

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Remembering Jim Nau

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Icon. Mentor. Expert. Historian. Friend.

Those are some of the many words that people from around the industry have used to describe Jim Nau, the long-time Trials and New Variety Manager for Ball Horticultural Company, when they heard of his untimely passing on July 20 after an extended illness. Jim was just 65 years old.

Jim earned his spot as an industry icon because of his broad swath of horticulture knowledge garnered through years and years of planning and growing for the Ball Gardens, speaking at innumerable industry events, and traveling to field trials and greenhouses around the world. We here at Ball Publishing know how much of a hort encyclopedia he was—he was the author of many of our books over the years, most notably the *Ball RedBook* and the *Ball Culture Guide*.

So many who met Jim as young hort students or new professionals credit him as being one of their early mentors. His passion and enthusiasm made them love this industry even more and they learned so much, even if you only spent a short amount of time with him.

Jim also had a love of the history of this industry. While attending Iowa State University in the early '80s, he served as historian of the horticulture club. And during his last few years at Ball before he retired in 2019, he was the corporate archivist, helping collect and catalog decades of irreplaceable artwork, catalogs and documents. Without his tireless search for pieces of horticulture memorabilia, we might not have a copy of the original May 1937 issue of *GrowerTalks* today.

For someone who was in charge of such a large, many-acred area at Ball, Jim was quiet, humble and unassuming—even when he was wearing his trademark floppy hat. He never bragged about all of the accolades he accumulated over the years, and always credited his gardens and grounds team for the excellent job they did. This was why people were drawn to him and I hope that he took comfort in his last days knowing how much people loved him and considered him a dear friend. Not many people can say that they touched as many lives or inspired as many people as Jim had.



If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund in Jim's honor, you can donate to:

Nau Horticultural Scholarship
c/o Iowa State University Foundation
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