

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Dutch Heritage Gardens Now in the Young Plant Business

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Heritage Young Plants, a brand new division of Dutch Heritage Gardens located in Larkspur, Colorado, founded by Aaron and Rozalia Van Wingerden, will focus on producing premium-quality starter plants for professional growers across North America, according to a press release.

“We launched Heritage Young Plants to give growers the kind of supplier we always wished we had,” said Rozalia, who serves as marketing director for both companies. “It’s one that listens, adapts and delivers on time, every time.”

Why go into the competitive young plant business? They seem to have a good thing going with the finished plant business in Colorado. Around 2016, they took a brief and challenging foray into the cannabis world, and then produced hemp young plants from 2017 to 2020, during that crop’s heyday. But what prompted this latest expansion?

Aaron said it’s a combination of two factors: their largest customer going to pay-by-scan and the closing of Welby Gardens.

“As you may know, our largest customer for the past 18 years, Kroger, decided in late 2022 that it was going to make all of its outdoor floral vendors go to a pay-by-scan model, and we growers had to hire Kroger’s merchandising Agent, National Garden Services, to assist with the merchandising at stores. Well, this turned out to be a total disaster and cost all of the growers who serviced Kroger a TON of money, and effectively ruined all business relationships with every grower.”

Aaron and Rozalia decided they could no longer supply Kroger unless they shifted back to a PO system like they had before. Kroger refused and Dutch Heritage was now down one important customer.

“Fortuitously for us, ‘When one door closes, another opens,’” said Aaron. “With the news in late 2024 that Welby was closing up shop after the 2025 season, we saw it as a perfect opportunity to get into the liner business and fill the void Welby would leave, as there are a lot of growers that want alternatives to what’s currently on the market for young plants.”

Aaron said they have plenty of space for liners during Q4 and Q1, before their finished production ramps up. And

they have the infrastructure and technology in place for top-quality liners from when they were growing 4 to 5 million hemp clones per year.

“So growing young liners is nothing new for our team,” he said. “I feel with our facilities we can offer extremely high-quality liners that are hardened naturally and will have great growth for customers after transplant. With our technology and infrastructure in place, we will be able to produce liners very cost-effectively, and be able to pass on these savings to customers. And finally with our experience, we will be able to accommodate the logistical issues that other young plant producers may have challenges with.”

Aaron said they’ll ship nationwide (with the exception of California) and that they’re open to working with all brokers, although they do have a close and long-time relationship with McHutchison, whom Aaron called their “preferred broker.” **GT**