



# BURCHELL NURSERY ROOT MATTERS

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## BEE-LIEVE IT! Self-fertile Almond Varieties Are Coming Soon!

**A**fter 20 years of research, Burchell Nursery looks to patent the first of several varieties of self-fertile almonds this fall. Propagation in commercial quantities is still a year or two away, but the option of planting a large block of a single variety is close to becoming a reality.

"Think of the efficiency," says Tom Burchell, third-generation CEO of Burchell Nursery. "A single regime for water, fertilizer, pruning, and just one harvest. Efficiency translates into profits. And a self-fertile variety will be far less dependent on bees to set a crop."

The goal is to breed reproductive parts of self-compatible flowers that will rub together, providing pollination without pollinators. Of course, the trees must also meet the usual standards of production potential, shell seal and thickness, harvestability, bloom and harvest dates, duration of bloom, and soil compatibility among others. And that's just what Burchell plant breeder, John Slaughter, has been working for over the past two decades.

Beginning with a selection of self-fertile almonds from Central Asia, John crossed the scrubby wild Asian trees with leading California commercial varieties using classical cross-pollination breeding techniques. His objective was to insert the dominant self-fertile gene into highly marketable almond types such as Nonpareil, Sonora and Butte. After the first cross, John backcrossed to commercial varieties. Eventually, he created more than 60 self-fertile varieties that offered commercial promise. But in the process, the mortality rate was high.

"After the back-cross, I planted the seeds, grew them out and bagged the blossoms to see if they set nuts on their own," John explains. "I cut down the ones that didn't perform to our standards. The test block looked like Arlington or Gettysburg Cemetery – lots of stumps all in a row. But we had a few keepers."

John mated the "keepers" with their siblings to refine the varieties. A number of these self-fertile types have been in commercial tests for the past five years.

Such research and development has been a hallmark of Burchell Nursery from the very start. As Tom Burchell puts it, "My grandfather began in 1942 with canning peaches, but as the industry changed, he changed with it and developed the first patented almond varieties." Soon that list will include self-fertile almonds.



*Tom*  
TOM BURCHELL



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### Carol Lincoln

Fresno's "Jill of All Trades"

No day is quite like another for our Fresno office administrator, Carol Lincoln, and that's just the way she likes it. You might say she's a taskmaster because she has mastered so many tasks. But that might suggest a more forceful personality, and Carol is friendly,

caring and always open to do whatever needs to be done.

On any given day or week, Carol might be answering phones, greeting customers, counting trees for delivery, ordering rain gear, designing sales sheets or taking photos of our newest varieties for reports and to submit for patents. She does it all, and well. She's even something of a philosopher, noting the seasonal rhythm of the nursery and the way the cycles of growth in the fields mirror those with the customers. "We're connected to our customers for a long time. I help take orders, then later connect the order to the face. But it doesn't end with the sale. Our guys go out and help with questions about planting, pruning, harvest. Trees are like people — each one grows differently," says Carol.

Carol has spent just about her entire working life in the nursery business. She's been with us for 10 years now, and we're fortunate to have her.



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**THE BURCHELL NURSERY, INC.**

## New Manager Keeps Our Greenhouse Growing

**T**here are big plans to expand our greenhouse operation, and they are now in the capable hands of our new greenhouse manager, Jeremy Bahne. Jeremy brought his expertise in potted trees to Burchell Nursery last April. The timing couldn't be more perfect, as we are preparing our largest ever shipment of 75,000 potted trees this fall.



Jeremy comes to us with a Bachelor's degree in ornamental horticulture from Fresno State University and six years of invaluable experience gained at the nation's

largest commercial nursery. And what does he think about his new job? "I love it!" says Jeremy. "The position is challenging and the people are great. We have a great team at the greenhouse."

Jeremy is currently heading up a significant research effort to transition commodities grown in the field to the greenhouse. As he says, "We want to raise the best quality product possible – straight, healthy trees with a vigorous root system – in a range of varieties, to give growers more choices." He's concentrating on almond rootstock, but also working with walnuts, cherries, peaches, nectarines and even citrus.

"There's a lot of science to the greenhouse – art, too, but a lot of science," states Jeremy. "I really enjoy that, because I'm working on a masters degree in plant science and I can apply the knowledge here." We're glad Jeremy brought his education and experience to Burchell Nursery.



Only Burchell Nursery potted trees can carry the new Ready Start label that stands for unsurpassed quality. We're proud to produce healthy trees with vigorous root systems ready to make a healthy start right from planting.

Look for our Ready Start Potted Trees label to be ensure a healthy start for your orchard.

To learn more about Jeremy's work on our fall line of potted trees, or to order for spring, please check with your field rep or call us at

**1-800-828-TREE.**