

## People & Places

# Nursery grower ventures into hemp

Barry Cook launches Boring Hemp Co. to test exciting market for new crop

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

Barry Cook doesn't want passersby to get too excited about the new crop he's got growing at his nursery in Boring, Ore.

The distinctive palm-like, serrated leaves that identify the plants as cannabis are bound to attract some unwanted attention, which is why Cook has posted his fields with signs that identify them as industrial hemp, marijuana's non-psychoactive relative.

The signs clarify that hemp contains zero THC, the psychoactive compound, and will produce no mind-altering effects if smoked, so stealing the plants is "not worth the headache."

"If we get robbed, we'll probably only get robbed once," Cook said.

The name of Cook's new venture — Boring Hemp Co. — is a double entendre referring to its physical location and the crop's lack of psychoactive properties.

While the legalization of marijuana in Oregon has spawned a multitude of new businesses seeking to capitalize on the crop, Cook believes hemp also presents big opportunities with fewer risks.

"I don't have the same security concerns as medical and recreational growers have," he said.

For now, the Boring Hemp Co. is focusing on producing hemp seeds, which have been in short supply as the nascent



Photos by Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Barry Cook, left, speaks with his son, Bo, in a field of hemp growing at his nursery in Boring, Ore. Cook, his wife and three sons are growing hemp on fallow land as a way of diversifying the company.

industry finds its legs in the state.

Next year, Cook plans to begin segregating male plants, allowing the females to produce seedless flowers from which one can extract cannabidiol, or CBD, a medicinal compound used to treat pain, seizures and inflammation.

The stems and stalks of the plant will be dried and stored until Oregon's hemp industry becomes more mature, in the hopes that processing facilities will be built to turn these byproducts into textiles, paper, rope, building materials or other goods.

"The plant has multiple income opportunities," said Cook.

At this point, Cook is taking a conservative approach by growing hemp on land that's resting fallow between rotations of nursery stock.

This strategy will allow Boring Hemp Co. to get a

sense of how much money can be earned from the crop and whether it's worth expanding.

"We're not quitting the nursery industry, but here is an annual crop that has a potential upside not only financially but environmentally," he said.

Research has shown that hemp's deep roots are valuable for soil structure and reduce the presence of undesirable nematodes and fungi. They're also used in "phytoremediation" of land by drawing heavy metals from the soil.

Hemp is already grown on a large scale in Canada for oilseed and fiber, but Cook thinks Oregon growers can establish a niche industry on a smaller scale because the plant's flowers are the primary product.

"We're doing it for different reasons," he said.

Boring Hemp Co. is starting as a family affair, with Cook's wife, Lee Ann, and three grown sons, Bo, Sam

and Ty, involved in different aspects of the operation.

Bo is in charge of growing the plants, Sam will be developing a business plan and Ty will work with vendors and customers.

"They all communicate really well with each other," Cook said.

Venturing into hemp isn't the first time Cook has reinvented his agricultural enterprise.

In the early 1980s, upon buying his property, Cook raised raspberries, strawberries and blackberries but eventually grew tired of insufficient labor and weather fluctuations that damaged the crops.

In 1996, he switched to growing various types of ornamental nursery stock while operating a hydro-seeding and erosion control company, Northwest Hydro-Mulchers, that continues to be the family's primary business.



## Western Innovator

### Barry Cook

Occupation: Business owner, nursery producer, hemp grower

Hometown: Boring, Ore.

Age: 58

Education: Attended the University of Montana

Family: Wife, Lee Ann, and three grown sons, Bo, Sam and Ty



The Boring Hemp Co.'s display at the recent Farwest Show in Portland, Ore. Barry Cook, the company's owner, posts such signs at his nursery in Boring, Ore., to discourage theft of the plants.

Now, he's aiming to put his plant knowledge to use while exploring new territory by breeding hemp to maximize CBD while minimizing THC.

"We're hoping we can become more refined and accurate," Cook said.

# Oregon's bounty to be spotlighted at Capitol

By BRENNA WIEGAND  
For the Capital Press

SALEM — If a downtown pumpkin patch doesn't draw a crowd, a 30-foot salmon on the Capitol steps ought to reel people in.

The Oregon Capitol Foundation hosts "Oregon's Bounty: A Celebration of the Harvest" from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 8, at the Capitol in Salem.

The event will raise awareness of agriculture and familiarize the public with the workings of the Capitol.

In the festival's second year, the number of partners has doubled to two dozen agriculture-related businesses, agencies and groups.

All of the partners provide displays and hands-on activities that teach people about raising fruit, vegetables, dairy cows and other livestock and informs about natural resources and educational programs, including FFA.

Among the attractions inside the Capitol and around the Capitol Mall will be baby animals, a free pumpkin patch, antique tractors, live music and dancing, face painting and Claudia the Chinook Salmon.

"We hope to double last year's 600 to 800 visitors,"



Capital Press File

The Oregon State Capitol will be the site of the Oct. 8 Oregon's Bounty Festival, which will feature the state's agriculture.

Stacy Nalley of the Oregon State Capitol said. "We have Claudia the Chinook Salmon from Polk Soil & Water Conservation District. At 25 to 30 feet long and probably 9 feet tall, she should be a real draw to people driving by."

Steve Johnson, Early Day Gas Engine Tractor Association president, is modifying the selection of antique tractors he's bringing this year.

"Last year I had a couple of really unique tractors," Johnson said. "The kids didn't care about that. ... I had a couple little ones there that I didn't care if they climbed on and that's all they wanted to do."

This and other Saturday events, including Cherry Blossom Day in March, seek

to bring the public into the Capitol.

"All of these have come about because of the Capitol History Gateway Project," Nalley said. "When they come through those doors we want them to know that this is the people's building and they are welcome here. During our building tours we try to deliver the message that they're able to participate in everything that happens in the chambers and hearing rooms — and if they're not able to be here it's all streamed on the internet."

In the House, a giant Douglas fir tree is woven into the carpet's design; the Senate carpet incorporates a chinook salmon and wheat.



Brenna Wiegand/For the Capital Press

Dylan Wells of Autumn Harvest in Aurora, Ore., lines up pumpkins for donation to the Oregon's Bounty event Oct. 8 at the Capitol. Kids can take home a free pumpkin while supplies last.

## Oregon's Bounty: A Celebration of the Harvest

Time: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Date: Saturday, Oct. 8

Place: Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, Salem

Parking: Free

Rain or shine.

### Schedule

All day: Booths, activities, tractor display, Claudia the Chinook Salmon display

10 a.m.-1 p.m.: Face painting

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: Roundhouse Band

11-11:30 a.m.: Cherry City Cloggers

1-1:30 p.m.: Independence Wagon Wheelers Square Dancers

11:30 a.m. & 1:30 pm: Capitol building tours

11 a.m., noon & 1 p.m.: Tower tours (weather permitting; 50-guest limit)

More info: www.oregoncapitol.com; Oregon State Capitol Visitor Services Department, 503-986-1388

## Calendar

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To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at www.capitalpress.com and click on "Submit an Event."

### Sunday, Oct. 2

17th Annual Salt Spring Island Apple Festival, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Over 450 varieties of apples are grown. Fulford Hall, Salt Spring Island, B.C., Canada. <http://bit.ly/2d89d1q>

### Tuesday-Saturday Oct. 4-8

World Dairy Expo, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wis. [world-dairyexpo.com](http://world-dairyexpo.com)

### Friday, Oct. 7

Perrydale Corn Feed, 4:30-8 p.m. Perrydale High School, 7445

Perrydale Road, Amity, Ore. The Perrydale FFA corn feed is a fun family community event, a good meal, and a football game. Cost: \$25 for a family, \$12 couple, \$7.50 individual.

### Friday-Sunday Oct. 7-9

Schafer Meadows Fiber Arts Festival, noon-5 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds Rabbit and Poultry Barn, Elma, Wash. The Alpaca Ranchers of the Northwest will take part.

### Monday, Oct. 10

Why Save Farmland Discussion, 6 p.m. Boise State University Jordan Ballroom, 1700

University Drive, Boise. The Treasure Valley Food Coalition is launching this initiative with a series of questions: Why is the time right for preserving farmland in the Treasure Valley? What is the value of farmland preservation in the Treasure Valley (economic, cultural, environmental)? Who is already working on farmland preservation in the TV? How can we work together moving forward? [www.treasurevalleyfoodcoalition.org](http://www.treasurevalleyfoodcoalition.org)

### Tuesday, Oct. 11

Why Save Farmland Discussion, 6 p.m. College of Idaho's Langroise Auditorium, 2112 Cleveland Blvd., Caldwell, Idaho. This is the second forum.

### Saturday-Sunday Oct. 15-16

All About Fruit Show, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Clackamas County Fairplex, Canby, Ore. An opportunity to taste hundreds of pears, apples, kiwis and grapes and order a custom-grafted tree. Speakers will answer questions and an ID Team will identify "mystery" apples. <http://bit.ly/2dq5iN6>

Gorge Fruit and Craft Fair, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Hood River County Fairgrounds, 3020 Wyeast Road, Odell, Ore. [www.hoodriverfair.org](http://www.hoodriverfair.org)

### Wednesday-Saturday Oct. 19-22

2016 National FFA Convention and Expo. Bankers Life Field House

and Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana. [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)

### Friday-Saturday Oct. 21-22

Montana Farmers Union Convention, Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls, Montana. [montana-farmersunion.com](http://montana-farmersunion.com)

### Saturday, Oct. 22

Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom 16th Annual Fall Harvest Dinner and Fundraiser, 5 p.m. CH2M Hill Alumni Center, Oregon State University, 725 SW 26th St., Corvallis. The social hour and silent auction start at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 and the oral auction at 7:45. [oregonaitc.org/](http://oregonaitc.org/)

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EO Media Group  
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper  
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is published weekly by EO Media Group, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem OR 97301.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308-2048.

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Salem, OR 97308-2048

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