

People & Places

This nursery offers more than plants

By DIANNA TROYER
For the Capital Press

Along with growing hanging baskets and carrying unusual plants, Nature Nursery and Market in Burley, Idaho, cultivates entertaining community events year-round to thank customers for their support.

Opened in 2016, the six-acre nursery in southeastern Idaho opened to provide hard-to-find plants including a variety of succulents, plants for backyard water features and koi ponds, and banana trees.

The nursery is part of the Gibby Group, a privately owned agribusiness based in Burley.

While managing Gibby Group's landscaping division, Andrew Gibby, 28, brainstormed about establishing a retail nursery with a few distinctive twists at 120 East Highway 81.

"I like challenges and opportunities and seeing how plants can make people happy and transform indoor and outdoor living spaces," Gibby said. "We offer classes, home décor, bulk vegetable seeds and fountains, and organize a fall market and free holiday events."

His sisters sell a popular Italian ice and ice cream custard adjacent to the greenhouses near shaded picnic tables.

Gibby and co-manager Terina Davis supervise six full-time and four seasonal employees.

Throughout summer,



Doug Abenroth buys bulk vegetable seeds from Brandi Wilcox and Dawnette Hutchison at Nature Nursery and Market in southeastern Idaho.



Andrew Gibby

customers come for the wide variety of hydrangea and hibiscus colors, Japanese

maple trees, fairy garden materials, and roses trained to grow like a tree.

"We have a lot of clients who bring in their own pots and ask us to plant them," said Dawnette Hutchison, coordinator of the customized potting program. "We'll pick the most suitable plants based on whether they'll be in shade or sun and what colors of flowers clients want. Some people just tell us, 'Surprise me.'"

Doug Abenroth of Burley says the wide plant selection and customer service keep him coming back, especially at holidays.

"Our kids love Crepes with the Clauses at Christmas," he said of the annual event with Santa and his wife and warm fresh crepes. "We come for their Easter egg hunts, too."

The popular September event is the Purple Shovel Market, a market day with vendors that is a tribute to Gibby's grandmother.

"Her family members were always borrowing her shovel and not returning it, so she finally painted the handle purple to remind them to bring it back," Gibby said.

Another popular autumn event is Lunch with the Witches at Halloween.



Western Innovator

ANDREW GIBBY

Age: 28

Duties: Manages landscape division and Nature's Nursery and Market for the Gibby Group, a privately owned agribusiness in Burley, Idaho.

Family: Wife and son.

Education: Bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University-Idaho in business management with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, online marketing and innovative thinking.

Hobbies: Spending time with family, singing, being involved in the local community theater, videography, triathlons, and weight training.

"We all dress up and have cauldrons and treats for the kids," Hutchison said.

Classes are offered, too, about herbs, cooking, and making wreaths.

"We're happy to offer classes for whatever interests people have," she said. "If people want other classes, they should let us know."

Virgil Lewis Choate, FFA teacher, banker and ag advocate, dies at 84

Virgil Lewis Choate, a long-time FFA teacher, banker and agriculture advocate in The Dalles, Ore., passed away peacefully at home on Aug. 14, 2019, after a short illness. He was 84.

He was born March 5, 1935, in La Grande, Ore., to Virgil Albert Choate and Louise Wetzel Choate.

He graduated from La Grande High School in 1953 and from Oregon State College in 1958 with a degree in agricultural education. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

In college he joined the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, which shaped his life in many ways throughout the years. It was at the fraternity that he developed life-long special friendships. After a short time on active duty in the Army, Virg came to The Dalles to teach vocational agriculture and serve as the FFA (Future Farmers of America) chapter advisor.

It was there he met his future bride, a fellow



Virgil Lewis Choate

teacher, Carolyn. During the time he was teaching, one of his students was elected state president of the Oregon FFA Association and The Dalles was selected to host the state FFA convention. Several of his students/FFA members achieved the State Farmer Degree, the highest degree awarded to only a small number of members in the state. One student and FFA member received the highest honor at the national level.

Virg was also the first Vo-Ag instructor in Oregon to allow girls in his classes before they were allowed to be members of the FFA. He so loved teaching and cherished his relationship with each student. He was so dedicated to his students that he neglected to keep up with the U.S. Army correspondence classes and thus became the oldest 2nd Lieu-

tenant in the Army.

Virg remained involved with high school activities by running the down marker at TDHS Friday Night Lights home football games for nearly 40 years.

In 1966, Virg began a 30-year career with U.S. Bank as an agricultural representative. He so loved working with the agricultural community and helping them with their needs.

In 1995, Virg began working part-time for Columbia River Bank and then Columbia Bank until the age of 84. He cherished the relationships built with bank customers and his many co-workers over the years.

Virg was the last living officer of the original officers of the Ft. Dalles Days Rodeo. He was a long-time treasurer of the Wasco County Livestock Association. He was active for many years in the wheat industry and served for several years as the general manager of the Oregon Wheat Growers League Junior Livestock Show. He

was also active for years at the Wasco County Fair.

He was a member of The Dalles Lions Club and Elks Club for over 50 years. He was selected as the grand marshal for the Wasco County Fair (1993), as well as the grand marshal for the Fort Dalles Days Rodeo (2008) and The Dalles Cherry Festival (2019).

Virg received a Diamond Pioneer Award from the Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences in 2010 for his work in the banking sector and his service to many agriculture-related organizations and events.

He was proud of his community and surrounding areas and loved promoting and touring interested people around and educating them on the area.

The best description of Virg is that he was, and enjoyed being, a people person. He never knew a stranger. Virg always cared for others and helping whenever he could. He had a long and eventful life.

Virg is survived by Carolyn, his wife of 55 years; his daughters Cathy (Perry) England of Bellevue, Wash., and Judy (Tyler) Kendall of Oregon City; grandchildren Austin Kendall, Zachary England and Sophie England; step-grandchildren Adam Kendall and Alyson Kendall Anderson; five special cousins Brent Lewis and Mike Babic of LaGrande, Susan Lewis Kubler of Portland, and Wells Matthews and Bob Turner of Beaverton; and several nieces and nephews. He recently lost his sister, Nancy Christensen.

A celebration of Virg's Life will be held on Sunday, Sept. 8, at 1 p.m. at The Dalles Civic Auditorium, 323 E. Fourth St., The Dalles, Ore.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to these organizations dear to Virg's heart: The Dalles Community Flag Program with checks made payable to Boy Scout Troop 398, P.O. Box 1610, The Dalles, OR 97058; Providence Hospice of the Gorge; or the Celilo Cancer Center.

CALENDAR

6-7:30 p.m. Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, 569 Hanley Road, Central Point, Ore. In this class, we will discuss the benefits of using fall-planted cover crops, learn about the species and mixtures well suited to southern Oregon, and detail the process of growing and managing cover crops for multiple benefits to your farm. \$10 per person <http://bit.ly/JacksonExtAgriculture>

THURSDAY, SEPT. 26
Oregon Aglink Open House: 9 a.m.-noon. Oregon Aglink's new office, 2195 Hyacinth St. NE, No. 105, Salem, Ore. Join the staff and members of Oregon Aglink at the organization's new Salem office. Pastries and coffee provided. <http://www.aglink.org>

SATURDAY, SEPT. 28
Sauvie Island Jubilee: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Howell Territorial Park, 13901 NW Howell Park Road, Portland, Ore. The event is free and open to all. Celebrate Sauvie Island history and culture, and the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District's 75th anniversary. It will be a fun-filled day of activities for all ages. <https://www.sauvieislandjubilee.org/main>

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 9, 16, 23
Exploring the Small Farm Dream for Veterans: 1-3:30 p.m., Benton County Extension, Sunset Meeting Room, 4077 SW Research Way, Corvallis, Ore. A 3-part work-

shop series offered to veterans free of cost. Sponsored by Benton County Veteran Affairs. <https://tinyurl.com/yy2fnnyo>

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY OCT. 30-NOV. 2

92nd National FFA Convention and Expo: Indiana Convention Center, 100 S Capitol Ave., Indianapolis, Indiana. This is the organization's annual gathering. <https://convention.ffa.org/>

SATURDAY-TUESDAY NOV. 2-4
2019 Angus Convention: Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 4590 S. Virginia St., Reno, Nev. From outstanding educational seminars to nationally known entertainment, the 2019 Angus Convention in Reno, Nev., is an event you won't want to miss. <http://www.angusconvention.com/>

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY NOV. 6-10

American Agri-Women Convention: Embassy Suites by Hilton, 9000 SW Washington Square Road, Tigard, Ore. Hosted by the Oregon Women for Agriculture, the American Agri-Women Convention will bring members from around the nation. <https://owaonline.org/2019-aaw-convention/>

TUESDAY-THURSDAY NOV. 12-14
Willamette Valley Ag Expo: 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Wednesday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Thursday. Linn County Fair and Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Rd. E, Albany, Ore. The expo is over 250,000 sq. ft. of exhibitors, equipment, seminars, classes, food and fun. Attendees will have the opportunity to work with exhibitors and vendors directly. In addition to the exhibitors and classes, attendees can enjoy other attractions such as "Dine Around Oregon," an antique farm equipment display and an educational area from Oregon Women for Agriculture. <http://wvaexpo.com/>

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY NOV. 13-16

Tri-State Grain Growers Convention: Davenport Grand Hotel, 333 W Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. This is the annual convention of grain farmers in Washington, Oregon and Idaho and features a full slate of presentations and breakout sessions. Sponsored by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and the Oregon Wheat Growers League. Early bird registration ends Oct. 18. <http://www.wawg.org/convention>

FRIDAY, NOV. 22
Denim and Diamonds Awards Dinner and Auction: 5 p.m. Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St. SE, Salem, Ore. This is Oregon Aglink's annual awards dinner and fundraising auction to support the organization's activities, including Adopt a Farmer, roadside crop signs and a multimedia campaign promoting Oregon agriculture. <http://www.aglink.org>

THROUGH SEPT. 2

Oregon State Fair: Oregon State Fair & Exposition Center, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, Ore. Oregon's annual 11-day-long celebration features 4-H, FFA, livestock, horses, concerts and many other activities. <https://oregon-statefair.org/>

AUG. 30-SEPT. 7

Eastern Idaho State Fair: Eastern Idaho State Fairgrounds, 97 Park St., Blackfoot, Idaho. Eastern Idaho celebrates country living each year at the fair. <https://funatthefair.com>

AUG. 30-SEPT. 22

Washington State Fair: Washington State Fairgrounds, 110 9th Ave. SW, Puyallup, Wash. Washington's statewide celebration opens at 9:30 a.m. on weekends and 10:30 a.m. on weekdays. It will be closed Sept. 3-4, 10 and 17. www.thefair.com

SATURDAY, AUG. 31

Oregon Pork Producers Breeding Stock Sale: 6 p.m. Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, Ore. Most breeding stock shown will be available in sale. Top 25 prospect pigs will sell. <http://www.facebook.com/OregonPork>

SUNDAY, SEPT. 1

Oregon Bunny Palooza 2019: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Oaks Park Dance Pavilion, 7805 Southeast Oaks Park Way, Portland. The Oregon Bunny Palooza by Rabbit Advocates, is a festival celebrating domestic pet rabbits and the people who love them. Karen Wilson, [Karen.Wilson@rabbitadvocates.org](http://www.rabbitadvocates.org)

<https://oregonbunnypalooza.org/>
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4

WSU Extension Forest Health Seminar: 6-8 p.m. Mason County Auditorium, 2621 Johns Prairie Road, Shelton, Wash. Forest health is a complex concept and tree death is a natural part of it, which can make it difficult to know when a dead or dying tree is truly a bad thing. This seminar will help you understand when to be concerned, what to look for, and what you may be able to do about it on your own property. Please register ahead of time by sending an email to patrick.shults@wsu.edu or calling 360-740-1213 with the total number of people in your party. <http://forestry.wsu.edu/sw/events/forhealth/>

FRIDAY, SEPT. 6
Pomology & Viticulture Fruit Field Day: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., University of Idaho Parma Research and Extension Center, 29603 U of I Lane, Parma, Idaho. In addition to grapes, peaches and apples, the field day will feature almonds, walnuts, cherries, nectarines, quince, Asian pears and other fruits. Maurine Baucom, maurineb@uidaho.edu, 208-791-6228

SEPT. 6-15
Spokane County Interstate Fair: Spokane County Fair & Expo Center, 404 N. Havana St., Spokane, Wash. Spokane County, Wash., invites people from around the region to celebrate. <https://www.spokaneconomy.org/1077/General-Information>

MONDAY, SEPT. 23
Fall Cover Crop Workshop:



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CORRECTION

Natural Milk Dairy in
Snohomish County, Wash.,
is a partner in a project to
treat manure. The name of
the dairy was incorrect in
a page 1 story Aug. 23 on
manure-treatment projects
funded by grants from the
Washington State Conserva-
tion Commission.
The Capital Press regrets
the error.