

5 MINUTES WITH —

**SANDI HILLERMANN
McDONALD**

By Teresa McPherson

Sandi Hillermann McDonald is owner of Hillermann Nursery and Florist in Washington, Missouri.



Could you share a little about your background?

I am a second-generation family owner and the oldest of six children. My youngest brother Scott and I run the company. We will celebrate 70 years on April 1 of this year. I have been with the company 51 years this year.

What do you love about your job?

Everything green and colored! I love the changing of the seasons and the inspiration we give to many with beautiful plants. And I love the team we have developed — they together make my job easier.

What keeps you up at night?

Finding good help has become a great issue for us. Our business is growing, but it's difficult to find dedicated employees. And the other thing is how to grow our first quarter sales during winter — doing 60% of our business in about 12 weeks is a bit daunting.

What advice would you give to someone just starting out in horticulture?

It takes dedication and heart. Build a brand you are proud of. Always be honest and compassionate. Building great relationships with vendors and customers is vital. Be available.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I love playing in my own gardens, but I am also a card maker — I love to play with paper. It's a great activity with the grandkids as well; I have three beautiful grandkids that I spend as much time with as possible.

Favorite plant to grow? Why?

This has always been a tough question for me. I can't say I have one favorite — I love tillandsias, succulents, ferns, begonias, and the list goes on. Please don't make me choose! 🌿