

OKI NURSERY: INDOOR—OUTDOOR

EDWIN S. KUBO

Oki Nursery Company

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Oki Nursery was started in Sacramento by Mr. Magoichi Oki. At that time, the nursery was both a producer of fruit trees and a retail nursery.

The Oki Nursery that we know today began in 1947 after Mr. Magoichi Oki and his two sons, Richard and George, returned from the Relocation Camp after World War II. As some of you may have heard, many Japanese families in the U.S. were interned in Relocation Camps during the war.

Being without adequate funding, it was very critical for the family to start a retail nursery immediately for quick cash flow and rely on the father's ability to produce fruit trees for a long term crop.

Shortly after, the sons found a niche for re-wholesaling bedding plants bought in Southern California and resold in Sacramento. Before long, production of general ornamentals in containers began.

In 1956, the retail nursery was sold and all effort was placed on production for the needs of the wholesale customers.

With emphasis on specialization of general ornamentals in containers, it became apparent that the need for better cash flow and more even sales throughout the year was of utmost importance. With this in mind, in the early 60's, we began a search for crops for diversification. We attended the Eastern Region I.P.P.S. meetings on a regular basis as well as visiting different greenhouse complexes during the winter months searching for crops that would fill our needs for diversification. By the mid 60's, the decision to start a greenhouse division was made.

Now we have an indoor-outdoor nursery to fulfill our cash requirements with:

—Strong emphasis on greenhouse crops during fall, winter and spring, and

—Strong emphasis on outdoor crops during spring and summer

In Sacramento, we have now approximately 1,000,000 sq. ft. of environmentally controlled greenhouses, 286 acres of general ornamental container-grown plants, and 90 acres of container and greenhouse production in Oregon.

The crops grown at Oki Nursery are as follows:

1. Bedding plants, annuals and perennials, plus ground cover plants

2. Foliage plants
3. Holiday plants, e.g. chrysanthemums, poinsettias, lilies, African violets, roses, cyclamens, and hydrangeas,
4. Hardy garden mums

In our outdoor division, we grow broadleaf and conifer plants in sizes of: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 15 gal. plus 24 in. boxes.

As in every aspect of business, there are advantages as well as disadvantages in our operation.

Some of the advantages are as follows:

1. Good cash flow, which is of utmost importance.
2. Good bench utilization.
3. Money items for salesmen to sell. This helps in retaining good sales people.
4. Wide selection of plants.
5. One-stop shopping for our customers.
6. Maximizing loading of our trucks.
7. Less vulnerability to market fluctuations.
8. More flexible to changes.
9. Broader market for customer potential.
10. More effective utilization of transportation equipment.
11. More effective usage of labor.

Some of the disadvantages are as follows:

1. Logistics and handling.
2. Consistent quality in all cultivars.
3. Qualified growers to grow wider range of plants.
4. Qualified sales people to sell wider range of plants.
5. Coordination of multiple locations.
6. Difficulty in loading trucks with different sizes of containers, flats, and cartons.
7. Depth in quantity.
8. Inventory control.
9. Difficulty in focusing on crops to sell.

For Oki Nursery, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages!!