

Rising Stars in the Industry



These five men and women are setting the direction for the horticulture industry's future.

By Tim Hodson

Every May for the last 10 years, Lawn & Garden Retailer's sister publication, GPN, has published its annual list of 40 young men and women who are really making a difference in the horticulture industry.

The 40 Under 40 program represents all sectors of horticulture — from plant breeder to retail expert and a little bit of everything in between.

They are all trailblazers under the age of 40 who personify superior leadership, creativity, innovative thinking, excellence and compassion in and outside the horticulture field!

All of the individuals 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 make in the years to come.

This month, we wanted to shine the spotlight on a few of the individuals in the Class of 2021. Keep an eye on these men and women — they're bound to have a lasting impact on our industry.

GPN will be accepting nominations for the Class of 2021 beginning in November. You can learn more about the program by visiting www.gpnmag.com/40-under-40-awards.

Kait Barry

Retail Business Manager
Griffin Greenhouse Supply
Tewksbury, Massachusetts



Accomplishments:

- Helped company increase retail department sales 60% in five years by building strong vendor relationships, creating sales programs and keeping up with market trends to stay relevant.
- Continually making an impact by participating on multiple company committees such as ecommerce, technology advancements, company culture and succession planning.

In Her Spare Time:

Kait loves to travel, try different foods and meet new people. “I also love to create scrapbooks for the different places I have traveled to and for special moments in my life.”

On Her Bucket List:

Running in the Boston Marathon. She recently completed her first half-marathon and has set her sights on the world’s oldest annual marathon (all 26 miles and 385 yards of it).

Liz Hughes

Owner
Groovy Plants Ranch
Marengo, Ohio



Accomplishments:

- Created and manages garden center’s online store that over the past five years has “become so successful that we now have a small army to manage the orders and ... are shipping live plants to consumers in all 50 states!”
- Responsible for developing and presenting many different fun and educational programs and classes to IGC’s loyal following.

The Work of an Artist:

Liz has a master’s degree in textile design and was an artist and art teacher before entering the horticulture world. Her artwork has been featured in international shows and she has been on a nationally syndicated quilting TV show.

She Screams for Ice Cream:

“I love ice cream any time of the year! I don’t even care what flavor, I just LOVE ice cream.”

Ryan Glover

Operations Manager
Glover Nursery
West Jordan, Utah



Accomplishments:

- Helped implement infrastructure improvements over the last five years, including building new retail buildings, cold frames for frost/winter protection and improved layout and signage throughout the nursery.
- A graduate of the University of Utah, takes great pride in continuing to learn and educate himself about the nursery industry. “I enjoy finding information from different sources and seeing how I can implement them in our business.”

What’s for Dinner Tonight?

When it comes to mealtime, Ryan’s favorite menu choice is “Anything that I cook on the grill at home.”

Check out His Passport:

Ryan likes to travel and has visited more than 40 different countries. His favorite vacation spot so far is Africa — “the wildlife was amazing and the people were great.”

Susan Judd

Front End Manager
Heeman’s
London, Ontario, Canada



Accomplishments:

- During the 2020 pandemic, Susan helped lead a team of 130 to safely and efficiently serve customers through IGC’s busiest month of the year in a curbside environment, filling 725 daily orders during peak season.
- Worked as co-lead in the development of IGC’s Hard Cider, which launched seven new flavors of hard cider and mead, while balancing her other business ventures and volunteer efforts.

She’s a Song & Dance Person:

Susan says she can’t live without singing and dancing at work. “Staff sing-alongs and dance breaks always make the day better.”

She Enjoys a Different Kind of Day Off:

“Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” starring Matthew Broderick is her favorite film. “It has some great life moments for people of all ages.”



Kit Leider Pierrri

Garden Center Manager/Communications Director
Leider Greenhouses
Buffalo Grove, Illinois

Accomplishments:

- Transitioned garden center from an outdated cash register system to a fully digital POS system that allows the company to generate reports and data to better plan for the upcoming seasons.
- Oversaw the process of completely revamping company’s production planning software.

Family Biz:

Kit is the fifth generation of her family to work in the business that was started in 1898. She also has an identical twin sister.

There’s Always Housework to Do:

Kit and her husband recently celebrated their one-year homeowner anniversary. “I love working on home projects and (slowly) decorating the place room by room.”

You Won’t Find This Info on IMDB:

Part of the movie “Omen 2” was filmed in the Leider family greenhouse in 1978! 🍷