

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Jim Youngsman

Chris Beytes



Jim Youngsman, the founder of Skagit Gardens, passed away peacefully on July 18. He was 87. We learned this from his daughter, Pamela, who followed in her father's footsteps by starting a business of her own, a young plant company called PoppyStarts.

Jim's passion for growing plants began at an early age. At 16, he built a backyard greenhouse where he grew tulips and sold them to local garden centers. He used the profits to pay his way through Washington State University, where he studied floriculture and horticulture and met his wife, Ruth. He went on to earn a master's in floriculture from Penn State.

After graduation, Jim began his career providing vocational training to inmates at Danbury State Correctional Facility in Connecticut. A brief move to Berkeley, California, followed, then Jim and Ruth settled in Mount Vernon, Washington, where they purchased 8 acres that became Skagit Gardens, primarily selling annuals and perennials to retail garden centers, landscapers and wholesale growers in the U.S. and Canada. Their four children, Bill, Susan, Pam and Matt, all worked at the business, which expanded to over 11 acres of greenhouses, 38 acres of field and upwards of 250 seasonal employees before Jim and Ruth sold it in 1998. **GT**