



Janae Sargent/Capital Press

Anthony Kinen, owner of Kinen's Big & Phat Special Plants, stands by his favorite tree on his nursery, the monkey puzzle tree.

# Bigger is better at this nursery

By **JANAE SARGENT**  
Capital Press

Anthony Kinen grows the same plants as a lot of other nurseries, he just does it bigger.

"We grow the weird stuff bigger than anyone else," said

Kinen, owner and manager of Kinen's Big & Phat Special Plants, near Gresham, Ore.

Kinen's nursery specializes in growing large specimen-style trees. The idea came from his father, Norbert, when he started the nursery in 1998.

"He wanted to grow the

trees larger so people didn't have a delayed gratification when they bought them," Anthony Kinen said.

He now grows more than 450 specimens of trees at the 16-acre nursery. Rather than growing large quantities of plants, Kinen said he grows only one or two samples of each type to sell to specialty garden centers, wholesalers and landscape architects.

"We're pursuing a different look, something that's weird that people haven't seen before," Kinen said.

Kinen relies on his relationships with other farms and vendors to decide which new specimens to bring in. He also looks online to find gaps in the market for large specialty plants.

One of his favorite trees is the 10- to 15-foot-tall monkey puzzle trees. They are native to the high mountains of Chile and Argentina. Kinen said a few nurseries in the region

grow monkey puzzle trees but none as large as he does.

He described his start in the nursery business as an accident.

His father died in 2011, the summer after Anthony graduated from Portland State University with a degree in international business.

Kinen said he never planned to take over the nursery but decided he would give it a shot—and really enjoyed it.

Having never before worked with plants, Kinen said it was a big challenge.

Kinen also attributed what he learned and some of his success to neighboring nurseries.

Customers, vendors and neighboring farmers taught him new things as well.

"We can be fierce competitors but at the same time, it's like a family," Kinen said. "I wasn't expecting how willing people would be to share information when I got into the industry."

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