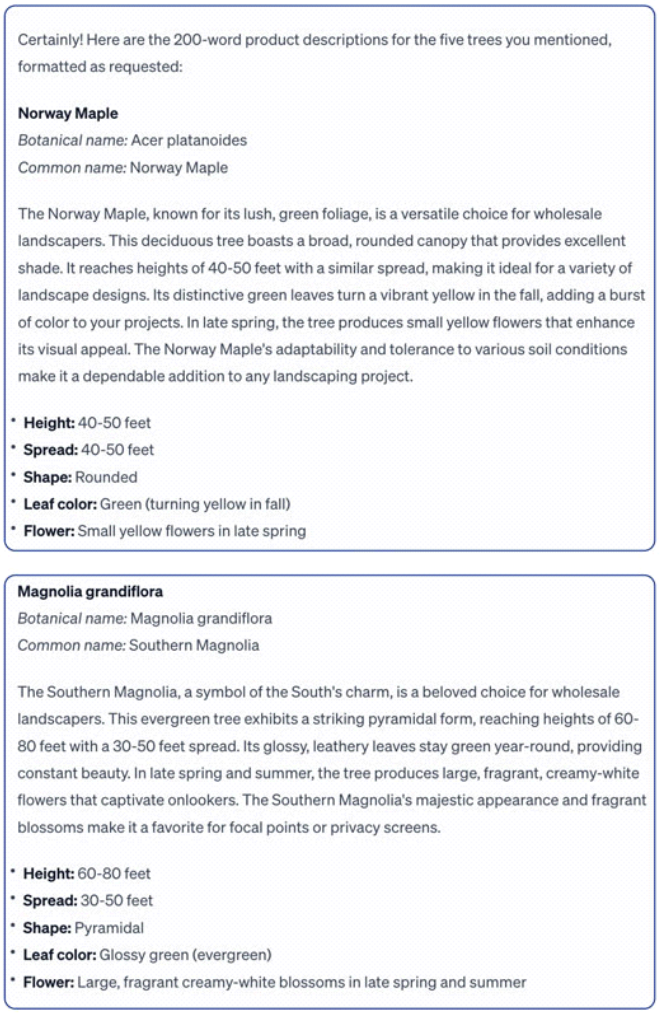
GROWERTALKS

Features

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AI for Growers

Katie Elzer-Peters



Certainly! Here are the 200-word product descriptions for the five trees you mentioned, formatted as requested:

Norway Maple
Botanical name: Acer platanoides
Common name: Norway Maple

The Norway Maple, known for its lush, green foliage, is a versatile choice for wholesale landscapers. This deciduous tree boasts a broad, rounded canopy that provides excellent shade. It reaches heights of 40-50 feet with a similar spread, making it ideal for a variety of landscape designs. Its distinctive green leaves turn a vibrant yellow in the fall, adding a burst of color to your projects. In late spring, the tree produces small yellow flowers that enhance its visual appeal. The Norway Maple's adaptability and tolerance to various soil conditions make it a dependable addition to any landscaping project.

- **Height:** 40-50 feet
- **Spread:** 40-50 feet
- **Shape:** Rounded
- **Leaf color:** Green (turning yellow in fall)
- **Flower:** Small yellow flowers in late spring

Magnolia grandiflora
Botanical name: Magnolia grandiflora
Common name: Southern Magnolia

The Southern Magnolia, a symbol of the South's charm, is a beloved choice for wholesale landscapers. This evergreen tree exhibits a striking pyramidal form, reaching heights of 60-80 feet with a 30-50 feet spread. Its glossy, leathery leaves stay green year-round, providing constant beauty. In late spring and summer, the tree produces large, fragrant, creamy-white flowers that captivate onlookers. The Southern Magnolia's majestic appearance and fragrant blossoms make it a favorite for focal points or privacy screens.

- **Height:** 60-80 feet
- **Spread:** 30-50 feet
- **Shape:** Pyramidal
- **Leaf color:** Glossy green (evergreen)
- **Flower:** Large, fragrant creamy-white blossoms in late spring and summer

Before you start! Get a thorough introduction to AI by reading this one-pager from the Marketing AI Institute. And brush up on AI with Katie's July 2023 article for *Green Profit*.

Tired of hearing about AI? ChatGPT? Well … we're just getting started with it. The good news is that generative AI tools (tools that "make" collateral—code, writing, images, audio) can help you be more efficient with marketing and operations. The key is to use them to augment what you already do or help with tasks that you could do, but haven't gotten around to doing. (Plant descriptions, I'm looking at you.)

Austin Bryant wrote a great column in the August issue of GrowerTalks: "AI in an Emotionally Driven Market." (If you haven't read it, it's a good lead-in and we didn't even plan it that way!) His main point was that AI cannot forecast the very real human element of plant purchasing and the very "out-of-our-control" weather conditions that affect that purchasing. This is entirely true … for now.

It's also true that generative AI tools are, at this point, best pressed into service for help with subjects you're already proficient with. These tools still have a tendency to make things up or "hallucinate," (that's the actual term being used to describe the phenomenon). That's because of the way the models work—by predictive text, not by actual copy/paste functionality. You have to fact check anything generated by the tools, including math.

Pictured: Two of the exact results I got for that prompt from ChatGPT 3.5.

Think of AI tools right now as a highly functional intern. AI is an ideal helper, but not a replacement for human professionals with years of experience.

One thing Austin said, “I guarantee that one day AI will be an amazing resource for growers and sales personnel to confer with. It’ll be another tool we’ll become way too reliant on like a cell phone,” is true. Here’s how to get started now with the available tools to recapture some time—without leaving anyone behind.

Start with ChatGPT

You’ve read the two recommended articles, yes? OK, you’re ready to get started! If you don’t already have one, register for a free ChatGPT account. Go to openai.com and click “Get started.” You’ll need to confirm your account with a phone number. I recommend starting with ChatGPT because as of this writing it does a good job for the tasks you’ll benefit from and there are some nice plug-ins for the paid version.

You can begin by writing a prompt. Here’s an example:

“Could you please write 200-word product descriptions for these 5 trees: Norway Maple, River birch, *Magnolia grandiflora*, sweetgum, sycamore. The descriptions will be used on a website for wholesale landscapers. Write in this format: Botanical name—first line, Common name—second line, 100-word summary of the tree’s characteristics third, followed by these bullet points: Height, Spread, Shape, Leaf color, Flower.”

Exact text from ChatGPT 3.5:

> Magnolia grandiflora *Botanical name:* Magnolia grandiflora *Common name: Southern Magnolia*
>
> *The Southern Magnolia, a symbol of the South’s charm, is a beloved choice for wholesale landscapers. This evergreen tree exhibits a striking pyramidal form, reaching heights of 60 to 80 ft. with a 30 to 50 ft. spread. Its glossy, leathery leaves stay green year-round, providing constant beauty. In late spring and summer, the tree produces large, fragrant, creamy-white flowers that captivate onlookers. The Southern Magnolia’s majestic appearance and fragrant blossoms make it a favorite for focal points or privacy screens.*
>
> *Height: 60 to 80 ft.*
>
> *Spread: 30 to 50 ft.*
>
> *Shape: Pyramidal*
>
> *Leaf color: Glossy green (evergreen)*
>
> *Flower: Large, fragrant creamy-white blossoms in late spring and summer*

The more specific your prompt is in terms of the way you’d like something formatted, the more specific the result you’ll get. As you can see from this example because I told the tool that it was for an audience of landscapers it geared the result for landscapers.

Now, do these results read like boilerplate? Yes, they sure do. If you have a brand voice, you might want to tweak them to better match your voice. In the case of Magnolia grandiflora, it would be better to ask it for a description of a cultivar because the straight species … well, that would be a big screen! And that’s where your knowledge or your hired garden writer’s knowledge comes into play. In order to get something useful out of ChatGPT you need to put something useful in.

Other use cases for ChatGPT

There are so many different AI tools, some of which have been around for a while, and more that are being developed every day. It would be easy to get overwhelmed by trying a bunch of new stuff. Better to start with one, get familiar and branch out from there.

Here’s how to use ChatGPT to perform some other tasks for you, including the human responsible. (Though, let’s

be real: in many cases, that human is YOU!)

Task: Summarize anything

Human: Whoever's available

Did you have an important one-hour training meeting? I hope you recorded it! Use a transcription service to convert speech to text. (There are tons of these available.) Skim the transcription, remove any sensitive information and then upload it to the free version of ChatGPT. Ask it to summarize, provide bullet points, headings, etc. Now everyone has meeting notes!

Task: Create worksheets/checklists or reformat documents

Human: The person responsible for said documents

Let's say you have a bunch of messy notes that you want turned into something else. Upload them and prompt the tool to reformat the way you'd like. Be specific to get specific outputs! And remember to remove any sensitive information before uploading.

Task: Drafting … everything!

Human: Marketing, sales—all staff can use this help

Need new "about" copy for your website? Copy and paste any information or jot down some key points about your company and ask ChatGPT to generate new copy. The same goes for the rest of the web pages.

Ask the tool to draft a letter announcing new products, sending past-due invoices, write survey questions and anything else you need to write, but don't know where to start. You'll need to edit anything for accuracy, brand voice and style, but it'll get you started and, as Mary Poppins said, "Well-begun is half done!"

Task: Brainstorming (newsletters, social media posts)

Human: Marketing staff

It can be challenging to constantly come up with new ideas for sharing content. Let these tools help you. Here's a prompt: Please generate a list of 52 seasonally appropriate social media ideas for a wholesale plant grower. One would be Week 1 in January. Two would be for Week 2 in January and so forth.

This is one of the groups it spit out:

> *Week 1 (Early January):*
>
> *• Showcase your top-selling winter-hardy plants.*
>
> *• Share tips on winter plant care for customers.*
>
> *• Highlight any special promotions or discounts for the new year.*

Other AI tools to explore

Recommendation engines

There's a good chance that whatever software you're using to email customers can also use past order history to make recommendations for future orders. These are called "recommendation engines" and they're the backbone of the "You might also like" features of online retailers. You tell the engine what you want it to show people, such as "Products they've viewed in the last 30 days," and then each recipient will get a customized email.

Graphics

Canva is a widely used tool for easily making graphics. In the paid version app section, you can now use apps that remove the background from images, help you cover blemishes and other AI-related tasks.

Process documentation

If you have a lot of online processes and procedures—such as processing orders, data entry, scheduling or customer service—investigate Scribe and Tango, two services that will record what you're doing on your computer screen and then will spit out a list of steps and instructions. You can then edit to remove anything unnecessary. (Such as if you click in the wrong place the first time.) These videos are invaluable resources when training new people.

There are all kinds of use cases for all kinds of AI tools. While writing this article, I talked with Rayne Gibson, owner of Taproots Horticultural Consulting. He also recommends starting with ChatGPT and branching out from there.

"It's easy to get overwhelmed," he said. He uses Grammarly a lot (it has been around for a while) to ask for quotes, citations and proofreading. I'd agree. If you add one more tool to your chest, add it.

In the end, it's worth exploring generative AI tools because of what they can do. And the main way a lot of these tools can begin to help is that they'll help you begin. **GT**

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