

5 MINUTES — WITH —

BENJAMIN J. POLZIN

By Teresa McPherson

Benjamin J. Polzin is owner of Down to Earth Garden Center in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

What brought you to the garden center world?

I started the company with my father when I was 12 years old. He wanted me to have a job that would keep me busy in the summers and allow me to work outdoors with him. We started with just a mowing and landscaping company and, over the years, plants became a passion of mine. As the demand for plants became greater from our landscape company, my cousin and I started growing plants at night to help with that need. The more we grew, the more people wanted to buy the plants we were growing. So, at that point we started selling retail plants on the weekends and it has blown up from there.

What do you love about your job?

I love that I get to work with some amazing people and that I get to do something different every day. No day is the same in this industry and I enjoy that. We have a great team here and watching that culture grow has been a true pleasure.

What keeps you up at night?

There are obviously stressors that come with this job, especially in the world we live in today. However, I have learned that worrying about those things doesn't help and you have to let that go. I try to focus on being a positive light for our team and focus on the good things each day.



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

That's a tough one. I have only been in this industry my entire career. I can't think of anything I would rather be doing. I love it!

What's something that few people know about you?

In my "free time" I competitively grow giant pumpkins. I grew a 2,061-pound pumpkin last year.

Favorite plant to grow? Why?

I have so many favorites, but if I had to choose just one, I would say my monstera 'Albo' and other sport forms of monstera. I have a grow tent at my house that I grow out many of our rare indoor plants in and I really enjoy taking a break and working with those plants. 🌿