

# INTRODUCING GPN'S 40 UNDER 40

# 40 UNDER 40

KEEP AN EYE ON THESE INDIVIDUALS WHO  
ARE SETTING THE PACE FOR THE FUTURE!


by **Tim Hodson**

If you want to see what lies ahead for the horticulture industry, then this is a good place to start — *GPN's* inaugural 40 Under 40!

These 25 men and 15 women are some of the brightest minds in horticulture and they are already charting the course for the industry's future.

The 40 individuals in the Class of 2012 were nominated by their peers for their achievements in and out of the greenhouse and you should get to know them now.

They range in age from 24 to 39 (as of the entry deadline, Jan. 31, 2012), they come from diverse backgrounds and their accomplishments are wide reaching, but they are definitely the ones to watch because they are making things happen now.

*GPN* is proud to present the next generation of leaders in the horticulture industry! 

**Tim Hodson is editorial director of *GPN*. He can be reached at [thodson@sgcmail.com](mailto:thodson@sgcmail.com).**

## The Class of 2013

In October, we will be calling for nominees for the Class of 2013 of *GPN's* 40 Under 40.

If you know someone that you think might belong on this list be sure to nominate him or her.

Contact Tim Hodson at [thodson@sgcmail.com](mailto:thodson@sgcmail.com) for additional information.

## CLASS OF 2012

NAME	PAGE
Albano, Yudisne 'Judy'	22
Altman, Matt	24
Aust, Amelie Brazelton	18
Barlow, Stephanie Whitehouse	16
Blanchard, Matt	18
Bolick, Landon	18
Calkins, Bill	26
Costamagna, Tom	16
DeGraaf, Jessica	22
Friesen, DeVonne	21
Gerace, Dan	22
Gragnani, Layci	16
Hipshier, Chrissy	18
James, Leah	20
Konsoer, Dave	18
Krug, Brian	22
Kurtz, Jennifer	24
Leech, Aaron	16
Lopez, Roberto	24
Miller, Chad	18
Mitchell, Greg	20
Moore, Tim	20
Morgan, John	20
Mossel, John	18
Moylan, Jim	28
Olson, Chad	22
Opiyo, Gladys Andiru	16
Parkerson, Art	28
Rittenhouse, Alicia	26
Roggenbuck, Joshua	21
Santos, Kate	26
Schneider, Josh	28
Terell, Kate	26
Trader, Brian	24
Van Belle, Dave	16
Van de Wetering, Kurt	16
Visnesky, Jayme	28
West, Tabitha	21
Weesies, Brian	26
Zimmerman, Susan Raker	20



**Layci Gragnani**  
Ornamental Marketing and Sales Director  
Greenheart Farms, Arroyo Grande, Calif.  
Age: 28

**Accomplishments:**

- Vice president of Central Coast Greenhouse Growers Association
- Responsible for developing innovative advertising and promotional campaigns and materials to sell roses to a new generation of consumers.
- Active participant in OFA committees

**Off the Clock:** Favorite vacation spot: Chicago during the months of April to October. Plans to compete in six half marathons in 2012.

**Extracurricular:** Has a goal of visiting all 50 states before her 30th birthday — currently she is at 44.

**In her family tree:** Related to Davy Crockett on her mother's side but, "Don't worry, you will not see me in a raccoon hat any time soon."



**Kurt Van der Wetering**  
General Manager  
Ivy Acres, Baiting Hollow, N.Y.  
Age: 37

**Accomplishments:**

- Oversees day-to-day operations of Ivy Acres' approximately 25 acres of greenhouse production and a peak staff of 200 employees.
- Responsible for the design, expansion and construction of 6.5 acres of greenhouses that are performing ahead of original expectations.

- Serves as chairman of the advisory council for Cornell University's Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center and is on the board of directors of the Long Island Farm Bureau.

**Off the clock:**

Can't live without: "My iPhone 4S. I am waiting for a model with a cork-screw like my Swiss army knife. Then it would be complete."

Favorite food: Fish — broiled, baked, blackened, fried, raw or Swedish.

Favorite movies: Oceans 11, 12 and 13.

**Hidden talent:** A few years ago, Kurt took a "sabbatical" from Ivy Acres so he and his wife could manage a hotel in Vieques, Puerto Rico.



**Aaron Leech**  
Head Grower  
Duwayne's Greenhouses,  
Hudsonville, Mich.  
Age: 29

**Accomplishments:**

- Directs team of assistant growers and production crew for large root and sell supplier.
- Proficient in advanced greenhouse technology and trains staff on equipment use.
- Participant in Michigan State University's College of Knowledge program.

**Off the clock:**

Hobbies: Enjoys late model short track racing and even served on the pit crew at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola, Fla. Favorite movie: A River Runs Through It. "It has a great moral about life and how they turn to their love of fly fishing to escape the troubles of life."

**Extracurricular:** Helped lead a group of students from his church on a mission trip to Alaska.

**You might not know:** Aaron is an Eagle Scout

- Manages the daily, weekly and seasonal contact with new and existing customers.
- Managed the company's installation and implementation of Picas software.

**Off the clock:**

Favorite vacation spot: Vancouver, British Columbia — her honeymoon destination with husband, Nick.

Favorite books: *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen and *The Brand Gap* by Marty Neumeier, "A really must read for grower and retailers."

**Family war stories:** Paternal great-grandfather, Arch Whitehouse, was a Royal Air Force pilot during World War I, fought the Red Baron and wrote more than a dozen war-themed books in the decades that followed.



**Dave Van Belle**  
President  
Van Belle Nursery,  
Abbotsford, British Columbia  
Age: 39

**Accomplishments:**

- Responsible for helping implement lean flow manufacturing practices and driving significant technological improvements in company back office processes.
- Responsible for helping re-brand nursery as two distinct operating units — Young Plants and Retail Ready
- Recipient of the Business in Vancouver's 40 Under 40 Award.

**Off the clock:**

Hobbies: Reading, spending time with his children, traveling and running.

Favorite foods: "There are too many to list. I haven't often run into food I didn't like that's why I need to run."

Favorite reads: *Wall Street Journal*, *WORLD* magazine and historical biographies.

**Hit the road:** Dave has traveled to 47 states and seven provinces in Canada.



**Tom Costamanga**  
Director of Plant Quality  
Mid-American Growers  
Granville, Ill.  
Age: 36

**Accomplishments:**

- Developed on-site production of anaerobically fermenting microbes as a front line of defense for the prevention of pests and pathogens in the greenhouse.
- Implements innovative research and production practices in the greenhouse like Kaizen (Japanese for "improvement" or "change for the better") techniques as well as Leibig's Law of the Minimum (plant growth is controlled, not by the total amount of resources available, but by the availability of the scarcest resource).
- Made successful transition from academic world at University of California-Davis to commercial greenhouse production.

**Off the Clock:**

Favorite hobbies: Deep sea fishing (the Sea of Cortez is a favorite destination) and watching and playing soccer.

Favorite food: Surf & Turf — "bringing the best of sea and land in many possible combinations."

**Secret life:** Father is a surgeon who has operated on a number of famous people including professional wrestlers and members of the Manson family.



**Stephanie Whitehouse Barlow**  
Sales and Marketing Manager  
Peace Tree Farm, Kintnersville, Pa.  
Age: 28

**Accomplishments:**

- Responsible for creating new marketing and sales materials and programs that reflect the latest fashion trends and are in tune with today's consumers.



**Gladys Andiru Opiyo**  
Grower  
Shenandoah Growers, Harrisonburg, Va.  
Age: 33

**Accomplishments:**

- Reorganized production systems in 17,000-square-foot greenhouse, improving overall efficiency and product quality.
- Improved company's propagation of mint plants by 50 percent — from 40 percent to 90 percent.
- Created a successful propagation program of rosemary plants to supply half of company's plug requirements for year-round production.

**Off the clock:**

Can't live without: Coffee.

Books on the nightstand: *Flower Confidential* and *The Orchid Thief*

Favorite vacation spot: A native of Uganda, Gladys likes to return to her home town of Moyo and "just relax and enjoy time at home with my parents and siblings."

**Getting a real education:** Gladys left Uganda to go to college in Costa Rica and became fluent in Spanish in three months.





**Amelie Brazelton Aust**  
New Business Manager  
Fall Creek Farm & Nursery, Lowell, Ore.  
Age: 27

**Accomplishments:**

- As a Fulbright scholar was first in her class earning a law degree from the Munich IP Law Center in Germany.
- Has co-authored a book on genetics and intellectual property.
- Helped design and establish launch of company's ornamental berry plant collection

(BrazelBerries) as well as the commercialization model for Fall Creek Genetics collection of blueberry varieties.

**Off the Clock:**

Quilting is an "outlet that keeps my hands busy while my brain can relax and open up to colors, design and think about anything that comes to mind." Speaks fluent German and loves to travel and go on international adventures with her husband.

**Extracurricular:** Active member of Junior League of Eugene, which supports foster families through fund raising, supply drives, direct child care and parent training.

**Matt Blanchard, PhD**  
Technical Services Specialist  
Syngenta Flowers, Gilroy, Calif.  
Age: 29

**Accomplishments:**

- Develops and implements industry-focused training programs that cover genetics, ornamental controls and growing media the help growers improve overall efficiencies and savings.
- Developed bedding plant growing media selection tool and temperature and light guide to aid growers.
- Taught bedding and pot-crop production and PGR courses at Michigan State University.

- During academic career, authored or co-authored more than 20 refereed journal articles, 50 trade journal articles and two book chapters.

**Off the Clock:**

Enjoys traveling, hiking, being outdoors and exploring new trails and parks. Favorite vacation spot: Glacier National Park. Favorite read: *National Geographic* magazine.

**You might not know:** Matt is an Eagle Scout.



**Chrissy Hipshier**  
Grower  
Hortech Inc., Spring Lake, Mich.  
Age: 30

**Accomplishments:**

- In charge of a 31 greenhouse growing area that includes a vast array of stock beds and liner and propagation houses — credits the success of the growing area to her team who "is nothing short of awesome."
- Certified Green Industry Profes-

sional by the Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association and West Michigan Shoreline Naturalist

**Extracurricular:** Frequent volunteer for the Muskegon Conservation District helping with native plant and tree sales, invasive plant removal and other projects.

**Off the clock:**

Favorite food: Mom's homemade lasagna. Loves to travel and recently visited the Galapagos Islands.

**It takes two:** Has an identical sister who is a zookeeper. "I'm flora, she's fauna."



**John Mossel**  
Co-Owner  
Grand Flower Growers, Wayland, Mich.  
Age: 34

**Accomplishments:**

- Founded company with brother, Todd, while both were in their early 20s and now supplies annuals to Home Depot stores throughout the Chicago area.
- Company has received Home Depot's "Grower of the Year" award three years in a row.
- Has a keen eye for detail and market trends and helps develop tagging, containers and genetics for regional and national plant programs

**Off the clock:** Favorite reads: Business books — a favorite is *Launching a Leadership Revolution*.

What's for dinner? Grilled filet, baked potato and asparagus.

Favorite movie: Christmas Vacation is a "Mossel family tradition"

**The Rx files:** John almost died from a rare blood disease when he was 13. "If my parents had listened to my doctor, I would not be here today."



**Chad Miller, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Kansas State University,  
Manhattan, Kan.  
Age: 32

**Accomplishments:**

- Working on integrating technology into the classroom, promoting student-centered learning and increasing student engagement.
- Investigating various ways to develop and integrate horticulture in K-12 classroom.

- Leads the annual Kansas FFA Career Development floriculture contest

**Off the clock:**

Favorite read: *Tuesdays with Morrie*. "Every now and then I go back and re-read it, to remind me what really is important in life." Hobbies: Enjoys cooking (and eating what he cooks), wine tasting, playing tennis and traveling.

**You might be surprised to learn:**

Chad climbed Mount Villarica, an active volcano in Chile.



**Dave Konsoer**  
Director of Sales  
Proven Winners, Hinsdale, Ill.  
Age: 39

**Accomplishments:**

- Supervised and managed nearly 60 "roadshows" to help educate growers and retailers on new varieties, production issues and merchandising techniques.
- Has helped complete more than 50 total garden center resets for more successful merchandising and traffic flow
- Manages Proven Winners relationships and programs with the Home Depot and Lowe's

**Off the clock:**

Favorite book: "Living in Chicagoland my entire life *The Devil in the White City* (by Erik Larson) is such an intriguing book and among other things, highlights an interesting period of Chicago's history."

Favorite food: "I'm a junkie for desserts."

**Special talent:** Started collegiate career as a music education major and performed in an eight-person a cappella singing group.



**Landon Bolick**  
Director of Purchasing and Product Development  
Layman Wholesale, Trenton, S.C.  
Age: 34

**Accomplishments:**

- "Architect" of company's perennial plant programs for big box retailers.
- Serves as bridge between outside growing operations and sales force.
- Helped drive the company's perennial production from 50- and 72-cell trays into 128- and 162-cell trays
- Participates in company-sponsored project that visits local elementary schools and helps with reading and music programs.

**Extracurricular:**

This even-par golfer's favorite movie: *Caddyshack*.

Can't live without: University of North Carolina football and golf!

Favorite vacation spot: the Caribbean Islands.

**In his family tree:** Distant relative won the Virginia lottery.





## Greg Mitchell

Production and Propagation Manager  
Stacy's Greenhouses, York, S.C.

Age: 37

### Accomplishments:

- In charge of production and propagation of 260 acres (outdoor and under cover) in four locations.
- Responsible for forming relationships with plant breeders, young plant growers and other suppliers.
- Working to develop a scholarship program to

award to best students in the community.

**Extracurricular:** Works with a local hort/ag high school teacher to help students with growing and fundraising activities.

### Off the clock:

Can't live without: South Carolina Gamecock football

Favorite authors: Tom Clancy, James Patterson and John Grisham

**Secret talent:** Nearly perfected the Happy Gilmore golf shot

Fine PGRs:  
the keys to  
conformity.

**abide**  
Same active ingredient as ARest®



**citadel**  
Same active ingredient as Cycocel®



**concise**  
Same active ingredient as Sumagic®



**configure**  
The only 2% 6-BA PGR for ornamentals



**dazide**  
Same active ingredient as B-NINE®



**florgib**  
Same active ingredient as ProGibb®



**fresco**  
Same active ingredient as Fascination®



**piccolo**  
Same active ingredient as Bonzi®



**piccolo 10XC**  
The only 4% paclobutrazol formulation



**fine**

Excellence in PGR Technology  
www.fine-americas.com

Always read and follow label directions. Abide; Citadel; Configure; Concise; Florgib; Fresco and Piccolo are registered trademarks of Fine Agrochemicals, Ltd. Dazide is a registered trademark of Fine Holdings, Ltd. A-Rest; Cycocel; Sumagic; B-Nine; ProGibb; Fascination and Bonzi are registered trademarks of their respective manufacturers. © 2012 Fine Americas, Inc.

Write in 760

## John Morgan

Technologist  
Bob's Market & Greenhouses,  
Mason, W. Va.

Age: 29

### Accomplishments:

- Responsible for creating company's comprehensive online presence – including website, blogs, social media outlets, e-newsletters and web-based video channel.
- An oft-requested speaker for the company at local gardening clubs and hospitals and serves as on-screen spokesperson for local new affiliates' gardening-related stories.
- Recently nominated for the 40 Under 40 in West Virginia.

### Off the clock:

Can't live without: High speed internet.  
Favorite meal: Homemade pot roast with home grown vegetables.

### Extracurricular:

- This former high school teacher is very active in his church and donates his computer skills along with his sound skills for the church choir.
- John has traveled around the world on mission trips including into the bush of Kenya to help with medical outreach.



## Leah James

Co-Owner  
James Greenhouses, Colbert, Ga.  
Age: 38

### Accomplishments:

- Recipient of Young Professional Award from Georgia Green Industry Association
- First generation grower, along with her husband Ken, established nationally recognized young plant company from the ground up.
- Member of Georgia Green Industry Association, Southern Nursery Association, and Perennial Plant Association

### Off the clock:

Hobbies: reading, shopping and crossword puzzles.  
Can't live without: the Howard Stern Show.  
Favorite food: Enchiladas poblanas from Agua Linda in Athens, Ga.

**All in the Family:** Mother and stepfather

started garden center/hardware store about the same time Leah and Ken founded James Greenhouses. "The four of us have been able to share in the ups and downs of building a business together...and both companies are healthy and growing."



## Susan Raker Zimmerman

Sales & Marketing Team Leader  
C. Raker & Sons, Litchfield, Mich.  
Age: 30

### Accomplishments:

- Developed company's fundraiser program for non-profit organizations and helps design program's combo planters and vegetable/herb combos.
- Helped create a company program from \$11,000 in sales in 2006 to more than \$1 million this year.
- Recipient of 2011 Michigan Cooperation Award from National Association of Agricultural Educators for work with Future Farmers of America.



### Off the Clock:

Hobbies: Softball, gardening, reading and cooking.  
Favorite Movies: Rudy. "I love the underlying message ... to be persistent in following your dreams."

**Extracurricular:** Susie was instrumental in persuading and assisting Jonesville, Mich., in participating in the America in Bloom program.

**From the Raker family tree:** "Contrary to popular belief, Gerry Raker is not father. My father is Dave Raker (Gerry's brother) who is retired from the business."



## Tim Moore

Inventory Control/Sales & Marketing  
Lucas Greenhouse, Monroeville, N.J.  
Age: 34

### Accomplishments:

- In charge of company inventory control for both liner materials and finished product and tracking production on the sticking line.
- Helps develop innovative customer programs to help them try new plants and be more successful.
- Responsible for the creation and development of company's marketing efforts including wide-ranging color catalog and website.

### Off the clock:

Can't live without: a GPS. "There is no doubt this device has reduced our in-car arguments by 50 percent."  
Hobbies: All kinds of sports. "I was leaving our house [recently] and there were seven pairs of cleats lined up next to the door." He and his wife have three sons, ages 10, 9 and 8.

**Secret life:** State chess champion three out of four years in high school, "before I lost to someone apparently less cool than me my final year."





**DeVonne Friesen**  
Sales & Marketing Manager  
Van Belle Nursery, Abbotsford,  
British Columbia  
Age: 39

**Accomplishments:**

- Responsible for helping rebrand nursery as two distinct operating units — Young Plants and Retail Ready
- Developed new brand message pyramid for company that “fueled the redesign of our complete digital and print marketing suite.”

**Extracurricular:**

Can't live without: “relationships with people close to me. Without my family, friends and team members, life would be dull indeed!”

**Off the Clock:**

Favorite hobbies: Reading great literature and golfing.

Favorite foods: Thick-cut New York steak and blueberries for dessert.

**Secret Life:** Has a home library with more than 1,000 volumes of fine literature.



**Tabitha West**  
Office/Greenhouse Manager  
Cedar Valley Nurseries, Ada, Okla.  
Age: 35

**Accomplishments:**

- A former hospital lab technician, Tabitha has played an instrumental role in developing the company's plant disease prevention and diagnostic programs.
- Developed innovative performance incentive program for production crews.

- Currently serving as president of Oklahoma Nursery and Landscape Association

**Off the clock:**

Favorite movie: Mary Poppins “reminds me that anything is possible and fires my imagination.”

Favorite food: Kraft macaroni & cheese or a grilled steak cooked by her husband – or both!

**She's Royalty:** Tabitha was once the Snow Princess in her hometown and got to wear a crown and ride on a float during the Christmas parade.



Who said  
conformity isn't a  
beautiful thing?

Today, it takes consistent size, shape and quality to increase ornamental profits. That's why more and more top growers are turning to PGRs from Fine Americas. With proven active ingredients, advanced formulations and uncompromising quality control, Fine PGRs bring out the best in your plants. Plus, these cost-effective products are backed by ongoing university research and top-notch technical support. For the distributor nearest you, visit [www.fine-americas.com](http://www.fine-americas.com) or call (888) 474-FINE (3463) toll free.

**fine**  
Excellence in PGR Technology



**Josh Roggenbuck**  
Owner  
The Flower Farm, Bad Axe, Mich.  
Age: 28

**Accomplishments:**

- Dedicated to helping customers become better gardeners and be successful by offering comprehensive education/coaching, garden pharmacy and off-site tours to horticultural hot spots around the state.
- Business has been voted Best of the Best Greenhouse and Best of the Best Floral by local community.
- Finalist for 2010 Michigan Farm Bureau Young Farmer Achievement Award

**Off the clock:**

Favorite movie: It's a Wonderful Life. “I'm a small town guy, and I am reminded of my community and myself every time I watch it.

Favorite quote: from It's a Wonderful Life. “Dear George, no man is a failure who has friends.”

Hobbies: Traveling, cooking, darts, golf and hunting.

**Extracurricular:** Active in local community's beautification projects and recently served as president of Bad Axe Chamber of Commerce.







## Brian Krug, PhD

Extension Specialist  
University of New Hampshire  
Extension, Durham, N.H.  
Age: 35

### Accomplishments:

- Recipient of Alex Laurie Award for most significant applied floriculture research paper published in refereed *American Society for Horticultural Science* publications.
- Instrumental in creating new and innovative

electronic delivery methods (video, online, podcasts) for presenting research and educational materials.

**Greatest personal accomplishment:** “Other than getting my wife to marry me...learning to surf.”

### Off the clock:

Favorite food: “Mmm, ham! Baked, grilled, on a sandwich, in an omelet...I can never get enough.”

Favorite vacation spot: Walking the streets of Paris.

**Not many people know:** Brian placed first in Milk Tasting at the Iowa Future Farmers of America Dairy Foods Competition in high school.



## Yudisne “Judy” Albano

Facility Manager/Facility Grower  
Riverview Flower Farm,  
Riverview, Fla.

Age: 39

### Accomplishments:

- Helped spearhead company’s efforts to refurbish and reestablish older propagation facility purchased in the fall of 2011 and had it up and running for spring 2012 to meet the demands of major customer.

- A native of Venezuela, Albano has made the transition to life in the U.S. while developing her advanced technical skills, producing the highest quality plants and establishing a superior work ethic.

- Devoted to trialing new products and finding new production methods to help increase efficiency or existing techniques.

### Off the Clock:

Favorite Reads: Spanish novels like *El General en su Laberinto* by Gabrielo Garcia Marquez, based on the last days of Simon Bolivar’s life and fight to unify Venezuela, Columbia and Ecuador.

Vacation spot to visit: Angel Falls in southeast Venezuela.

Can’t live without: Chocolate.

**Secret Life:** Dog whisperer — “My friends say I can speak with dogs ... because I understand what my dog [is thinking].”

## Jessica DeGraaf

Program Manager  
C. Raker & Sons, Litchfield, Mich.  
Age: 31

### Accomplishments:

- Graduated magna cum laude with M.A. degree in marketing from Michigan State University
- Spent a year working in Germany for a breeder company to learn more about the European market and the differences in horticulture marketing in Europe and the United States
- Responsible for helping market new upscale brand of plants for

independent garden centers using new and unique plants and genetics.

**Off the Clock:** Favorite movie: Braveheart — “William Wallace just makes you want to stand up and fight for what you believe in.”

Can’t live without: Toothbrush, Smartwool socks and licorice.

**Family life:** Jessica is 5’3” and her husband is 6’8”



## Dan Gerace

Production Coordinator  
Welby Gardens, Denver, Colo.  
Age: 38

### Accomplishments:

- President of Colorado Nursery and Greenhouse Association, board member of Colorado Floriculture Foundation and chairman of the certified Greenhouse Grower program.
- Overcame fear of public speaking and is often

invited to teach seminars on pest management and other horticulture topics

### Off the clock:

Hobbies: kayaking, fishing and skiing with 8- and 10-year old sons.

Favorite movie: Heat with Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino. “It is the perfect mix of good vs. evil.”

**Secret family life:** During World War II, his maternal grandfather spent a month in jail for not wearing the black shirts required by Benito Mussolini.

## Chad Olson

V.P., Operations  
Olson’s Greenhouse Gardens, Salem, Utah  
Age: 32

### Accomplishments:

- Helped design and build Olson’s state of the art greenhouse facility.
- Instrumental in company expansion while improving production efficiencies and product quality.
- Actively participated in company’s Veriflora certification process.

**Off the clock:** Favorite food: authentic Mexican like carnitas or carne asada with homemade beans and rice.

Favorite books: *The Game of Work* and *Who Moved My Cheese?* “I think work is much better if you try to make it fun. We always need to look for new ways of doing things to not get stagnant in life.”

**You might not know:** Chad speaks three languages (English, Spanish and Portuguese). When he was 19, Chad served a two-year church mission in Brazil. “You really grow up fast living away from your family in another country from ages 19 to 21.”



# 40 UNDER

CELEBRATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GROWING

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE  
2012 40 UNDER 40 WINNERS!

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

**BioSafe Systems** L.L.C.

**FIDES ORO**

**fine**  
Excellence in PGR technology



**NEXUS**  
GREENHOUSE SYSTEMS  
LEADERS IN GREENHOUSE SYSTEMS INTEGRATION®

**ofa**

**PREMIER TECH**  
HORTICULTURE

**PW**  
PROVEN  
WINNERS®  
Nothing Sells Faster:

**Summit Plastic Company**



## Jennifer Kurtz

Sales, Marketing & Brand Manager  
Kurtz Farms, Cheshire, Conn.

Age: 39

### Accomplishments:

- Created Urban Gardener program that provides unique products to help busy consumers get into gardening "As easy as 1-2-3."
- Adeptly juggles demands of big box customers, IGCs and retail florists for wholesale growing company while continuing to grow Urban Gardener brand.
- Donates portion of the Urban Gardener profits to the

Tommy Fund ([www.tommyfund.org](http://www.tommyfund.org)) to help fight childhood cancer.

**Extracurricular:** "Mini extreme couponer" for local food pantry. Each week, Jen and her son, Christian, shop for items that are donated to the pantry.

**Off the clock:** Can't live without: Dunkin' Donuts coffee with her dad. "I've been going to the same DD for almost 17 years."

**Not many people know:** Jen's family survived the second largest hotel fire in American history in Puerto Rico in 1986.



## Brian Trader, PhD

Coordinator of Domestic and International Studies

Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pa.  
Age: 33

### Accomplishments:

- Coordinates Longwood Gardens' educational programs that focus on young adult to adult learners.
  - Manages Longwood's College and University Internship Program responsible for approximately 30 paid internships per year and recently developed international intern program.
  - Recipient of Excellence in Teaching Award as an assistant professor at Mississippi State University and Outstanding Recent Alumnus Award from Virginia Tech.
- Off the clock:** Favorite food: Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Cakes. On his nightstand: Non-fiction colonial history books, *Virginia Tech* magazine and plant catalogs.
- Call him the Godfather:** Brian's greatest personal accomplishment "is to be loved and trusted enough to be selected the godfather of five intelligent, caring and beautiful kids."



## Matt Altman

Chief Operating Officer  
Altman Plants, Vista, Calif.

Age: 34

### Accomplishments:

- At the age of 22 he was "drafted" to be GM of Altman's Salinas, Calif., operation that grew from \$5 million in sales to \$20 million in five years.
- Helped lead company's rapid entry into rose business in 2010 and put the company in a position to grow nearly 1

million roses in just several months.

- Responsible for improving communication and systems operations across companies four different divisions.

**Off the Clock:** Hobbies: traveling, reading and the plant business. "There's not much time for the first two."

Favorite foods: Mexican food and the artichoke soup at Gino's Restaurant in Salinas, Calif.

**From the family files:** Grandfather, Mike Kashkin, was a pioneer in bromeliads who traveled to the rainforests to bring new species to the U.S. and sell them at his store, Fuchsia Land in L.A.



## Roberto Lopez, PhD

Assistant Professor, Extension Specialist  
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind.

Age: 33

### Accomplishments:

- Youngest recipient of Purdue University Extension Specialist Association's Early Career Award.
- Actively involved with OFA's outreach and educational programs and has been invited to speak in English and Spanish at more than 75 regional, national and international industry conferences.
- Involved with leading edge production research in such areas as

LED lighting, sustainability and energy conservation.

**Extracurricular:** In the community, Roberto donates his time and works with high-risk teenagers as well as senior citizens on horticulture related topics.

**Off the clock:** Can't live without: A watch. "Maybe having a grandfather and an uncle who are watch repair technicians has something to do with it?"

**From the family file:** Roberto is a first generation U.S. citizen and the first in his family to graduate with a bachelor's, master's and PhD.



BioSafe Systems LLC

# WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

Trust BioSafe Systems' complete horticultural line to provide 24/7 protection for greenhouses and nurseries, you can count on us.

**ZeroTol 2.0**

Foliar Applications and Mist Propagation

**SaniDate 12.0**

Water Treatment - MicroBiocide

**AzaGuard**

Insect Control

**GreenClean PRO**

Algaecide/Fungicide for Ponds



## Contact Us for Around the Clock Protection!

1.888.273.3088 (toll-free) • [www.biosafesystems.com](http://www.biosafesystems.com)

Write in 763

Copyright 2012 BioSafe Systems LLC. Always read and follow label directions. 2.12



Jiffy® CarbonLite

Growblock®

Speedypot®

Preforma®

Jiffy-7®

Jiffy-Mix®

Powered by Tref

Jiffy CD®

Jiffy® Plug

Carefree®

Jiffypot®

Jiffy-7C®

**Jiffy®**  
it's all about the roots

Jiffy Products of America Inc.  
1-800-323-1047  
email: prosales@jiffygroup.com  
www.jiffygroup.com

Write in 765

400  
UNDER

**Bill Calkins**

Business Manager-  
Independent Garden  
Centers/Product Mar-  
keting Manager-Ball  
Seed Co.

Ball Horticultural Co.,  
West Chicago, Ill.

Age: 35

**Accomplishments:**

- Responsible for spotting the latest retail and consumer trends, product positioning and developing programs for retail garden centers.
- Participates on numerous horticulture industry committees and boards to help "facilitate innovation, industry unification and help move the industry forward."
- Active participant and presenter at industry events on IGC-related topics as



well as emerging green goods trends.

**Extracurricular:** Participated in a one-year "service adventure" project with the Mennonite Church in Norristown, Pa.

**Off the Clock:** Favorite movie: Major League – because the Cleveland Indians win the World Series.

Favorite food: Big hamburgers

Can't live without: "Music available at the push or click of a button."

**Kate Santos, PhD**

Director of Research and  
Development

Costa Farms, Goulds, Fla.

Age: 30

**Accomplish-  
ments:**

- Developed one of the largest unbiased trials programs in the country that helps provide growers, retailers and breeders with insight into how varieties



perform.

• During her graduate school career, Kate was published in five different scientific publications on research primarily related to nutrient uptake.

**Off the clock:**

Can't live without: my Kindle.

Hobbies: In no particular order — mountain climbing, writing, reading, painting, baking, yoga and kayaking. Favorite vacation spot: "Somewhere quiet and secluded — on a mountain, by a lake or a river"

**Out of this world ambition:**

"I would drop anything I was doing, regardless of the point I was at in my life, for an opportunity to travel into space."

**Family fish stories:** In 1969, Kate's great uncle, Alphonse Bielevich, caught the world's largest Atlantic cod (98 lb., 12 oz.) — a record that still stands today.

**Alicia Rittenhouse**

Manager of Business  
Development

OFA — the Association for  
Horticulture Professionals,  
Columbus, Ohio

Age: 32

**Accomplishments:**

- Helps direct the OFA Scholars Program to expose students to various facets of the floriculture industry they may typically experience as part of their coursework.

- An advocate for IGCs, she also is instrumental in helping orga-  
nize



Garden Center Live at OFA Short Course.

- Travels to various universities to speak with students about the horticulture industry, internships and careers and how they can get involved.

**Off the clock:**

Can't live without: the Internet.

Favorite food: Pizza, but not just any pizza. Her favorite is a local Columbus restaurant that serves pizza with apricot glaze, chicken, caramelized onion, basil red pepper flake and Gorgonzola cheese.

**Extracurricular:** Alicia is always trying to "pay it forward" and has served as a board member of Columbus Jaycees, volunteers for Big Brothers Big Sisters and is a member of Columbus Gives Back.

**From the family file:** Alicia graduated from the same high school as her grandmother — only 75 years later!

**Kate Terrell**

Purchasing Manager  
Wallace's Garden Center,  
Bettendorf, Iowa

Age: 32

**Accomplishments:**

- Makes frequent radio, television and newspaper appearances to help educate consumers on horticulture related issues
- Active OFA board member and co-chair of OFA Garden Center Committee.

• Recipient of Iowa State University's College of Agriculture Outstanding Senior in Community Service

**Off the clock:**

Hobbies: Tailgating and watching Iowa State Cyclone football games, seeing Broadway shows, traveling and family time.

Favorite food: Any kind of ice cream.

**In the family tree:** Her grandmother was the first woman in the Iowa Nurseryman's Association.

**Ask her about it some time:**

Kate and her father once met Jerry Springer in a Cheesecake Factory restaurant.

**Brian Weesies**

General Manager  
Mast Young Plants, Grand  
Rapids, Mich.

Age: 38

**Accomplishments:**

- Responsible for all production operations including managing relationships with breeders and brokers, overseeing R&D, plant trialing, transportation and administration.

- Implemented lean flow techniques in specific areas that helped reduce losses in propagation, increase order fulfillment, expand product offerings and improve variety selection and timing for finished business.

**Off the clock:**

Favorite authors: Lee Child, John Grisham, Scott Thor and James Patterson.

Hobbies: Fishing, camping, hunting, running, golf "and hanging out with my kids."

**Marathon Man:** Brian took up running at age 32 and has completed six 25-km races (he'll run his seventh this month) and four half marathons.







**Jayme Visnesky**  
Owner  
Penn Hills Lawn & Garden Center and Gift Shop,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Age: 35  
**Accomplishments:**  
• Progressive, but still down-home, philosophy has been embraced by community and the company has doubled the size of garden center in less than five years.

• Shares passion for gardening by offering seminars for young and old gardeners alike – her garden center is “a place to learn and grow.”  
**Off the clock:**  
Favorite movie: Under the Tuscan Sun. “I love any story where women overcome adversity in their lives.”  
Favorite food: Any and all Italian food.  
**You might be surprised to know:**  
Loves to drive heavy equipment and big trucks ... “even a girlie girl likes to play in the dirt sometimes.”

## Art Parkerson

Owner  
Lancaster Farms Wholesale Nursery, Suffolk, Va.  
Age: 36  
**Accomplishments:**  
• Responsible for creating innovative videos to promote company products to retail customers as well as videos retailers can use to promote their businesses.  
• Designed and produced *Lancaster Farms Plant Book* – an original resource tool to help customers better understand products.  
• Active member of Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association and American Nursery and Landscape Association.

**Off the clock:** Favorite food: Chocolate, especially with peanut butter.  
Favorite vacation spot: Skiing on Sugarbush Mountain in Vermont.  
**From the family file:** Art’s great grandfather owned a minor league baseball team and once sued Major League Baseball (going all the way to the Supreme Court) for impeding on the broadcasting right of minor league teams. He eventually lost his case but he is in the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame.



**Jim Moylan**  
Bedding House Manager  
Ray Wiegand’s Nursery & Garden Center,  
Macomb, Mich.  
Age: 24  
**Accomplishments:**  
• Manages all of company’s annuals production and nearly doubled production in one year.  
• Certified Green Industry Professional and Member of Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association, serves

on multiple OFA committees.  
• Only person to ever serve two years as president of Horticulture Club at Michigan State University.  
**Off the clock:**  
Favorite hobby: Vegetable gardening. “Growing every variety of vegetable is exciting to me.”  
Favorite flix: The Bourne series (The Bourne Identity, The Bourne Supremacy and The Bourne Ultimatum). “I love the action and the constant change of pace.”  
**Secret talent:** Jim is a certified scuba diver who has dived in Mexico and Canada.



**Josh Schneider**  
Managing Partner  
Cultivaris North America,  
San Diego, Calif.  
Age: 38

**Accomplished:**  
• Co-founded services company dealing with idea and project management to bring out-of-the ordinary ideas and products to international horticulture market.  
• Created the Breadfruit Project ([www.globalbreadfruit.com](http://www.globalbreadfruit.com)) to help reduce hunger in the tropics.  
• Manages company’s North American licensee network.  
**Off the clock:**  
Favorite movie: the German film *Das Leben der Anderen* (The Lives of Others). “An excellent portrayal of the (sometimes evil) power of the state and its Orwellian potential to ruin lives despite the best intentions of the self-proclaimed rulers.”  
Favorite foods: Risottos and curries. “I love to both eat and cook them and my family loves them too.”  
**From the family file:** Josh’s grandmother raised 11 children, was a delegate to the 1972 Democratic convention, learned how to design websites in the 1990s and at 94 is very adept at Wii video games.



# Grab-n-Go Trellis

## GrowerSelect®

The **Grab-n-Go Trellis** is the perfect product for your climbing plants! Pick up your plants by the trellis without any spilling, separation or risk of destroying the plant.

Fits co-ex and pressure formed pots by most major manufacturers including **Landmark, Dillen, Janor, Popplemann, ITML** and **NSI**! With four sizes available, they fit a multitude of standard pot sizes, from nursery containers to small plant pots.

### Grab-n-Go Trellis Small

6.25" Pot Diameter  
12" Height Above Pot  
Sold in bundles of 20 with 276 bundles per pallet and a 5,520 pallet quantity.

### Grab-n-Go Trellis Large

9.50" Pot Diameter  
15" Height Above Pot  
Sold in bundles of 20 with 138 bundles per pallet and a 2,760 pallet quantity.

### Grab-n-Go Trellis Medium

7.50" Pot Diameter  
12.75" Height Above Pot  
Sold in bundles of 20 with 184 bundles per pallet and a 3,680 pallet quantity.

### Grab-n-Go Trellis Extra Large

11.25" Pot Diameter  
15" Height Above Pot  
Sold in bundles of 20 with 141 bundles per pallet and a 2,820 pallet quantity.



Available at:  
**BFG Supply Co.**  
Call **800-883-0234** to order

Canada: JVK  
Call **800-665-1642** or email [info@jvk.net](mailto:info@jvk.net) to order

Visit [www.bfgsupply.com/growerselect](http://www.bfgsupply.com/growerselect) for more information!