

Tagawa Family

Prelude:

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Tagawa Greenhouses, let us reflect on the legacy that was inspired by our parents and is being perpetuated by the next generations. **HIKOTA TAGAWA** and **MAJU (MATSUSHIMA) TAGAWA** immigrated to Sacramento, California in the early 1900's to exploit financial opportunities in order to secure the Tagawa household in Japan, which led to laboring and farming. They had one son, **FRANK SHIGEO TAGAWA**. **FRANK SHIGEO** was born in Sacramento, California in **1912**. He then returned to Kumamoto, Japan with his parents where he graduated from high school. In **1930**, he accompanied Kazuo Kimura to the U.S. with the intent of furthering his education and entering a business school when he was caught in the "Great Depression". While schooling and working in the peach orchards of Yuba City and Marysville, California, he met **HAZEL HARUKO SERI**, daughter of a turkey farmer and they were married in **1937** thus starting the "**TAGAWA FAMILY**." During this era, Frank would be very close to his cousin **KAZUE TAGAWA**.

While engaged in farming, World War 2 broke out and the Tagawa family of **Frank**, **Hazel**, and sons **Ken**, **Albert**, and **Dave** were interned in Camp Amache in Granada, Colorado. While interned, the family was out on a work permit to Frank's cousins lettuce farms in Granby, CO where **George** was born. In 1945, Japan surrendered and with the end of the war, evacuees were ordered to leave the camps, thus the family moved to the Denver area and share-crop farm in Welby. Here number five son **James** and daughter **Caroline** joined the family. In 1967, the Tagawa Family purchased a farm in Brighton and began the start of greenhouses, engaged in farming and growing of ornamental horticultural crops.

Today all the family and next generation are actively engaged in the family business that encompasses operations in Brighton, Golden, Centennial, Estancia, New Mexico and Nipomo, California. Tagawa Enterprises grows under 70-Acres of greenhouses, and employs in excess of 700-800 persons during peak production/marketing times. The lessons and philosophy and ethics taught by our parents remains an inspiration to the Tagawa Families that help guide our business and develop strong relationships with family, community and employees, in the spirit of "**Okagesama-de**."



Hikota Tagawa



Maju Tagawa



Mr. Iseri



Mrs. Iseri



Frank Shigeo Tagawa

*"Patience
Tolerance"*



Hazel Haruko Iseri



Frank and Hazel

Gaman

*Enduring the unbearable
with patience and dignity.*



Frank (Ojiichan)



Hazel (Obaachan)



Dad (Jiichan) had always been anticipating returning to California one day. Several trips were made to scout opportunities to acquire a farm in California. Since he had extensive knowledge of and worked in the peach orchards, going into the orchard business was considered but, unfortunately the peach market was in a slump and none the less, could not locate any favorable property that we might purchase. Or fortunately encouraged the decision to maintain operations in Colorado and finally purchase our first property here in Weld County on August 2, 1966 from **Raymond Hinkle**. This was the beginning of the Tagawa families journey in developing a family business that is being recognized as a leader in the industry, and in the community.

The farm and buildings were purchased and consisted of 120 acres of land which included a home, barn, small garage, and an open shed with a chicken coup. The property came in two parcels of 60 acres each diagonally located on the intersection of Weld County Road 4 and 37, Sections 25 and Sections 31, all for \$60,000 and \$20,000 respectively that we considered a great buy. Section 25 had the farm buildings and Section 31 contained a an old railroad car that was converted to a small labor house. Section 25 included a ditch that supplied water or drainage to not only our farm but to our neighbors **Sam Wentzel and Pete Lehl**. Section 31's water was supplied via a ditch/pipe line through a right-of-way on the a neighboring property on the SW corner of WCR-4 and 37.

1966: **Fall/winter** I recall going to the Brighton bank with Dad to obtain a loan for \$3,000 and only getting \$1,500 plus pledging all of the assets we owned. I guess that we didn't understand dealing with financial institutions at the time. Notwithstanding this, two small wooden structures (30 ft. x 60 ft. or 3600 ft²) with poly covering was constructed to grow starter vegetable plants for the field and the beginning of bedding plant production. **Geno Amato** came to help us start bedding plant seedlings in the greenhouse as this was our first experience with bedding plants such as petunias, zinnia, snapdragon, and dahlia. Also **Mr. Yoshihara** would visit us occasionally to give us valuable growing tips. **Mom (Obaachan)** always had a small flower garden when she was growing up. Also hot-beds were constructed for growing plants in the fields, where Dad's experience and keen plant knowledge was invaluable. We had purchased the most inexpensive lumber to start the greenhouses (2x4 pine), that proved to be inadequate as we shall see. 100 pound propane tanks were used to fire up 2-150 BTU space heaters.

As the first year on new soil we had a lot of learning to do in order to be able to properly time the crops. The sandy-loam although seemed to be desirable, had many challenges, such as tighter consistency that made the timing of crops slower, and tilling the ground required different equipment. We started plowing the fields with a small 25horsepower Oliver tractor and pulling a single bottom two way plow that took long hours and more time than anticipated to completion. We were accustomed to small row tractors like the Allis Chalmers Model-G to cultivate, that was inefficient on a 120 acre farm. The crops we planted were: zucchini squash, onions, cabbage, bell peppers, cherry peppers, green onions, lettuce, and cauliflower. Generally the lettuce was planted as a first crop, then after the lettuce was harvested the late cauliflower was planted. This year we encountered a hail storm that set the lettuce back. Fortunately the lettuce market was very good, the price of lettuce hit \$10.00 a crate of 2-dozen that was unheard off, The weather in 1967 was cool and wet. The fields were so wet and it rained so often that the fields were not properly prepared. The fall season was mild and harvest went well and 1967 turned out to be a rather good year. All of the produce and bedding plants were marketed and sold through the Vegetable cooperative, direct shipped to grocery stores and the **Denargo Market**.

In 1968 We were in full operation on the farm raising vegetables and added cantaloupe to our crops. We rented the 60 acres of pure sand to the south of us and planted cantaloupe and honeydew. **Dave** devoted all of his time to irrigating and growing this additional acreage. We received valuable advice from **Sam Chikuma** on the culture and timing of this new crop. Also we built three additional poly greenhouses (15ft.x60ft) or an addition of 2700 square feet. Now our total greenhouse area was 6300 ft2. Vegetable transplants and bedding plants were dedicated to the additional expansion. The **Tanaka Brothers, Sam, Rocky, Dick and Bob** were very generous and helped us on the farming operations, by loaning farm equipment such as tractors and trucks. Sam would bring his laborers and equipment to help us in building greenhouses. We hauled onion plants from Texas and they helped us by loaning us the equipment until harvest. We were all treated like family and had lot of enjoyment together. We went out to dinner and bowled in leagues and tournament together.

Farming in Colorado was a challenge due to the adverse weather conditions, market competition, and good reliable labor availability. The decision to diversify and grow under more controlled environment was considered. This was all possible with the aid of **Bob Montague** of American Clay Products. Bob put confidence in us with the recommendation of the Yoshiharas, to loan until the seasons harvest, fiberglass, fans, and heaters. This expansion of 7,800 Ft2 would be the start of major greenhouse expansions. Building with coolers and offices, 65,000 ft2 of wooden frame with poly covering, and a 3,024 ft2 Denverlite II with metal covering warehouse .

1969-1970: Salvaged greenhouses from **Frank Kirshner** . Constructed additional 3 houses or 18,720 ft2 (Range-E) with the salvaged material. **Jim Kiyota** of Brighton Florist and Greenhouse introduced and recommended Ken to **Ben Haley** of the **Denver Wholesale Florists Company**. The first crop of carnations was planted in June, 1969, and achieved number one ranking out of 80 growers at \$5.40 per ft2. The position of first and second would be maintained in ensuing years. First loans on greenhouses would be necessitated by the expansion of Range-1 of 25,704 ft2. Spring bedding plants would be planted after construction was completed and carnations planted immediately for a Christmas cropping. This would necessitate additional space requirements for production of bedding plants for the ensuing spring. This expansion plan would be utilized in future years to preserve the bedding plant market for Tagawa and add diversity and flexibility for future planning and production.



*Salvage Work at Canyon City Floral
George (above) Ken (below)*



*Caroline and June planting first
carnation crop in 1969.*



*1970 First
crop of
bedding in
Range 1.*

1970-1971:

Range-1, 3-additional houses or an additional area of 25,704 ft² was added completing 6 houses of Range 1, along with a Service Building (3,024 ft² of salvaged greenhouse material) to accommodate carnation grading area, cooler and office area with a kitchen and restrooms.



1970, Dave watering the 1st crop of bedding in Range 1.



1972: Albert joined the company after his service in the Air Force



Carnation grading area

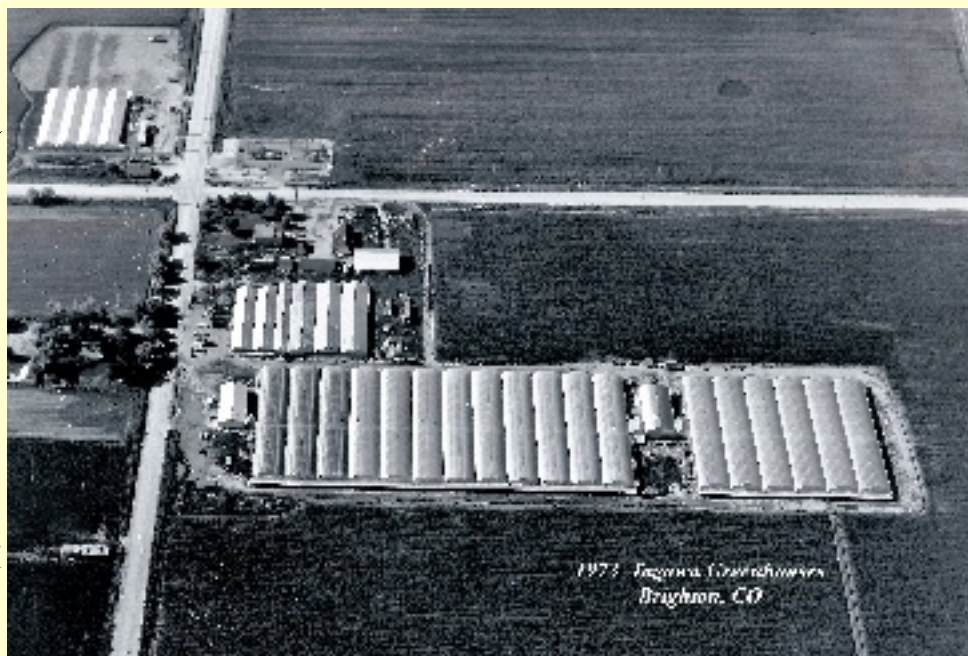
1972:

Range-2 (IBG ARCH II 51,408 ft²), Boiler Building and our first 400 horsepower boiler, and FLOWERING Range-1 (19,200 ft² of wood structure and fiberglass). Total additional expansion of 73,632 ft² in 1972 brings the total square footage to 157,848 ft², or at the rate of doubling the area each year for the last 5 years.

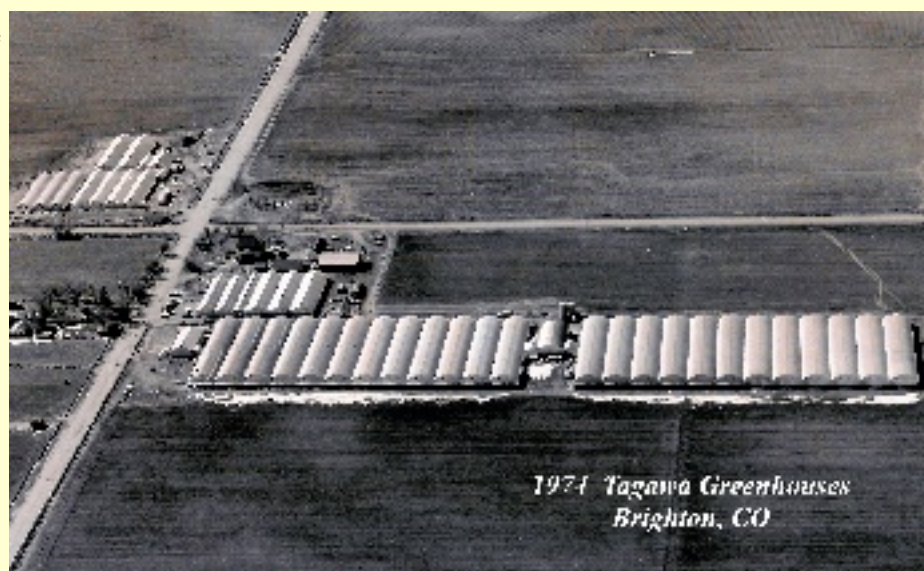


Ken applying polylayer to save heating cost.

1973: Range-3 (IBG Arch II 51,408 ft²) with the addition of a 500 horsepower Kewanee boiler. Flowering Range-3 (14,304 ft² of IBG Denverlite greenhouses salvaged from Bob Euser's wind damage) Flowering Range-2 (3-30x15 poly quonset or 14,220 ft²)



1974: Range-4 (IBG Arch II 51,408 ft²), New 4800 ft² metal service building with coolers and offices, 65,000 ft² of wooden frame with poly covering, and a 3,024 ft² Denverlite II with metal covering warehouse .



1975: Rose Range (R-8 & 9, 118,680 ft²), added 600 horsepower Kewanee boiler. The demand for quality roses was ever increasing at DWF. The decision to expand into rose production was made and the greenhouse construction commenced.



1976: Added 52,560 ft² of wood frame and poly covered greenhouses. During the first years expansion came at a rapid pace. Greenhouses were constructed in the fall and winter months. Bedding plants occupied the space and after the spring season, carnations were planted.



Ken and June standing next to the Coal Fire Incendal Kewanee Boiler.



600 HP Kewanee Boiler



1975 Xmas party in new service building (note the old basketball hoop)



Elaine Powers Carnation Supervisor

1977: Added 27,000ft2 of wood frame and poly covered greenhouses. In December 1977 Tagawa Rose Farms acquired the property on 7711 S. Parker Road, Aurora. The property consisted of 160,000ft2 on 10-acres with a modular home adjacent to Cherry Creek and half of the property in the 100 year flood plain. The greenhouses were formerly owned by Parker Road Greenhouses and was in receivership with the Federal Land Bank.

The greenhouse was a nice metal structure but the rose crop had mildew and white flies. It was obvious that the crop was neglected and could be restored with lot of care and attention. Jim and Ken looked at each other and decided to take on the challenge and purchased the property. The offer was just too good to pass on. The property came with a little crippled dog, a cat that lost its voice and could not meow and John Kamp, who was invaluable to us in learning all the nuances of the greenhouse. Work was hard in the beginning as Jim would attest to. However the rose crop was groomed back into a quality product. Also, this was the beginning of our venture into the retail segment of the business. A small section in the corner of the greenhouse was opened to the public to purchase some foliage and bedding plants



**Dick Skalecke, 93 year old garden expert.
Worked in perennial depart. Dick's Corner.**



1978
**First crop at
Tagawa
Rose Farm.**



**John Kamp was
at Parker
Greenhouse
when Tagawa
family purchased
the property.**



**Beth began working at
Tagawa Gardens in 1983**



Jim working with crew





1983 Christmas. Blizzard that dropped three foot of snow in a period of 24 hours caused extensive damages to greenhouses at Parker. The drifts on the rooftops were up to six feet and caused the collapse of House 1, 2, and 3 or about 32,000 ft2 of structure. Unfortunately, we had only fire insurance but no structural collapse or crop insurance. Then, we decided to reconstruct as a retail garden center and florists rather than rebuilding for roses. Only a part of the greenhouses were reconstructed. The open perennial areas are a result of the lack of parts to rebuild. Work was hard and we worked in cold and adverse conditions to get back into business as the collapse isolated the boilers from the rest of the greenhouses. All hands were on deck for us to rebuild. Bob Montague of American Clay Works and Bob Riney from DWF were both involved in the restoration.

Randy Tagawa comments:

Taking the Garden Center to a New Level:

In 1983 there was a heavy snow storm, and I went with Dad and Uncle George to check damage at the Rose Farm. When we arrived, we were the first to see Jim overlooking the collapsed greenhouses. We surveyed the damage, and the initial reaction on their faces didn't look good. There was talk about how we could salvage most of the rose house, but we didn't have enough money for the first two houses. At the time, we mostly just produced roses, and Jim was selling a few plants to the public on the side with the help of a couple employees. After a quick brain storming session, they decided to take a leap and try something completely different: convert the damaged houses into a garden center. The snow storm had them change gears and start putting effort into building Tagawa Gardens. By the following spring we had over 15 employees and a brand-new store front which still exists to this day.



1984

Start of Randy's career:

During this time, I was a senior in year high school and was ready to start college as a computer science major. During those days, my dad and uncles worked endless hours to get the garden center ready for spring. Summer was almost over, and I went off to college and started my first programming class, excited, and ready to work. I spent countless hours looking at punch cards, and one day I threw my hands in the air, and I knew in my heart: this was not for me. This wasn't me at *all*. I packed a bag and went MIA for a week: went into the wilderness, thought deeply about my future, and really worried the parents. When I went home, I of course had to face my dad. I told him that school wasn't for me. He stopped, looked me dead in the face, and asked: if school wasn't for me, what the %\$#&@ are you going to do?! Without even missing a beat, my reply was to work for the family business. I don't recall how I ended up at the Garden Center, but in the end was much happier with the outcome of working with my Uncle Jim, (though I'm not sure if he felt the same way.) The first job they gave me was to grow the poinsettia crop, and honestly it was a great experience and I learned more from Jim and George than I think I ever could have in that programming class. It seemed that I had the green thumb, because that poinsettia crop was outstanding. But by the end of spring, a young professor named Dr. Will Healy convinced me to go back to school and get my degree. Not in computer science though: four years later I proudly graduated Colorado State University with a Bachelor Degree in horticulture with a concentration in business.



Beth, Pauline, Sue, Randy, Therese, Robin, Charlene

Rocky Mountain News, Denver, Colo.

Saturday, December 8, 1984

Family greenhouses grow like beanstalk

By FRANCES MELROSE

Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

You see red when entering the Tagawa Garden Center at 7711 S. Parker Road. The Tagawa family has scattered 3,500 poinsettia plants, an eye-filling splash of red. The plants are for retail sale.

The display on South Parker Road, however, is nothing compared to the red sea of 80,000 poinsettia plants that spread their crimson glory over the beds at the Tagawa greenhouses in Brighton. The plants are sold wholesale and are committed, according to Ken Tagawa, general manager.

The Tagawa story is in the American genre — a tale of a small agricultural business that grew like Jack's beanstalk, a tale of triumph over adversity, and a tale of a family that stayed together and found success together.

At the end of World War II, Frank and Hazel Tagawa, American-born Japanese, and their children came out of Amachi Relocation Center at Lamar, Colo., and started sharecropping. Before the war and their relocation they had farmed and had a peach orchard in Marysville, Calif.

With hard work and determination, the Tagawas saw that their children attended school. Ken graduated from the University of Colorado with a degree in electrical engineering, served two years with the Navy, then went to work at the U.S. Bureau of Standards in Boulder. Jim graduat-

ed from Colorado State University as a physical education major. Carolyn, the only girl, graduated from CU with a degree in education. Dave and George attended college briefly, but were more interested in the farm. Albert stayed in the Air Force for several years.

Although they were trained for other work, the young Tagawas found themselves drifting back to the farm.

"It was the way we were brought up," said Ken. "All through our childhood, Dad and Mother stressed doing things as a family. Dad talked to us about family togetherness. If you have differences in the family, you nearly always can iron them out. He delivered that lecture often."

Today's business for the Tagawas had its beginnings when Ken and Dave went in with their parents on 120 acres near Brighton, and farmed it during the summer.

"But we needed something to do in the winter," said Ken. "We started with a couple of temporary greenhouses in 1967, and raised vegetables. Then we began raising bedding plants, both vegetables and flowers, because gardening is popular in this area."

Two years later they built two more greenhouses and raised carnations for Denver Wholesale Florists. Not long after that the entire Tagawa family was reunited and working in the greenhouses. Roses, Easter lilies and house plants were added.

The Tagawas have become the second



First elementary school choir to sing during holiday

Family: Raising house plants a family affair for Tagawas

Continued from page 105

largest grower in the Rocky Mountain Region. Annually, they produce 4 million roses, 4½ million carnations, 100,000 bedding plants and 90,000 poinsettias.

"And we work 12 months a year," said Ken.

They prefer the greenhouses to farming.

"The climate is more certain," said Ken.

"There is no control over the weather on a farm. We used to say we lay in a hail belt, because we were hit with hail every year."

But still, not everything's perfect. The blizzard of 1982 destroyed several greenhouses on the South Parker Road property and damaged others in Brighton.

"We weren't insured then, but we are now," said Ken.

Disheartened and dismayed at the blizzard damage, the Tagawas and all their employees pitched in to clean up, repair and replant.

The Tagawas employ about 100 people at both places.

"It takes everybody to make this place go," said Ken. "That's one of the most important things. We try to relay this philosophy to our employees. Our company has certain values that go beyond a profit motive. We want our people to be proud of their company and proud of their work. We want happy employees."

The work is divided among the Tagawas. Ken is general manager. Jim is superintendent of the greenhouses. Dave is sales manager and does production planning. George is in charge of bedding plants, poinsettias and maintenance. Ken's wife, June, is personnel director. George's wife, Gail, handles accounting. Until her death last spring, Carolyn helped in many facets of the company.

"We stay together," said Ken. "When there's trouble in some area, there isn't just one of us there; there are two or three of us. Sometimes it adds up to an 18-hour day. You can't tell somebody to go home and go to bed when they're so concerned."

Ken recalled a night recently when he and his brothers worked until 1:30 a.m. on a malfunctioning boiler.

"In my opinion this is one of the most intense businesses there is," he said. "It's always with you."

Greenhouse costs have risen with the costs of labor and energy, and that has pushed up the cost of flowers, according to Ken.

"Since the oil embargo our gas bill over a year at Parker Road is about \$190,000," he said. "At Brighton it runs around \$100,000."

The Tagawas have installed new roof coverings and insulated sidewalls to retain heat. New coverings have cut bills 50 percent in Brighton, Ken said. They are experimenting with other energy savers.

The family likes to keep improving the business, adding to it and changing it. Two years ago they started a retail shop at 7711 S. Parker Road and put Cherie Auble in charge of it. Auble, a registered nurse, had tired of emergency room work and wanted to work with plants. She joined the Tagawas four years ago.

The shop also offers flower arrangements with florists trained in one of the region's leading schools of floral design. Two years ago they started selling Christmas greens. The shop now is filled not only with poinsettias, but also with decorated trees and wreaths. One of their biggest orders last year came from a shopping center that wanted 107 evergreen wreaths.

The most unusual order, however, came a few months ago when pop singer John Denver ordered plants for his home in Aspen and invited the staff to come up and see them after they were in place.

"But a lot of people still don't know we have a retail business out here," said Ken. "We're trying to educate them with an open house on Mother's Day weekend, and one just ahead of the Christmas season." (This year's Christmas open house is Dec. 1, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., with refreshments and a live band.)

What do the older Tagawas, now retired, think of the family business that grew out of their little farming venture?

"I think they're pretty proud," said Ken. "But the Japanese are very low-key. They don't say much, but you know what they're thinking."



Beth, Chery, Mary, Mineko



Jim and Matt Mateyka



First concert Big Deal Blue Grass Band in 1983

1985 The Big Fire



April 15, 1985. Pads caught on fire from welder. The fire destroyed the sales offices, loading dock, Ranges A,C and D. It took 50 Brighton, Hudson, Lochbluie and the Fort Lupton volunteer fire fighters to control the fire. The breezes from the west, lack of water and the thick smoke mixed with particulates of fiberglass and plastics from the greenhouses, impeded the battle against the fire. The entire crop was destroyed.

1986 Rebuilding



Tagawas still in business despite r

By John R. Ketchel

Driving in to Tagawa's Greenhouse on Road 4, you can't help but notice the charred and twisted metal frames of greenhouses that were once filled with young plants.

But when you look closer, you can see the same basic of workers preparing undamaged plants in other greenhouses for market.

"We are still in business," said Gail Tagawa. "We plan on starting shipping within a week. We'll service what we can and rebuild what we lost."

The April 14 fire that swept through several greenhouses on the Tagawa property could be seen for 30 miles around as thick black smoke caused by the burning plastic and structures poured into the sky. A slight breeze from the west pushed the fire on east faster.

"It just went so fast," said Tagawa. "Because of the fiberglass it all caught."

George Tagawa, Gail's husband and one of the two brothers who own the greenhouse, added that a matter of minutes saw the rest of the buildings.

"The fire was jumping the road that runs between two groups of greenhouses and we thought they were going to go too," he said. "Suddenly the wind shifted just long enough so that when it got back, everything flammable had burned down and the fire couldn't jump."

The shift also provided firemen a chance to get in and put down the same area.

"WE THINK the fire was started by a welder's torch," said Gail. "It just took off and for some reason we couldn't get the water pressure up enough for us to put it out."

"I just want to say that when that fire

started, the first thing on the Tagawa's mind was to get the employees out," said Beth Arlman, a one-year employee with the greenhouse. "They didn't care about the saving the plants, they went through and ordered everyone out, to some degree digging people out who were trying to put the fire out. Then they went around and checked with the supervisors to make sure everyone got out."

The following day, Kenneth Tagawa, president of the company, called the employees together and announced that no one was going to lose a job, that the business was going on as usual.

"We lost a lot of things, but we have a lot more," Gail said, as she walked through the intact greenhouses. Tall, healthy corn plants were getting ready to open buds and rows of holding plants were standing in their flames.

"It was lucky that the fire stopped where it did," she said, referring to the dividing road between the greenhouses. "And we are so grateful that the fire department, Hendon, Lockman, Engle, and Port Laporte worked so fast and so well together. They were so fast."

The fire knocked out water pumps, but by the following day, they were back in working condition again as employees helped out.

"Business has us out of business, people hurt, plants crashing into us, all sorts of things," said Gail. "Who knows how they start, but we are in business and all of our employees are healthy and working."

FOLLOWING THE FIRE, the family picked around, trying to figure out what had happened to them.

There always seems to be something

(Continued on page 2)



Lillian Tagawa, daughter of George and Gail Tagawa, stands proudly in front of a greenhouse in a 1986 day.



Gail organizing the refurbished office.



The Denver Taiko led by Aiko and Yuji prepared a special program for the celebration.

Firefighters lauded for relentless efforts

Editor:

Words can never adequately express our gratitude to the Hudson, Brighton, Fort Lupton and Lochbuie Fire Departments: and also the Lochbuie Police Department, and the local law enforcement offices for all of their help with the fire. We will be forever thankful for their prompt responses and relentless efforts. It is especially gratifying to have competent and caring fire fighters here and ready on such quick notice making every effort to save all that they came.

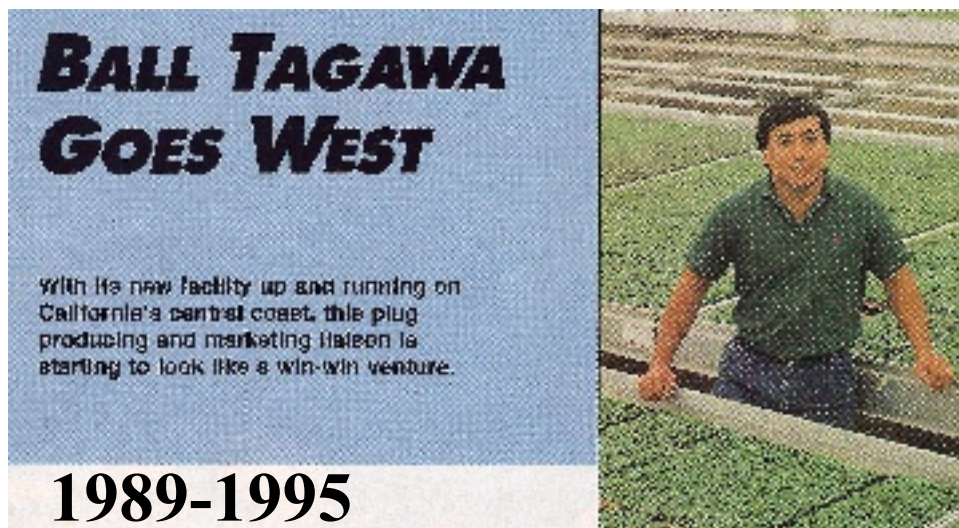
We would like to thanks all the concerned neighbors, friends and associates who have given us to much support not only as time of the fire, but also afterwards. Your generous offers of help and use of equipment and all the food which were brought over to us are more heartwarming than words can express.

Our heartfelt hanks to everyone who gave us the support and help when it was needed. Thank you.
Tagawa Families and Greenhouse staff.



Ken thanking everyone attending the restoration celebration.





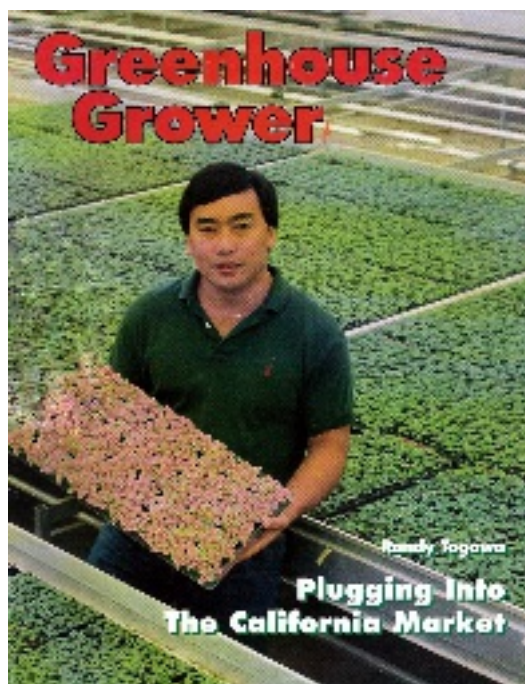
Randy comments:

In May of 1991, my wife Jeri, our newborn daughter Ashlie, and I headed west and lived in a double wide trailer right on the property where the greenhouses were being built. Two years later, our son Alex was born, and we continued to live on-site to be close to the business and still be able to see the kids. Ken and George routinely traveled to California to help build the facility. Calling us a “hands-on” team would have been an understatement. We poured our own concrete, set poles, and pulled our own electricity.

While the facility was being built, Dave traveled up and down the coast selling and building our customer base. Another person who played an integral part of the business was Mr. Ed Rose, a salesman from Ball. Since the initial inspection, Ed played an important role in selling the products we grew. He lived within 10 minutes of the facility, and he was around so much that others would often call the facility as: “The house that Ed built.” Though he didn’t have ownership or take part in the construction aspect, our relationship was one built on tough love

that in the end pushed us to grow at every turn. Although painful at times, he treated the business like his own, and we all were better for it. Even now, I wish he was still out there selling our products. I was stationed in California for the first five years building a team to produce high quality young plants. Just like all businesses, we had our successes and challenges, but I was also fortunate to have the opportunity to tour and have long conversations with Anna’s parents: Carl and Vivian Ball. Carl would give me advice on how to manage a company, from his philosophies on technology to distribution of products. As many can attest, Anna became the leader of Ball and transformed her company into a world class business. Working with Anna and all of her great managers allowed me to acquire the skills I needed to really become a leader within my own family business.

Looking back, it’s hard to believe that Ball Tagawa celebrated their 25th anniversary last year. Just as our relationship with Ball has continued to grow throughout the years, the Ball Tagawa facility now has over 70 employees with 240,000 square feet of greenhouses. With a fantastic management team, the company is doing very well. We learned a lot from this partnership, an



by PARRY KLASSEN

EXPANDING into the California plug market might seem a bit risky. Tough state regulations, expensive real estate, and keen intrastate competition are enough to make an expansion-minded company look elsewhere for a place to set up another shop.

Not Ball Tagawa Growers. These two familiar names in the greenhouse industry decided in 1989 to join forces and build a state-of-the-art plug growing facility on the central coast of California. Not surprising to those who know Tagawa Greenhouses of Brighton, CO, or Ball Seed Co. of Chicago, IL, the risk was very calculated — and is paying off in a big way.

Almost 12 months after the first plug trays were seeded in the 100,000-square-foot facility outside

Arroyo Grande, the order books for this spring are nearly full and ground-work has begun on another 100,000 square feet of greenhouses.

Hit The Ground Running

If you’d have asked Randy Tagawa 11 months ago if he expected to come so far so quickly, he might have laughed in your face. Tagawa, general manager of the Arroyo Grande operation, left the security of the family’s established operation in Colorado and moved to the Central coast of California to get the facility up and running.

Only the young Tagawa family moved West — no assistant managers or experienced growers from the home operation came along. In fact, one of Tagawa’s first responsibilities was to hire the entire production and office staff.

Tagawa credits rapid start-up of the

operation to expert help from consultants and managers from the two parent companies. “Our relationship has been really good from the onset,” says Tagawa. “We formed a 50-50 partnership in this venture and from the onset, it has been a give-give situation.”

The training provided by the consultants was easily picked up by the new staff, all of whom were recruited from surrounding communities. “They quickly turned this training around and put it to use producing quality plugs,” he adds.

Untangling Red Tape

Building new greenhouses on the California coast was a little trickier than doing the same in Colorado. “In Colorado, my father would draw up plans one day, bring it to the county for approval, and the next day we started building,” says Tagawa.

Continued on page 30.

"Here, it took 2 years after we applied to the county for permits before we could start building this facility."

Local and state officials were concerned about potential runoff and air quality degradation from the facility. When the greenhouses were completed, the county required air samples to be taken inside the facility and at several sites outside after a pesticide application was made. "All the tests came up negative," Tagawa says. The cost for the air sampling: a cool \$12,000.

Water runoff concerns were handled by designing the greenhouse so irrigation water is captured and reused. All greenhouse floors are concrete and angled toward gutters in the center of each house, with water recirculated through the irrigation system and applied later.

On The Scene

Cracking the West Coast plug market proved to be almost easier than dealing with the bureaucratic red tape involved with building. In fact, part of the reason for moving west was because of problems bringing plant material from Colorado into California. "Tagawa Greenhouses has been shipping here for years, but we were having more and more difficulties

into the germination room, which is kept at 90%-95% humidity and between 68°F and 75°F, depending on the crop.

For pansies and primula — their biggest volume crops in the fall — a 68°F/90% humidity combination works best. For petunias and impatiens — their largest volume warm season crops — a 75°F/95% humidity combination provides quick germination, Tagawa says.

From the germ room, the benches roll outside briefly before entering the first of four areas segregated for each phase of the growing process. "Our facility is designed for a linear flow of material so the seeded trays go in one end and the loading dock is at the other," says Tagawa.

The Nexus greenhouse structures are heated by a Delta T hot water system, with the heated pipes mounted directly under the benches. Temperature and light intensity are monitored and adjusted by a Wadsworth Microstep computer. A Cravo shade system and Mee Fog humidity

with delays from plant inspections, stretched plants, and on-time deliveries," says Tagawa.

The Arroyo Grande location alleviates most of those headaches. With the big markets for plugs in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay area, building a facility on the central coast puts them midway between those two markets. Besides those two regions, Ball Tagawa ships plugs to growers in Oregon and Washington. All sales and marketing is handled through the main office of Ball Seed in Illinois.

Independent trucking companies are used to deliver the majority of orders. "We find that private companies get the product to customers a lot quicker and with less damage — plus the rates are more competitive."

Most deliveries are made to a customer's doorstep on Monday morning, a service conventional parcel handlers couldn't provide, Tagawa says. Independent truckers are also more willing to handle the shipping racks Ball Tagawa is using for delivery of finished plugs.

Putting Technology To Work

The shipping racks are a good example of how new technology is used

throughout the facility: if it helps improve plant quality or serve the customer better, use the best. "What we are trying to do is integrate and mold all the different pieces together," Tagawa explains.

"Equipment is one aspect, climate control is another, and then there are the people," he adds. "Our team of people is what really makes this facility, rather than just each piece of equipment. We may not have the best gadget for a particular job but if it is adequate and our people know how to handle it, it will do the job."

A walk through the tray seeding room and growing area reveals plenty of gadgets at work. Tray seeding is handled by three machines, a Bouldin and Lawson drum seeder for coated seed, and an Old Mill and small Vandana seeder for specialty seed.

Seeded trays — ranging from 90- to 800-cell — are placed directly onto Howe rolling benches, where they stay until loaded onto delivery racks or packed in cartons. Most plug orders go out in the 390-cell trays, although Tagawa says Southern California growers usually prefer the larger 90- to 220-cell size. Growers in the cooler Northern climate prefer the smaller 800 cell size.

The 30-tray tables are first rolled

booms at regular intervals during the growing season. Weekly soil samples are monitored closely to watch pH levels and alkalinity. Leaf samples are taken monthly.

"We're just looking for red flags, something out of balance, then we try to correct it," says Tagawa. "Otherwise, we base our adjustments on how the plant is growing. If it is growing well, we really don't want to change what we're doing."

Tagawa is very frank in describing the type of plug he grows at the Arroyo Grande facility: "Whatever a customer wants. Ball Tagawa is not just selling plugs, but an entire program to ensure success, which includes the plugs. It could be any of a number of tray sizes, a hard or soft finished plug, or the wide variety selection we have. Whatever it is, we try to fit the needs of our customers."

GG

About the author: Parry Klassen is a contributing editor for GREENHOUSE GROWER based in Selma, CA.

Randy Comments:

My wife, Jeri, always said that there were two reasons that would make her move back to Colorado: if she either felt an earthquake or if the kids were old enough to go to school. Luckily, there were no earthquakes in our area, but at the end of our fourth year living on-site at Ball Tagawa, she told me we would either need to plant our roots in California or move back to Colorado. With Ashlie enrolled in pre-school and Alex climbing to explore everything, we made the initial decision to stay in California. We put earnest money on a new house and started its construction.

It wasn't an earthquake, but during that time it seemed that there were other challenges for the Tagawa family.

Unfortunately, Uncle Albert passed away early in life with cancer and it seemed there were other challenges within the family business. After many discussions, I found that while California was great,

it was my ultimate desire was to return back to Colorado.

My family moved back to Colorado by Christmas of 1995.

Switching gears was tough, and I can't thank my Dad and the Uncles enough for supporting me through this transition as General Manager of Tagawa Greenhouses. It wasn't just difficult setting up my family's roots in Colorado, because being based here meant suddenly I had all managers reporting directly to me. Many of them reported directly to Ken, George, and Dave for years and having me suddenly in that position was easier for some than for others. All of the uncles helped me through this time, and when the dust settled I knew coming back home to Colorado was the right choice.



Ball Tagawa Growers

Owners: Tagawa Greenhouses and Ball Seed Co.

Location: Arroyo Grande, CA

Founded: 1989

Size: 100,000 square feet; additional 100,000 square feet under construction

Crops: Plugs

Market: California, Oregon, and Washington

fier allow for fine tuning of climatic conditions.

While computers provide much of the day-to-day instructions on when to move plugs from one stage to the next, the grower or Tagawa is always there to double check the computer's decision before a bench is moved.

Other aspects of growing plugs reflect Tagawa's emphasis on simple, efficient techniques. Nutrients are added to the Greenway soil through the SK Designs overhead watering

1992-1995



Ken comments:

DWF Foundation Range which I managed produced carnation cuttings prior to TGI renting the facilities beginning in 1992. The entire facility was then converted to producing geranium cuttings for Fischer Geraniums. Brother Dave pursued the business opportunity and was presented to us by Michael Hensler due to hurricane Andrew destroying the entire Fischer facility in Homestead, Florida. Warren Ida was hired on to TGI and he managed the facility for 2-3 years. Warren was transferred to North and Jason Stephenson came on board and he managed the facility until Chad Baessler assumed management and finally Don Lehman managed the facility when the devastating “xzamtamonus” struck Fischers facility and we closed the facilities and moved the clean stock program to North, which saved the Fischer North America Geranium production.

Beth remembers:

Randy comments:

It was up to George, Ken, and me to make this possible operationally. The increase in volume created the need to find more greenhouse space. In 1997, we leased to own a facility in Golden from Bob User. The facility we used we now own and call Tagawa Foothills. Bob had a second facility adjacent to Foothills, which we ended up purchasing it the following year.

Most of our changes at Tagawa Gardens involved taking our long-stem roses to create more garden center and growing area. This happened mostly in the late 1980's and early 90's. Our Parker Rd driveway was paved and we did the landscaping by the current front sidewalk, adding Austrian Pines (planted by Chuck) and cobblestones in the drainage areas, both of which are still there today. This was also the year we built (Scott and Chuck) the demonstration gardens in the Perennial area.

In 1992 we expanded our outdoor nursery to the south and constructed new restrooms and west parking lot in 1993. We added electric doors to our front shop and doors into perennials. Believe it or not, we are still using the original ones installed 25 years ago!



In 1997 we started a series of concerts held each month, meant to introduce our community to the different music styles and cultures in our area. This series lasted for several years. At the time of its inception, there just were not the music or theatre experience in our area that there are now. In fact, when the Town of Parker started its own concert series etc they contacted us for references and ideas. What an honor!

1997



Tagawa Greenhouses leased the Golden facility (Tagawa Foothills) from Bob Euser as a lease purchase option and subsequently purchased the 320,000 square feet greenhouse in 1997.

1998



In 1998, Tagawa purchased on a lease purchase contract the other Euser Greenhouse facility (300,00 square feet) on McIntyre St. Tagawa Table Mountain.

This is the Tagawa Facility in Arvada.

2004-2005

Randy comments:

Out in the plains of New Mexico, just outside of a small town called Estancia, a large fire enveloped a greenhouse facility. The flames decimated the warehouse, and the owner called it a loss: placing the entire facility for sale and moving his operation elsewhere. Two years later, we had somewhat of our own fire. Tagawas had just lost an important small account, but in exchange we were able to land a much larger account for our retail business. Normally, this would have been an overwhelming success, but looking at the account we didn't have enough space to grow all of the product. We had a difficult decision to face: grow the business or shut down some of the other facilities. Bill Kluth was tasked to find us an opportunity to rent or purchase a greenhouse. Fortunately, he found the greenhouse facility just outside of Estancia.



Boilers on pad after fire



Beginnings of reconstruction



View of East to West



Julio Trejo Gene Pakaozi

Moving here would increase our greenhouse square footage by over 40%, and New Mexico is 2nd only to Arizona in days of sunshine per year. The dry climate was similar to Colorado but with less snow and other extreme weather conditions. The facility would be good for the retail business and also be good for our young plant production. We called Ball to see if they would partner with us, and while they declined, they thought it was a good plan and gave us a loan to help pay for the facility.



Boilers on pad after fire



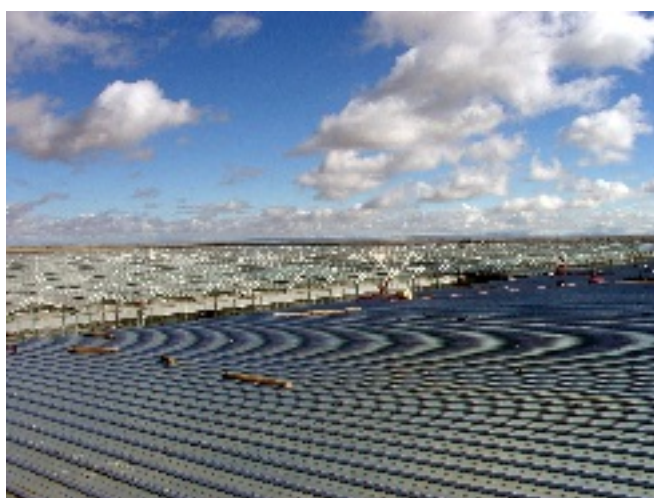
Warehouse nearly completed



Warehouse structural steel



Preparig for concrete walkways



View of 20 acre greenhouse



Shelter for boiler plumbing and controls



Burners installed on 1000hp boilers



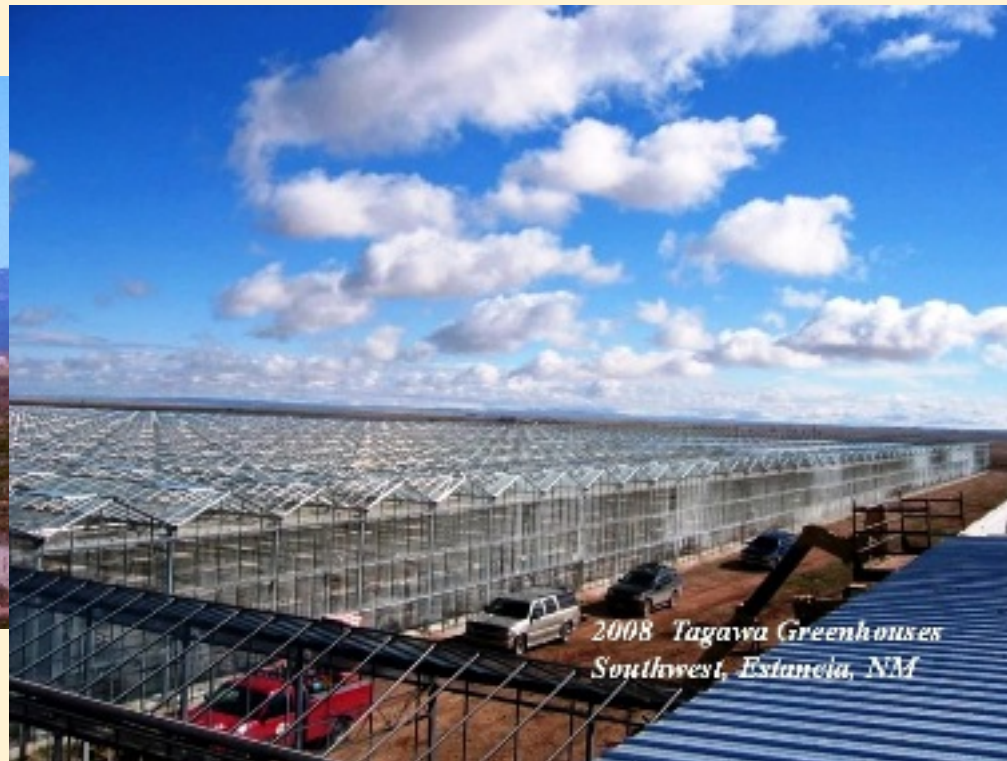
Jim, George, Ken. Randy



TSW Closing: Ken, Jim, George



New Sign April 2, 2005



2008 Tagawa Greenhouses



Completed 80,000 square feet warehouse and offices

Randy comments:

The only problem was that by the time we had the facility, it was September, and it hadn't been touched since the fires two years ago.

We rolled up our sleeves and set out to build and clean the burned warehouse: literally 3 months before we had to have plants in production. The abandoned greenhouse needed a lot of work, and we spent 7 days a week from morning to dusk fixing structures, running utilities, and cleaning up the new facility.

Two years of dust and fire was no match for the Tagawa team though. With help from Bill, Ken, George, Dave, and myself, December came and we had the place up and running just in time to start our growing season.

Bill Kluth comments:

It's January and the deadline to receive plants at TSW is approaching fast. But the greenhouse still doesn't have water connected so all effort is put into getting the water lines reconnected and working.

Going to the grocery store to buy thick sliced baloney to heat on an electric fry pan so we would have hot lunches at the site. Holding my breath as Ken and George are climbing on scaffolds to connect a temporary roof over the boilers so the new burners can be installed. Not because I was so afraid of them falling, but I was afraid of telling June that one of them fell.

George has been using a tractor with a tiller to grind up rose stock at Tagawa Depot. The tiller breaks and George is on his back under the tiller with the torch welding and cutting for a repair. He sticks his hand with the lit torch out from the tiller and ignites the chaff that has settled on top of the tiller. We don't have any water available, so I grab George's hat that he had taken off to put on the welder's helmet and pound out the fire. George comes out from under the tiller upon hearing the pounding, sees me with his burnt hat and says, "What the hell did you do to my hat?".

2014



Building Success At Tagawa Greenhouses

Tagawa Greenhouses has spent the past year improving its production team, in part by tapping into young talent. Blending young employees with more experienced staff has yielded positive results for the company.

by **AMANDA GALLAGHER**
Assistant Editor
agallagher@meistermedia.com

TAGAWA Greenhouses is trying a new approach to how it runs its operation, starting with the production staff.

CEO Randy Tagawa says that throughout the greenhouse industry, customer expectations have increased, and the company wants to be accurate and provide customers with a quality product.

"On the young plant side, there's definitely an expectation to have quality products delivered on time, and with the complexity of the number of varieties and product lines that we have, it's definitely been challenging to provide and meet our customer's expectations," Tagawa says. "From a company standpoint, we've been trying to reinvent Tagawa's. Just like any company and any product, you have to reinvent yourself to be relevant going into the future."

Making Changes To Keep Tagawa Current

Tagawa Greenhouses is a family owned company that has been in business for 47 years. The company produces young plants and liners sold exclusively to Ball Horticulture, as well as finished products for the mass market.

The company has locations in Brighton and Golden, Colo., and New Mexico, and each facility has around 16 to 20 acres of production greenhouses. Tagawa also has a partner company in California called Ball Tagawa Growers that produces all young plants that are sold to Ball.

To help meet customer expectation levels, the company has made an effort to build a great production staff. In the process of adding to the staff, many young individuals in their 20s and 30s were hired to fill those production spots.

Tagawa has found that younger individuals come to the table not only with an education, but with a lot of energy and a positive attitude. With more employees

coming to the company with fewer years of experience, Tagawa says he is personally spending more time in production trying to educate growers.

"For the past six months, I've been directly working with all of our new production staff to help train them in making good production decisions," he says. "I am very impressed with all of them and how fast they pick up on things."

Building A Strong Team

Hiring young people is one philosophy that is working for Tagawa Greenhouses. The production staff has improved in meeting its goals, and Tagawa says there is a lot more communication among staff members, and that the group is energetic, social and skilled at working as a team.

"I've seen a huge improvement over the past season and we will be very successful in meeting our customers' expectations into the future," Tagawa says.

Building Success

*"There is enough time in the
day to do
everything you want,
so, work hard,
but be there for those you love
and make time for the things
you like to do."*

*"You can overcome challenges
through perseverance
and hard work,
and sometimes it's not about the
end result
but what you learned
along the way."*

*"Mistakes happen,
but how we respond
and what we learn
from them
help us to be better
at what we do."*

Jeri Oda Tagawa

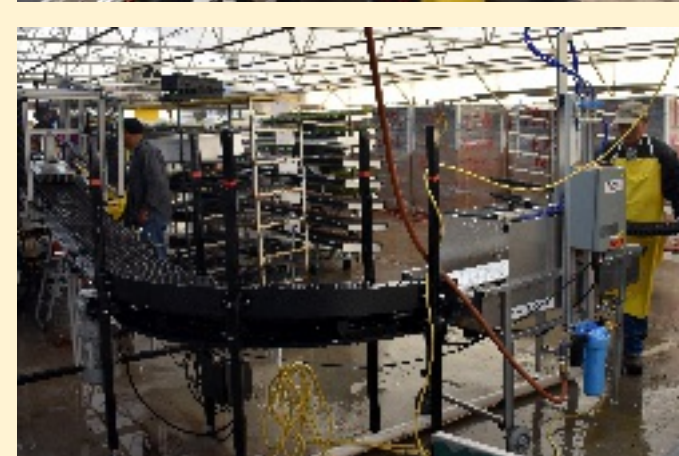
2017



Ted Tsumura comments:

Bill Kluth sent me an email with a request which I could not refuse because it was so challenging. Bill wanted to increase the number of cuttings stuck *Per Person Per Hour* at Tagawa Foothills Greenhouses. One entire house was renovated with rows of two level, long conveyer belts positioned to carry trays on top and bottom. In addition to **PPPH**, Bill wanted to improve sanitation by having the employees walk through footbath when entering sticking area, washing hands at sticking area, wear apron and to use hand sanitizer while moving from one species of plant to another. Bill also wanted each employee to know their role in a team or POD of six. Also, know how to hold and stick single and multiple cuttings and cleaning the POD area.

I was certain that this assignment would be fun and that the video or PowerPoint workshop would be useful. Then, Bill mentioned that there would be 30 to 40 people involved and that English was **not** the employee's second language. He gave me a list of the language spoken among the employees and they included Arabic, Myanmar, Nepalese, Persian, Somali, Sundanese, Burmese, Spanish, Ethiopian, and Laos. Thanks to **Bill, Don Lehman and Anita Campos**, the difficult task was completed



Supervisor Shakila explaining and demonstrating how to Stick a variety of cuttings.

Blanca Castro comments:

Rodrigo and I were married before we began working at Tagawa Greenhouse. We have been working here for about 24 years. I've always been in plugs transplant. 24 years ago, plug transplant was all done by hand. Now, this is the first year that we have a machine called TTA CombiFix. (see photo below). First season to be used. It is good, transplants faster. Doesn't differentiate between "is this going to be viable plant in seven days," if it's green the camera takes a photo and transplant occurs. The team that I hire would be able to determine if the plug would survive and discard it. But overall, the machine is faster. We were trained by a Canadian company and it took a week for us to learn how to use the CombiFix. They can check our machine from their office. I interview the new employees with the Supervisors and try to hire the best people for each position. Because I worked my way up at TGE from the entry level, I have learned much about the business during my 24 years.



We are doing well at TGE because we wanted to find a job that was close to our home. The company treats us like a family. I have three children and my youngest daughter, who is 14 years, is involved in many activities. Even during the peak season when we have to put in 15 hours or more each day, June will allow me to have a flexible schedule when we are not busy so that I can ask for days off to help my daughter. This is what I mean by the company treating us like their family.

**By Carlos Castillo**

I have been with Tagawa Greenhouses for the last 16 years. I spend the first nine years working in the Brighton facilities and today, I am completing my seventh year at the Golden facilities.

I was first assigned to the position as a Range Grower back in January of 2002. I was responsible for taking care of all growing needs in this area. After a brief period and within three years, I took over other areas including ranges A,D,E and Flowering 3,4,6,7 and 10. In 2012, I took over as Production Manager position for which I have been very thankful to the Tagawa family and many other employees for their support and coaching which have helped a lot on this journey.

The reason I enjoy the last position is because I love working with plants and being able to listen and read their needs (it reminds me of Grandma who always told me, "...look and listen to the plants and they will tell you what their needs are." I am fascinated to be able to dictate what we like the plants to do for us. Also, there are many great employees who really care for their jobs.

What talent do I bring to the greenhouse business? Dedication. I feel I am a very dedicated person that cares deeply for all other customers and their internal or external successes. I foster team work with the many great people who share the same passion for their jobs in floriculture. I also bring experience since I have been growing plants for over 20 years. I have seen a lot of good crops go and others that did not make me as proud. The most challenging aspect of my responsibilities is consistency. I expect having crops look and perform the same every week. Since mother nature bring something different each year to our greenhouses, I have to

**Rodrigo Castro****Mendez****commented:****I have been**

a grower all throughout my career with TGE.

I like the challenge of keeping the crop healthy and learning new ways to monitor how much plants need water like the "Number System" and the "Spot Check."



I began working when roses were still being grown in the greenhouses. I worked with RJ and was a rose cutter. After that, I learned to be a Grower at TGE. I enjoy working at TGE because I am always learning. I take pride in producing quality crops.

Maria Calderon comments:**I have been working**

for Tagawa Greenhouses for the past 26 years. I started working in the carnation department. I learned so much and gained some experience for my next chapter.



From here, I was switched to the bedding department and then I learned more new skills and moved to the planting department in a few years. I gained the proper experience to become one of the Supervisors for TGE. Thanks to my hard work and experiences in different departments, I learned to love what I do.



George and I tinkering with one of the many equipment to keep the greenhouses operating efficiently in Estancia, NM.



I'm looking for pcontrol parts shipped from Holland.



Yoshi and I met with legislators to discuss the importance of clarity in the ACA legislation.

By Bill Kluth

I was hired to support John Miller and the marketing effort for young plants - mostly plugs. Over time I have managed retail accounts of Safeway, site manager for a rented facility called Tagawa Depot which required me managing the tear out and rebuild of a cut flower facility into a bedding facility. (The first of 3 major remodels.) I helped to rebuild Tagawa Southwest from a tomato facility into a bedding facility. GM for our Golden facilities. I am currently the GM for all Colorado production facilities.

Along the way I took over many administrative responsibilities including managing our intellectual properties, property taxes, insurance, benefits, water right, regulatory requirements.

The Tagawa family have treated me and my family as extended family from day one. Their values of relationships, quality products and service, respect and care for employees, customers and suppliers match my values. I owe the management of the administrative processes described above mostly to Ken's guidance and patience in teaching me.

I brought my experience of being a grower and working for Ball Seed to my new position. But as I look back, almost everything I do today and how I do it was learned and taught here at Tagawa's... sometimes the hard way.

The philosophy of life and business ethics include respect, patience, strong ethics constantly and consistently applied to every situation. I am also very impressed with the willingness to change and accept new customers, products, equipment and methods.

One example of a "wow" experience I remember is the commitment to the project and determination to drive to success. I was in a trench in a light mist at dusk at Tagawa Southwest in Estancia. It was muddy, I was wet and cold. I saw Ken driving toward me. Hurrah! I was finally going to dry and warmup. No. He was coming to shine his headlights into the trench so I could see what I was doing. We were on a tight deadline and nothing was going to prevent us from being successful. By staying to finish the job we stayed on schedule and we were ready to receive plants on time.

My aspirations, as I continue my association with Tagawa Greenhouses, is to accept nothing less than quality and to develop the teams with whom I have the pleasure of working. Also, the attribute on which we can continue to focus is relationships.



By John Williams

I have been employed at Tagawa since January of 1984. 32 Great Years! When I started at Tagawa I was not married and had no children. I got married to Kathy the same year I started at Tagawa and we have raised four wonderful children. At one time or another, all of my family have worked for Tagawa and know how important the company is to me.

My career started at Tagawa when I learned about a Bedding Plant Grower position. I applied for the job. My boss would be George Tagawa. George and I had met before. The opportunity to work with someone like George attracted me to the position. His insight to what makes plants grow amazes me to this day. I knew this would be a great opportunity since Tagawa was well known in the Colorado Floriculture Industry.

My first day on the job and the first person I met was June Tagawa. June's office was located in the area that was most recently occupied by the soil lab. I remember the distinctive half door to her office. She kept the bottom half closed when conducting business and could close the top if she needed privacy. After meeting June I was introduced to key personnel. They would become and still are great friends. Additionally, I met Ken, Dave, Albert, Jim and the rest of the family. Ken the leader, the innovator, not afraid to try something new. Dave opened new markets, introduced new products. Albert made growing quality crops look easy. Jim built the Retail Garden Center.

32 years at Tagawa is a long time. I have stayed for many reasons: Respect, Vision, Peers, Customers, Suppliers and Opportunity. The greatest opportunity for me was to become a member of the ownership. Together with my partners Randy, Bill, Yoshi, Cheryl, Glenn, Yuji and Aiko we have had the responsibility of guiding the company for the last ten years. The skills I developed at Tagawa have been to pay attention to the details. I learned what quality products are and how to produce them. I have learned passion for my work, how to communicate, how to organize, to listen, to teach and to present my passion to individuals and groups who share my love for the industry.

When asked to describe my "WOW" experience, the top of my list is the honor to become part of the ownership, an honor I would never have had if I had not worked for Tagawa. A close second would be the look of astonishment and gratitude customers would express when being introduced to the "Punchable System". The responsibilities I have held over the last 32 years as Grower, Department Manager, Site Manager, Production Manager, Product Manager, Technical Assistance and Peer to my fellow workers has been gratifying.



The Vision Statement defines the company values, which are focused on family traditions, employees, communication, products, services and company growth. The vision statement is well worth repeating. "Tagawa Greenhouse will grow the highest quality product and through this excellence, become a recognized leader in the national market." We have not changed this belief. The business philosophy of Tagawa has not changed in the 32 years since I have been employed. Produce a quality product. Calculate your cost of production. Charge a fair price. Maintain accurate inventories. Deliver on time. Communicate challenges as they arrive. This simple, yet consistent business formula has led to success. I believe Tagawa started the business to provide for the family. The business has kept to this course and now provides for our employees, plus the customers the company sell to.

The Tagawa business model has remained constant, but the promotion of change has been encouraged. Promoting change and then changing to take advantage of opportunities has been the driver for company growth. Changes in products: The elimination of Cut Flowers and Foliage as markets decreased, led to the expansion of plug and liner production in the same square footage. Changes in square footage: Locations in Brighton and Parker expanded to locations in Arvada, California and New Mexico. Square footage increased from 600,000 square feet to 2,100,000 over the last 30 years. Changes in customer base from King Sooper and Safeway to Costco and Home Depot for finished product while focusing on young plant production and retail at the Garden Center. Changes in production techniques, production management, computer technology and equipment moved the company forward. Changes in employee sources, many employees took advantage of the amnesty program in the 1980's, we now hire millennials, and the recent waves of new immigrants create diversity in our work force. Change will continue.

Tagawa has always treated the employees fairly and with respect. Never asking an employee to do something they would not do themselves. I believe this attitude towards the employee is an important reason for the high retention level in the company. The departments: Administration, Marketing, Human Resources, Production, Operations, Distribution and Maintenance all work together for our common goal. Being with the company for 32 years has allowed me to interact with a lot of individuals. I have learned to encourage employees to accept new opportunities within or outside the organization. Any employee that worked for the Tagawa, then left, has become a way for Tagawa to give back to the industry. I have worked with a lot of great people, some who have retired and some who are still here. During the busy season, work requires you to spend a lot of time with your co-workers, promoting a good work environment. I have had the great opportunity to mentor new employees the last few years.

One reason I have stayed so long is because of my past and present co-workers. Looking ahead to the future, I know I will continue to learn, take on every new responsibility or challenge with the same passion I have for the company, our employees and our industry now. I know I would never have had this opportunity without having been associated with Tagawa. I say, "Thank you" to all the Tagawa Family by allowing me to be part of your History.