

5 MINUTES WITH — CAMERON REES



By Teresa McPherson

**Cam Rees is general manager
of Skinner Garden Store in
Topeka, Kansas.**

Could you share a little about your background?

I grew up on a family orchard operation, playing on the orchard as a kid and sometimes helping. Picking strawberries for my granddad was the first job I can remember. I picked cherries as I got older and helped jug cider during the busy season.

Years later, when I was in my early teens, my dad made the tough decision to leave the family orchard and take a position at a local garden center. A few years later, needing money for a car, I worked my first garden center spring season for him ... and I was hooked.

I enjoyed the work, studied horticulture in college, specializing in landscape design. Upon graduating, I returned home to help run the garden center with my dad, splitting my time between our landscape business and the garden center. Years later, I handed over most of my landscape responsibilities to focus my effort on the garden center and 40 years later ... I'm still here!

What's the best part about your job?

I love helping people — both customers and staff — enjoy all the things plants can bring.

What keeps you up at night?

I typically don't have problems sleeping — I'm usually plenty tired!

What's something people would be surprised to know about you?

I used to play rugby in college.

If you weren't in this profession, what would you be doing?

Maybe a landscape architect specializing in ecological restoration and developing urban natural areas?

Favorite plant to grow? Why?

I really don't have a favorite. There are just too many different plants to enjoy! I like to experiment and try new things. But I have been on a pawpaw kick lately — because they're cool! 🍌