



Understanding that
agriculture truly is the
backbone of our region.

**That's
Watrustology**
Wisdom. Vision. Passion. Strength.



At Washington Trust Bank, we have bankers who specialize in agriculture; they take the time to understand the diverse and complex nature of the agricultural industry and work closely with their clients to ensure that their financial needs are met.

Learn more at watrust.com

Washington Trust Bank
Member FDIC



N18-4/104



Desiree Bergstrom/Capital Press

Mike Ridling, left, and his business partner, Scott Anderson, with their dog, Gator. They are the owners and operators of Sevenoaks Native Nursery in Albany, Ore.

Nursery grows 400 varieties of native plants

By **DESIREE BERGSTROM**
The Capital Press

ALBANY, Ore. — For Sevenoaks Native Nursery, sand is a key ingredient for optimum growth in their plants.

Situated just southwest of Albany, Ore., on a narrow country road, Sevenoaks grows 400 varieties of native plants from regions west of the Rocky Mountains using a raised sand bed system.

Mike Ridling and his business partner, Scott Anderson, are the third owners of the nursery, which was started in 1979.

The biggest benefit of the raised sand beds is the fibrous root system that they produce. The roots re-establish better when plants are transplanted, Ridling said. The sand beds also foster a lot of added growth, he said.

Sevenoaks digs all of its seedlings by hand as well, while many other nurseries use a tractor to lift them out

of the ground.

"It's kind of a lot of hands-on stuff," Ridling said. By doing a lot more by hand, there are more people handling the plant and paying attention to its quality, which helps to ensure the plant is retail-ready, Ridling said.

The mentality with native nurseries sometimes is "Oh, it's native, it will be fine," instead of trying to grow the highest-quality nursery stock, he said.

"We wanted to make retail-ready plants and plants that were good for landscapes," he said.

"There is a lot of stuff out there that is not that great and people are like, 'Oh, I'm selling you the roots, it's going to make it, it will be fine,'" Ridling said.

Sevenoaks wanted to go the route of being more of a mainstream nursery that happens to sell native plants, he said.

The nursery grows trees, shrubs, perennials, bulbs and

grasses, using both bare-root and container methods.

Unlike typical nurseries, spring isn't Sevenoaks' busiest time.

"Because we do bare-root, the winter is extremely busy," he said. Summer is also a busy time for the nursery because they ship a lot of plants to the Lake Tahoe area. They go once a year to Tahoe to harvest seed, come back and plant it, then sell the plants back to that area during the summer.

According to Ridling, the area has a short growing season and can only accept plants three months of the year so landscapers ship everything in.

"There might be the same species that grows in Lake Tahoe as here. ... But they are kind of a different subspecies, one can handle water and one can't. That is why it is kind of important for them to get the right genetics on their plants," Ridling said.