

# Nursery does it all, including soccer fields

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS  
For the Capital Press

BOISE — Cloverdale Nursery's original owner, Hans Borbonus, changed the landscape around Boise.

He was born in Germany and worked in the nursery trade there.

"He came to the U.S. in 1958," says Beni Cook, one of the current owners. "When Hans arrived, he did residential landscaping. Back then, everything was very basic; people just put in trees and junipers and nothing fancy."

Borbonus added his artistic flair, with stones and more elaborate landscaping — like he'd been doing in Germany.

"He is 80 years old now but still has an eye for pleasing designs and still keeps in touch with the nursery," Cook says.

When Borbonus started Cloverdale Nursery it was just a small place, headquarters to do landscaping for clients, with bushes to sell. It has grown into one of the largest wholesale and retail nurseries in Idaho.

"Our main emphasis is supplying wholesale customers who have landscaping businesses. We have a 1,000-acre sod farm and sell sod, bulk products, topsoil, bark materials and crushed lava rock for bed coverings," she says.

The garden mix and planting mix are big sellers in the spring, she says. Planting mix consists of compost, peat moss and a time-release fertilizer.

"We educate people about adding something to soil so it doesn't compact around the roots, creating a better environment for plants to grow in," she says.

"We used to do landscape construction but our main emphasis now is landscape supplies, whatever a landscaper would need," she says.

The nursery has a wide variety of trees and shrubs that are winter-hardy.



Courtesy of Cloverdale Nursery

When Cloverdale Nursery started near Boise it was just a small place with a landscaping business. It has grown into one of the largest wholesale and retail nurseries in Idaho.

## Cloverdale Nursery

**Location:** Boise

**In business:** Since 1964

**Website:** [www.cloverdale-nursery.com](http://www.cloverdale-nursery.com)

"We have such a variable climate here; 9 out of 10 people can grow less hardy varieties, but last winter reminded everyone what you can and can't grow easily in this region," she says. "We have a knowledgeable and helpful staff and carry a large amount of a variety of plants so people have a big supply to pick from."

The trees and shrubs are grown on the sod farm south of Boise, near Kuna.

"It's a big market, however and we do ship in some of the plants we sell. Many trees and shrubs grow faster in Oregon, where there is more rainfall," says Cook.

Some plants are grown in 1- to 15-gallon containers.

"Trees are usually balled and burlapped, up to 3-inch caliper trees," she says.

A one-inch caliper tree would be about 8 feet tall while

a 3-inch caliper tree might be 14 to 18 feet tall, depending on the type.

"We carry the whole scope of what people need for landscaping," she says.

During the busy times of the year, Cloverdale Nursery employs up to 75 people at the nursery and turf farm.

A special project Cloverdale has been working on is a soccer field on top of the Boise State University stadium's artificial turf football field.

"We are doing the sod for the Basque soccer game here this summer. A professional team from Spain will play a professional team from Mexico. The sod has been growing for over a year. For a soccer field they want a very tight, short grass so it's very smooth," Cook says.

"The sod will be harvested a week before the event and moved to the site — to cover the blue turf at Boise State. They will put down plastic and put the sod on top of that, and keep it watered and mowed until the game. It has 3 inches of dirt attached to it, so it can't move around. After the game is over, they will roll it back up and take it out," she says.



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