

Wholesale nursery specializes in cold-hardy plants

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS
For the Capital Press

MERIDIAN, Idaho — Meredith Carnahan and her husband, Doug, started Jayker Wholesale Nursery after they bought property on which the earlier owners had planted 19 acres of conifers.

"We started with the Austrian Pine and Colorado Spruce that were already growing on the place," said sales manager Carla Carter, who has been with the nursery since 1988. "Then the nursery bought 100 more acres in 1989 and added decid-

uous trees and the first container division."

Her husband, Joe, started the container division and runs the growing operation at the tree farm. An additional expansion in 1998 added 110 acres.

"We now grow everything from a one-gallon container to a 25-gallon container tree. We do perennials, exotic grasses, and all the shrubs for landscaping. It's all cold-hardy species; we don't do any plants that aren't hardy enough to survive winter in our mountain climate," Carla Carter said.

The nursery grows many of its trees, shrubs and decorative plants on 240 acres in Middleton, Idaho, and Nyssa, Ore. The nursery doesn't have greenhouse production, but uses its unheated greenhouses to shelter overwintering young trees.

"We also have shelters in summer for plants that need to be in the shade. They normally grow in the shade of other trees," she said. In the nursery they go into a shade house, with black mesh to provide a filtered shade so they don't get too hot.

Customers can look at the trees and plants, or order them online.

"We started as just a wholesale grower, selling to garden centers, large landscaping companies and re-wholesalers," she said. "Then we opened a 20-acre re-wholesale yard in Meridian in 1993 where local garden centers and landscapers purchase material."

Jayker grows plants for businesses that don't have room to grow them.



Courtesy of Jayker Wholesale Nursery

A row of deciduous trees is irrigated at Jayker Wholesale Nursery near Meridian, Idaho. The nursery grows many of its trees, shrubs and decorative plants on 240 acres in Middleton, Idaho, and Nyssa, Ore.

"We don't do retail sales to homeowners; we just sell to the outlets who sell to them," she said. "We ship to garden centers in Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada and Oregon, and occasionally Washington state. Most of our plants can

grow anywhere in the cooler regions of the West," she said.

Shrubs utilized for landscaping include lilacs, snowball bush, spirea, currents, other common shrubs and small trees.

"There are hundreds of these, and we grow the ones that thrive in zones 2, 3 and 4," she said. The USDA plant hardiness zones and sub-zones go from 1 to 13, based on average annual minimum temperatures.

Jayker also grows syringa, Idaho's state flower.

"We don't actually grow the native variety because it

Jayker Wholesale Nursery

Location: Meridian, Idaho
Owners: Doug and Meredith Carnahan

In business: Since 1982

Website: <http://www.jayker.com>

doesn't propagate very well. The most popular one we sell is called Minnesota snowflake. It's essentially the same plant but is just a little hardier. It's tough to get the native ones to grow in a new setting," she explained.

"We sell some flowers but we don't grow annuals like zinnia or marigold," Carter said. "We do all the perennials like lupine, daisies, delphinium, day lilies and lavenders and ornamental landscaping grasses."

Carla enjoys working at the nursery. "I used to work at a garden center here in town, and bought our plants from Jayker. Then I married the container grower."

She and her husband own part of the land at Middleton, where the trees are grown.

"We enjoy working with plants and living in the country where it's quiet and peaceful," she said.

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