GROWERTALKS

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Smith Gardens is the Newest Addition to Hoffmann's Hort Portfolio

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A couple of weeks ago, Smith Gardens, a fourth-generation greenhouse operation based in the Pacific Northwest, announced that private equity firm Hoffmann Family of Companies had acquired a majority interest in the business.

This year, Smith Gardens is celebrating 125 years in the horticulture industry and is led by Eric and Mark Smith, with members of the fifth generation already actively involved. Smith Gardens will continue under Eric and Mark's leadership, as they retain ownership and remain in their leadership roles, guiding the company's strategic direction.

In a brief phone chat with Eric, he stressed it was important they found the right partner who not only had an established stake in the green industry, but also emulated the same values commonly held in a family-run business. Hoffmann is currently run by its second generation, co-CEOs Geoff and Greg Hoffmann, sons of founder and chairman David Hoffmann.

"They understand family businesses and it was one of the criteria that we felt was really important for the continuity of the business and for our team," explained Eric. "Having a partner that understands the seasonality of our products and has been in this business for four or five years in other parts of the country gives us confidence that they understand what it takes to be successful in our industry."

Hoffmann's portfolio consists of more than 125 global brands that include aviation and transportation, hospitality and entertainment, marketing and real estate. But during the last few years, they've become majority investors in a handful of nursery and greenhouse businesses, including some familiar faces, like N.G. Heimos/Millstadt Young Plants and American Farms. The strategic partnership with Smith Gardens expands Hoffmann's rapidly growing agriculture and horticulture portfolio into a new geographic region, complementing its existing holdings in California, Florida, Illinois, Missouri and Mexico.

Since Eric and Mark bought the business from their parents, Terry and Carolyn, in 2004, Smith Gardens has experienced consistent growth. The company operates five major growing facilities across the Pacific Northwest and West Coast totaling 4 million sq. ft. with more than 100 acres of outdoor production in

Bellingham, Mount Vernon (after the purchase of the property from Skagit Horticulture in 2024) and Marysville, Washington; and Aurora, Oregon (which includes a 6-acre expansion completed this year), plus their young plant business, Pacific Plug & Liner, in Watsonville, California. Twelve hundred employees help produce annuals and perennials in their growing facilities, and in their merchandising service division.

“We look forward to expanded opportunities for growth and development of our team and our business,” said Eric. **GT**