



25TH ANNIVERSARY

# More Perennial Personalities

We wrap up our mini “Who’s who” in the perennials industry as part of our 25th anniversary celebration.

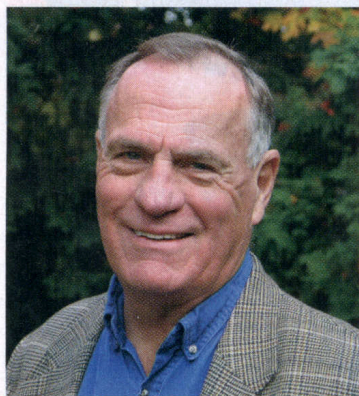
by **DELILAH ONOFREY**

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It sure was hard choosing just 25 personalities to represent the eclectic mix of people who are passionate about perennials. We could have easily picked 25 more. Our first dozen last month spanned from daylily hybridizer Dr. Darrel Apps all the way to growers Jim & Jan Gulley, who started their business across the street from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo. Our remaining 13 take us from Pierre Bennerup of Sunny Border Nurseries in Connecticut to Frank Yantorno of Center Greenhouses, also in Colorado. All 25 can be considered perennial industry icons, or in Valleybrook Gardens’ John Schroeder’s case, “rock stars.”

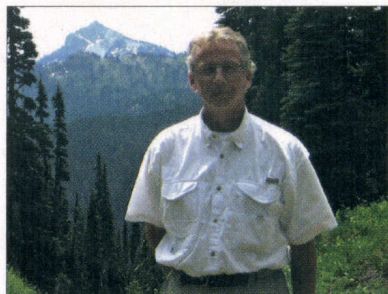
**PIERRE BENNERUP** – For more than 70 years, Sunny Border Nurseries has remained true to its roots in propagating perennials while also branching into tropical temperennials, vines, grasses and herbs.



Bennerup has led the company since 1967 and was one of the founders of the Perennial Plant Association in 1984, serving as the first president-elect. His father, Robert Bennerup, hybridized the world-famous veronica ‘Sunny

Border Blue.’ Located in Kensington, Conn., Sunny Border propagates perennials year round from cuttings, divisions, liners, tissue culture and seed.

**DICK GIGOT** – As director of Northwest Horticulture’s sales and marketing, Dick Gigot has helped lead the company to new heights by responding to grower and marketplace needs.



From sizes and assortments of plugs to how they are shipped, Northwest Horticulture goes the extra mile to make sure customers receive high quality plugs at a competitive price. What’s hot at Northwest Horticulture? Knock Out Roses and sedums for green roofs. The company just added 12 more acres of greenhouse and four new customer service representatives and a customer service manager to support its growth.

**J & LINDA GUY** – This dynamic duo from Carolina Nurseries provide vision and inspiration for the Novalis



consortium of growers. While J is the one who had the idea to put the grower network together to market perennials under the Plants That Work brand to independent garden centers,

Linda searches the globe for distinctive varieties to add to the collections. Carolina Nurseries has also captured a lot of attention at trade shows, by creating retreats with lifestyle setting booths that elevate the value of plants in outdoor living. Once you’re there, you never want to leave.

**HARLAN HAMERNIK** – Hamernik was president and founder of Bluebird Nursery

in Clarkson, Neb., for 48 years before starting a new business called Wild Plums – a wholesale grower of unusual woodies for The Great Plains. Over the years, he has served many national and regional industry organizations as a board member and president. Hamernik has a passion for plant exploration, breeding and selection, searching for improved and/or unique plants for the landscape industry and gardens. His philosophy related to plants is “If they’ll grow in Nebraska, they’ll grow anywhere!”



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**DAN HEIMS** – Known for his outgoing and colorful personality, Heims is president of Terra Nova Nurseries in Canby, Ore., and an active breeder and plant collector. Over the last 13 years, Terra Nova has grown to become a world leader in plant breeding, introducing more than 550 new varieties to the global market. Specialty genuses include heuchera, tiarella, echinacea and coreopsis. More than 30 of Terra Nova's introductions have received national and international awards. Heims himself received the Royal Horticultural Society's Reginald Cory Memorial Cup for advancements in heuchera.



**DALE HENDRICKS & STEVE CASTORANI** – Twenty years ago, Hendricks and Castorani founded North Creek Nurseries, a perennial plug specialist. They grow a large selection of perennials, grasses and ferns with an emphasis on new varieties and Eastern North American native plants. Larger landscape plugs are used in restoration projects by highway departments, municipalities and conservation societies. They also partnered with the National



Wildlife Federation to promote a collection of native plants at retail called American Beauties.

**FRANCES HOPKINS** – The lady who just may have the greatest success story in perennials is Hopkins, owner and CEO of Under A Foot Plant Co. in Oregon and founder of the Stepables brand of creeping perennials. She reinvented a whole new class of plants by promoting their use and the fact that they can be walked on. Fun signage and point-of-purchase materials



engage consumers who look for the foot-shaped tags. The Stepables network of 16 growers supplies more than 3,500 independent garden centers in North America. Lately, Hopkins has been becoming more active online, using technology to engage consumers at [www.stepables.com](http://www.stepables.com).

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