing growers.

### WATER QUALITY

Providing growers with the latest insights on water-related issues in greenhouse production.

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# Forty under 40

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generation of horticulture

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