

5 MINUTES — WITH —

TRAVIS KNOOP

By Teresa McPherson

Travis Knoop is owner of Laughing Owl Greenhouses in Benjamin, Utah, which opened in early April, as well as a GPN Magazine 40 Under 40 alumnus.



What inspired you to start your own garden center/greenhouse business?

It's been a dream of mine to own my own greenhouse business ever since I took my first class at New Mexico State University over 20 years ago. I took a tour of a commercial greenhouse facility in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and was instantly hooked. I loved the fact that you could grow a large variety of crops in volume in different shapes, sizes and colors. I loved seeing how happy flowers made people and knew that my love for growing was a perfect fit for this career.

What is your biggest goal for the next year?

My goal is to add another 10,000 square feet in growing space and add more square footage to our sales house, along with a pavilion with large swings and a fire pit so that we can host events, weddings, etc.

What's the best part about your job?

The best part is waking up every morning and being excited and feeling eager to get to the greenhouses and check on the flowers. There is something so refreshing and peaceful about walking through the greenhouses and feeling regenerated. I also love the impact we make on our community, especially with the customers who come in — I watch their faces light up and smile when they see the beauty the crops bring. I have seen the grumpiest people walk out with a new positive outlook for the day just from spending time surrounded by the flowers.

What keeps you up at night?

Ha ha! Everything! From storms to freezes to Mother's Day eve — even excitement for a new crop rolling out. There is always something that sits on every greenhouse owner's mind that keeps them up.

As a family business, what measures do you take to separate the family part from the business part?

The most important thing is letting the business go at night and making sure that the quality time is being spent with the family. This means putting the phone down and ignoring the emails and calls until the kids go to bed. I can always work through the night, but I'll never get the few minutes back that I lost with my wife and kids if I'm stuck on my phone or reading through emails.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Honestly, I love planting. I'm usually working on new combination ideas to bring to market, and when I'm not working on that, I'm usually studying up on automation for the facilities. My brain is always on improving the processes, and luckily it's something I really enjoy.

Favorite plant to grow? Why?

Hands down, the ornamental chili pepper. I grew up on a farm in New Mexico, and we grew hundreds of acres of green and red chili peppers every year. I love the challenge in growing them and love the different shapes, colors and flavors that can be found with each variety. 🌶️