

Virtual Hortlandia 2020

## **Joy Creek Nursery**

[www.joycreek.com](http://www.joycreek.com)

This week Joanne Fuller talked with Maurice Horn at Joy Creek Nursery and edited the conversation for this article.

### ***Maurice, What are some of your favorite plants?***

Really, it's hard to find a plant I don't like. I love so many plants that I actually think less about the plant and more about the situation where the plant will live then choose the best for those conditions. That makes the right plant my favorite for that day.

Of course, everyone probably knows that I love clematis, particularly viorna species and hybrids. Many clematis I love in part because I know the people who found or bred them, or I've seen them growing in the wild. It creates a lasting connection to the plants.

Penstemon are a particular favorite. Given enough sun they are healthy, tough plants that come in so many colors and bloom for such a long time. At Joy Creek, we created the 'Kissed Series' breeding for flowers with a pure white center and saturated color surrounding the white. Those plants glow.

Woodland Hydrangeas have become a passion for me. The serrata forms and their crosses can grow in a far amount of shade and bring lovely colors to shady spaces. Plants like- Hydrangea serrata 'Little Geisha', Hydrangea serrata, 'Miranda' and Hydrangea serrata 'Diadem'. We created Hydrangea 'Eve' which is a cross between macrophylla and serrata. It takes a while for 'Eve' to fully develop. But a developed plant has unusually lovely foliage with fully double pink and blue lace cap flowers and rose-colored stems. With a little sun, the plant develops excellent fall color.

### ***How did Joy Creek get started?***

Mike Smith and I founded Joy Creek in 1992. We had been friends for a long time. Mike got the chance to retire early from the corporate world and he bought the property. We talked about creating an herb garden to sell to the restaurant trade. We never thought we would get into retail or landscaping. Through the years I worked part time jobs, we built the business, realized we were never going to make much money but we got to do something we love. Many wonderful people helped us along the way- employees, good customers, designers and plant societies. Now we do the full range of retail, shipping, design, and maintenance.

### ***Can customers visit your nursery right now and what is that like?***

We are so happy people are visiting us right now and our customers seem to be happy too--feeling comfortable and safe. The gardens and nursery beds are so large people can come out and be outside safely. Visitors all have their masks and they wear them if they feel it's needed. We are getting lots of visitors but it never feels too crowded.

We have made a few changes. We had to close our customer restroom. We just felt we couldn't let people use it and keep it safe for all customers. And we are only taking credit cards for payment. Customers read their credit card numbers to staff at a safe distance, that way no paper, pens or cards exchange hands. Of course, we are following the Oregon Association of Nursery (OAN) guidelines for safe nursery shopping. I am so thankful that the government and the OAN were able to work together to develop a safe way for nurseries to stay open this spring and for gardeners to get their plants.

### ***What plants look good right now in the nursery?***

Lots of things look good. The clematis is budding out and some are blooming. Customers are buying a lot of old fashioned spring stuff like dianthus and helianthemums which are blooming now and ribes which are just finishing bloom. Also, pulmonaria, primula, tricyrtis and thalictrums. I need to mention roses--we aren't known as a rose nursery but Mike loves them and we carry a selection of good roses for tough conditions.

Gardeners seem to be more interested in foliage and plants with a longer season of bloom, leaf color, good bark etc, than in the past. Maybe while staying at home, people are thinking more about what their garden needs rather than impulse buying a pretty plant.

### ***If customers want to mail order how does that work?***

Mail order is part of our regular business. People can visit [www.joycreek.com](http://www.joycreek.com) and place an order. Right now we also have customers calling or visiting the web site and placing an order for pick-up. We call them when their order is ready and they come pick it up. Often when they arrive they feel safe enough to wander around a bit.