

**PMC Update**  
**January 28, 2021**

**Five things that you should know about the PMC for January 28, 2021:**

- **COVID-19 Update** – All COVID protocols continue. They have become an important part of the routine around here. Everyone remains healthy due in part to everyone’s vigilance at work and home. There is one person on the crew who is currently under quarantine due to a family member that tested positive. Skagit County reported 24 new cases yesterday which is an average daily number these days. Hopefully that average starts going down soon, but who knows. Some are receiving the vaccine but probably not enough to effect county-wide statistics or our bubble here. Until that day comes, we will remain vigilant.
- **Sales** – There is not a sales report to review but the most recent ones indicate that sales are slightly off from last year but ahead of 2019. The PMC has sold almost 1.3 million plants so far with several new orders coming in every day. 1,036,000 have been harvested and 349,000 plants have been shipped so far. It is impossible to predict where sales will be at the end of the season but it should turn out to be a good year. Perhaps not a record setting year, but a very respectable year given the realities of operating during a pandemic.
- **Harvest** – Today is the 40<sup>th</sup> day of harvest with another 30 to 40 days left, so about halfway through. Everything is going as well as can be expected. There has not been any time lost due to frozen ground or excess rain. No equipment breakdowns or labor shortages yet. It seems that there is a steady rhythm. The crew starts at 7:00. The packing shed crew picks up where they left off the previous day and the outside crew typically work processing live stakes until it is light enough to safely go out and lift plants. During the day field totes come in from the field and the packing shed crew works through them one at a time. Over 1 million plants have been processed so far which is awesome considering the challenges faced. No telling what awaits over the next 6 weeks but whatever they are, they will not deter us from the goal of watching the last plant run down the line for the year.
- **Shipping** – Operating a modest sized bare root seedling nursery is complicated with innumerable steps involved in growing a crop, bringing it in, and getting it to market. If



one needed to pick out the one step that brings the most sleepless nights it would have to be shipping. Whether the order is large enough to warrant a semi-truck for shipping or 1 box going out with UPS, it requires us to go into the , find the right plant, often opening bags to get the quantity requested, repackaging them and preparing them for pickup or shipping. There are a total of 493 potentially different inventory items in the cooler which means



that just finding the right stock can take time. The PMC is fortunate to have Jon Hagen come back for his 4<sup>th</sup> season doing this and he has got it down as well as anyone ever has. Assistant Manager John Knox provides support as well (see photo). Still, it can take a lot of time and effort to put together these orders which numbered 529 last year. Getting everything out the door can be compared to draining a swimming pool with an eye dropper. Most of this occurs behind the scenes but the customer could be affected by the lead time needed to get their order in the que and processed. We request that customers let us know 2 weeks before they need the plants. That does not always happen but we do our best to get everyone their plants when they need them.

- **Life Goes On** – It could be argued that this update has focused on the difficulties and challenges of operating a bare root seedling nursery which is not the intent. Things happen every day that make coming to work something to look forward to. That includes working with those who are involved in conservation plantings. There are clients who come here for the first time to ones that have been coming back for years and years. One thing that most have



in common is a very real interest in the flora around us and doing what they can to perpetuate it. It is rewarding to share their experiences and enthusiasm. This is the only time of year that we get to see and catch up with many of them. They are the ones finding suitable forever homes for PMC plants and helping restore parts of our beautiful world around us. Thanks to all who make our work here worthwhile.

I hope this helps. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks. Jim