



CURT KIPP

Jim Schmidt started with just a few Japanese maples, but ultimately amassed a collection with more than 350 cultivars.

Renowned Japanese maple grower passes away

Oregon's nursery industry unexpectedly has lost one of its most passionate advocates for the many varieties of *Acer palmatum* and *Acer japonicum*. Jim Schmidt, owner of Don Schmidt Nursery in Boring, Ore., passed away Dec. 30, 2009 following a heart attack.

A memorial service was held Jan. 7, 2010 in Gresham, Ore.

"I think we can replace just about any plant on the market with a Japanese maple," Schmidt told *Digger* magazine in a January 2009 article. "It's low maintenance. You can use the small ones anywhere."

Schmidt amassed such a huge collection of Japanese maples that he stopped counting after he accumulated 350 cultivars. "That's what I really like, to be honest," he said.

People from all over the world toured his nursery and sought his advice on Japanese maples. "I probably have the largest collection in the world," he said.

But he was also known for flowering cherry trees and for introducing the 'Heart Throb' dogwood, which he patented.

Schmidt was a third generation nurseryman, born Jan. 18, 1946 to Donald and Helen (Shearer) Schmidt. His father founded Don Schmidt Nursery in 1939.

Jim graduated from Reynolds High School in Troutdale, Ore., and served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. He served on board

the U.S.S. Ticonderoga, an attack carrier that assisted the U.S.S. Maddox after it reported an attack by North Vietnamese ships, ultimately leading to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which authorized full U.S. involvement in the war.

Jim was honorably discharged in 1966 and attended Portland State University. He married Linda Lou Pyle in 1973. In 1974, he purchased the nursery from his parents. Under his management, Japanese maples became the nursery's calling card.

"I started out with just a few, and then I started collecting them, and then they started collecting me," he said in the *Digger* interview in 2008.

One of his favorite cultivars was a volunteer *Acer japonicum* he found in a neighbor's yard. He tested and introduced it as 'Yama kagi', named after his subdivision, Mountain Shadows.

Don Schmidt Nursery employs dry farming techniques. Trees are field grown with only the natural irrigation that comes from the sky. The nursery sits on 200 acres in the Cascade Mountain foothills near Mt. Hood, and employs approximately 30 workers.

Jim was an active member of OAN and a past president of the Mt. Hood Chapter. He is survived by his wife, Linda, at home; son James Eric Schmidt of Oregon City; daughter Lindsey Jade Schmidt of Portland; sisters Donna Herbel of Portland and Carolyn Meyer of Gresham; and several nieces and nephews. ☺

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Willamette Chapter helps those in need during the holidays

The Willamette Chapter of OAN generously made the holidays brighter for those less fortunate. Chapter Vice President Josh Zielinski of Alpha Nursery presented a \$500 check from the chapter to Marion-Polk Food Share and its vice president, Phil McCorkle.

Additionally, chapter members donated canned food and winter socks at their holiday party on Dec. 4; these were donated to Silverton Area Community Aid.



WILLAMETTE CHAPTER

Phil McCorkle (left) of Marion-Polk Food Share accepts a \$500 check from Willamette Chapter Vice President Josh Zielinski. Chapter members also gave canned food and winter socks.

Nelson Irrigation Co. sprinkler wins new product award

Nelson Irrigation Corporation's R33 Rotator® Sprinkler received the new product award for agriculture at the recent Irrigation Association show in San Antonio, Texas.

According to the company, the R33 saves money and time, outperforming the 3/4-inch brass impact sprinklers it often replaces. It provides longer throw distance, fight the wind and deliver uniform coverage.

While brass sprinklers are prone to damage, clogging and theft, the R33 is easy to clean, easy to repair and costs less. The R33 is suitable for permanent-set, portable-pipe and wheel-line applications for all type of crops, including forage crops, vegetables, grain and pastures, tree/vine, berry and nursery crops.