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GT in Brief

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2024 Liberty Hyde Bailey Award Given to Jim Nau

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The American Horticultural Society's (AHS) highest award, the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award, is given to an individual who's made significant lifetime contributions to at least three of the following horticultural fields: teaching, research, communications, plant exploration, administration, art, business and leadership.

This year's winner of the AHS's highest honor is the late Jim Nau, who served as the greenhouse, gardens and trials manager at Ball Horticultural Company for 37 years. Jim was a plant expert, an accomplished writer, a sought-after speaker, a historian, an All-America Selections (AAS) Judge, former AAS President and a garden designer. Jim passed away in June 2023.

Directly after graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture from Iowa State University in 1982, Jim joined Ball Horticultural Company, to which he dedicated his entire career. Through his work at Ball, he became a leading researcher in plant variety trialing, with the goal of recommending the best varieties to North American growers.

Jim is credited with helping to identify Wave Petunias while they were in the AAS Trials, and writing numerous industry publications, including the Ball Culture Guide: The Encyclopedia of Seed Germination, Ball Plant Propagation Guide and Ball Perennial Manual. He also edited over 20 editions of the Ball RedBook, all through Ball Publishing.

Jim served as president of AAS, but also served as president of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers and as a leader for the Perennial Plant Association.

Above all, Jim is remembered by horticultural colleagues for his collaborative attitude. This fondness and affirmation of his impact was echoed through support for his posthumous award nomination from leaders at Ball, AAS, Longwood Gardens, the North Carolina Farm Bureau, and many nurseries and seed companies.

"Jim's personality and his incredible knowledge set him apart and make him unique. He was a kind, generous friend to so many in the industry. His contribution to horticulture is huge," said Anna Ball. **GT**