

Virtual Hortlandia 2020

Gossler Farms Nursery

<http://www.gosslerfarms.com>

This week Joanne Fuller talked with Roger Gossler at Gossler Farms Nursery and edited the conversation for this article.

Roger, you have grown so many great plants in your life, what are your favorites that we might not know about?

I love lady slipper orchids. They are so expensive. I allow myself to buy one a year. One of the best is *Cypripedium japonicum*. It has those glorious pleated leaves, and the pouched flowers are a soft pink to white. They are supposed to be fussy but for me they move themselves around the garden to where they want to grow. They have moved into the gravel path, and now my clump must have 25 flowers on it. I also like the European Meadow Orchid --*Dactylorhiza*. They were slow to bloom for us, and they move around as well, but they have such a range of leaf color from spotted to all green to chocolate and the flowers from pink to deeper purple pink.

What about trees and shrubs that you sell in the Nursery?

I love *Cercidiphyllum magnificum*. It looks good every day of the year with its heavy trunk and fine twiggy branches. All year long it has those heart shaped leaves, and then in the fall they turn butter-yellow with pink highlights.

We grow and sell a huge selection of magnolias. Right now, one of my favorites is *Magnolia* 'Felix Jury' a hybrid from New Zealand. I first saw it in Ray Schreiner's garden, and there is a great one at Sebright. It blooms young with intense pink blooms that are 10" across with tons of thick petals in each bloom.

Of course, *Corylopsis pauciflora*-- one of the best shrubs for deciduous shade. It has masses of butter-yellow flowers early in the year, then it leafs out with fresh green leaves edged in burgundy, finally getting yellow fall color. We have had one for close to 50 years. You can prune it hard and it regenerates amazingly. And *Hamamelis* 'Jelena' which is the best of the witch hazels. Again, early flowers of rusty colors and then great fall color.

For summer flowering shrubs, I like viburnums. I like *Viburnum* 'Pink Sensation' and *V.* 'Pink Beauty'. We got our original cuttings of 'Pink Sensation' from Connie Hansen in Lincoln City. It has lovely pink flowers with deep purple new foliage. *V.* 'Pink Beauty' is a double file viburnum with pink flowers followed by red fruits.

How did Gossler Farms Nursery get started?

You know, I grew up in the business. My grandparents' property is just a mile away from our property. My dad started the nursery. He started with magnolias, and his first magnolia is still growing in the yard-- it's eighty years old. He collected magnolias through the 50's and 60's. He

would sell five or ten of something to buy one for himself. By the 1960's, we were selling magnolias, stewartias and azaleas. In 1968, he put out the first catalogue-- it was one side of one page. We also had the farm growing sweet corn and spearmint. By 1986, my Mom and I were running the nursery full time, and in 1994, we were joined by my brother Eric and my sister-in-law. We still have farmland and recently planted twenty-five acres of filberts.

Gossler Farms has been connected with so many great gardens and gardeners in the Northwest. Can you tell me about the connection with Mrs. Jane Platt?

In the Spring of 1968, my Dad and I delivered plants to Mrs. Platt's garden, and we saw a garden like we had never seen before. Jane Platt was incredibly knowledgeable about plants. Of course, she had grown up in the wonderful gardens around Elk Rock, and she had the artistic training to put things together in such an unusual way. She grew so many special plants on that property that are still there today. We sold her plants and also took cuttings from her garden. In the early 1980's, we cultivated a Magnolia stellata from her garden that has good vigor and large double pink scented flowers. We asked Mrs. Platt what she wanted us to name it, and even though she never agreed, we named it M. stellata 'Jane Platt'. She was pleased, and we were thrilled that it won first an Award of Merit then an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Few plants receive those honors. I was a high schooler, and then college student, in those years, and I learned so much from her.

What's looking good in the garden and nursery right now?

The garden is constantly changing, and each year, we try new things including planting about 150 new plants. Yet, some of the trees and shrubs have been here since the 50's. There are few places where people can see plants that are seventy years old. In addition to the mix of trees, shrubs and perennials in the garden, we have about forty to fifty different agaves, plus a collection of dwarf conifers and Japanese maples in clay pots. One of our most unusual trees blooming right now is the Embothrium coccineum -- the Chilean Fire Tree. Outside of the forests of Chile, it only grows west of the Cascades from San Francisco to Vancouver. It has flaming red/orange tubular flowers that look unreal.

How do people shop for Gossler Farms plants right now?

Right now, the plant lust is incredible! Our mail order volume is way up.

We always do mail order. We have updated the catalogue on the website at www.gosslerfarms.com We are open Wednesday - Saturday 9 am - 5pm. It never hurts to call ahead to make sure we are around. We are being very cautious. We are cleaning all the carts and having people read their credit card numbers to us for payment. There is plenty of room in the garden and nursery for people to safely wander around. And there is a lot to see.