

# Farmer advocates passion and curiosity

By **JULIA HOLLISTER**  
For the Capital Press

Grant Brians, an organic farmer in San Benito County, Calif., started his agricultural career at an astonishingly early age.

"I started raising vegetables in the backyard in Los Angeles when I was 4 years old," he said. "I had a market-size garden by the time I was 11, thanks to a neighbor who wanted their lot to grow plants. When I was 14, I got a seed production contract, bought my first tractor and irrigation pipe and embarked on commercial agriculture."

He also worked for a grower who placed the young Brians with his Hispanic employees moving irrigation pipe and doing other tasks, thus allowing him to gain experience, some money and practice his Spanish language skills.

"I farm here in Hollister on six properties — about 280 acres," he said.

He raises a wide variety of crops.

"I tallied over 200 varieties when I looked at the last total," he said.

Heirloom Organic Gardens grows well over a dozen kinds of radishes alone,



CUESA

**Grant Brians farms over 200 varieties in Hollister, Calif. His organic crops run the gamut from Polish golden radishes and baby leaf greens to wasabi.**

ranging from Brians' own bred variety of Purple Dainkon to Polish Golden Radishes to Long Black Spanish Radishes.

The farm grows wasabi and many other mustards primarily as baby leaf greens and stinging nettles as a culinary and herbal green.

Unsurprisingly, the difficult crops vary season to season and year to year. Many of the wild crops (some describe them as weeds) are interestingly challenging to manage, he said.

Pests are always a problem and the ones that are most problematic vary by crop,



**Branson TRACTORS**

SERIES	
3120R	3520R
3510H	4020R
4525R	4720H
6640	8050

24 - 80 hp., 4WD,  
Compact Synchro Shuttle; Hydro 24, 28, 35, 47hp

**Branson Model 4520**

**THE TRACTOR STORE**

**(541) 342-5464** 5450 W. 11<sup>th</sup>, Eugene, OR

location and year, he said.

(Fun fact: The oldest cultivated variety Heirloom Organic Gardens grows is the Golden Custard, a yellow scallop squash that dates back to the Middle Ages.)

Brians sells his crops to various markets, from farmers' markets to CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and delivery services, directly to restaurants and small markets, restaurant distributors and a brokerage.

Brians is passionate about food and farming and would advise anyone to go into it as a career.

"Despite the incredible challenges of farm-

ing, I would encourage anyone who finds their passion in farming to take whatever steps needed to proceed in the business," he said.

"My strongest advice is to find what it is that makes you passionate and find a way to make those items your business," he said. "This could be goats, lettuce, wine, mushrooms, animal feed or any number of other items. Be curious, seek out knowledge and experience and find ways to enjoy life other than pre-packaged entertainment."

His advice goes beyond farming.

"Talking to older people,

young people, reading, working and doing are all important parts of making your way in life and especially in farming. Life is hard, so be prepared, have faith, don't be afraid of mistakes, but correct them as fast as possible and forge forward with compassion," he said. "I know that as I have found and kept alive many vegetable varieties by producing their seed, that it is rewarding psychologically and also genetically. There are many crop varieties in grains and trees and fruits that are on the brink of loss, too, maybe a new farmer will take on their preservation and resurrection."

## 2018 TRX250TM RECON

- BIG RACKS • 5-SPD MANUAL SHIFT
- ELECTRIC START • 12 MONTH WARRANTY

**SALE PRICE \$3,699**

MSRP \$4,099



STK #02713

**TAYLOR honda sports**

Serving Farms & Ranches for 55 Years - 1964-2019

**YOUR AUTHORIZED FULL SERVICE DEALER**

- TONS OF ACCESSORIES • EASY FINANCING
- FULL SERVICE DEALERSHIP • COMPLETE LINE OF HONDA ATVS

2140 N. Pacific Hwy. 99E • Woodburn, OR • Open 8-6 Tues-Sat.  
**(503) 981-1813 • 800-981-1813 • www.taylormotorcycles.com**

honda.com UTILITY ATVS ARE RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR RIDERS 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER. ATVS CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO OPERATE. FOR YOUR SAFETY, BE RESPONSIBLE. READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL. ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET, EYE PROTECTION AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING. BE CAREFUL ON DIFFICULT TERRAIN. ALL ATV RIDERS SHOULD TAKE A TRAINING COURSE (FREE FOR NEW BUYERS. ASK YOUR DEALER OR CALL ASI AT 800-887-2887). NEVER RIDE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, ON PAVED SURFACES, ON PUBLIC ROADS, WITH PASSENGERS, OR AT EXCESSIVE SPEEDS. NO STUNT RIDING. RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT WHEN RIDING. TRX® is a registered trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (12/17) \*Neither MSRP nor Price includes \$400 in destination charges. Visit powersports.honda.com to view applicable destination charge amount. S19-4/106

## WATER MASTER SERIES AND EVERGREEN



### SUPERIOR SERVICE & DESIGN

- All your needs for irrigation parts service
- We build custom equipment for your special needs.
- Hose replacements & fusion repairs
- Transport Tanks • Rental Returns & Used Equipment
- **US FARM SYSTEMS** Dairy Waste Equipment

### Truck Equipment

**VALLEY WORKMAN**



- Full Service • Alterations • Dump bodies
- Hoists • Farmbeds • Flatbeds

**VALLEY FAB**  
CORP

10910 Portland Rd. NE • Brooks, OR  
Call: 503-792-3739 • Fax: 503-792-3738

S19-4/106

## OTECO WHEEL TRACK FILLERS

- Fills ruts properly and with the correct material.
- Completely fills ruts with one pass.
- 10 cubic yard (28,000 lbs.) total capacity.
- One-man operation.
- Off-season uses include filling ruts in roads and transporting grain.

**THE ONLY SOLUTION**  
*All else is just another problem.*

**(307) 331-0734 • (307) 322-9415**  
**www.otecomfg.com**

S19-3/103