



Connie's Corner

Written 9/26/24

Girl Power!

by Connie Kratzke

Hello Everyone! It's been awhile! Writer's Block is real. I couldn't think of a single thing to write about that I haven't written about before. Over the years I've created numerous newsletters, columns and social media blurbs. My mantras haunt me. How recently I've delivered my favorite soap box sermons is difficult to recall. Luckily, I found inspiration at the second, Midwest Women in Horticulture event at the Lyndale Bachman's on Tuesday night. In fact, I think it cured me!

Mingling is something I feel awkward about and avoid whenever possible. That's why I signed up for the gathering quickly before I could overthink it. Doing "out of comfort zone" things helps us grow, even if it feels a little twitchy. Right off the bat, I was greeted by some familiar faces. Fifteen minutes in, I had a serendipitous encounter with a firecracker of a gal named Lynne Burke. (Have a great time in Italy, Kindred Spirit!) Those initial encounters loosened me up for the "speed dating" discussion groups that followed.

We toured a tiny portion of paradise and indulged in delicious treats and drinks. Glancing around our beautiful surroundings, I felt an air of competence and confidence. Industry role models connected with amazing young talent. Like-minded, professionally driven people shared good energy. We were reminded to care for ourselves and the whole experience felt healthy.

That got me thinking about my experiences in the industry. There were significantly fewer females in the business when I started. Nature's Bounty Garden Centre in Victoria is where I made my debut. That's also where I met my first, industry mentor, Sandra Frederickson. Had it not been for her, I'm not sure I would have plowed through. Sandra is the toughest chick I know. She's totally fearless (with the exception of spiders.) The most important thing I've learned from Sandra is how to stand up and defend my position. Considering the plethora of valuable horticultural

knowledge she has shared with me over the years, that's saying something. Watching her power through overwhelming challenges with fervid determination continues to inspire me to be stronger.

My next nursery mentor is less than half my age. She trained me at Wilson's and injected positivity into my somewhat dreary, overwhelmed mind. Changing companies after 20 years was hard. Claire Witte lightened the emotional load. Recently, while on vacation in Bemidji, I had a chance to catch up with her. The moment she walked into "Lazy Jack's" her good energy resonated. Equipped with an amazing work ethic and adventurous spirit, Claire is going places! She helped me endure the biggest shake-up of my adult life and I'm forever grateful.

Heck, plenty of incredible, plant-loving women have encouraged me over the years. Names like "Brenda" and "Jayne" come to mind. They have likely been there for many of you as well.

Now it's my turn to be the beacon. I work with some amazing ladies! From our OG's to our new recruits, we have a talented team. Barb and Kristi have been holding down the fort for many years. Previous to my employment here, they were friendly voices at the end of the line. Now, I see them as indispensable resources. Intelligent, capable, experienced team members like Barb and Kristi contribute professionalism to our organization.

Rafaela and Lydia are the amazing women who keep our plants looking their best. Lydia is constantly trimming from spring until late summer, masking any evidence of winter struggles. Rafaela muscles hoses around and replaces irrigation emitters. She labels pots, pulls weeds, deadheads flowers and prunes shrubs. Listing what she doesn't do would probably be faster. Both of these amazing people do their work without frowns or complaints. They are simply indispensable. However, all four of the individuals I just mentioned are edging towards their next chapters. That reality is a source of stress for a different day.

Autumn joined our customer service team last year and Priscilla hopped on board this year. They are the future of our customers' experiences. Both individuals are motivated and dedicated towards solutions and improvements. Their integration hasn't been completely seamless, but that's to be expected. Strong women feel deeply. Passionate personalities intertwined in the pressure cooker don't always "seal" right away. However, those who endure the challenges persevere. Surviving struggles together strengthens bonds. At least, that's been my experience.

Our fulfillment lead, Brianna, is paving my brightly lit path towards the next leg of my horticultural career. My confidence in her abilities and the trust we've built makes it possible for me to focus on becoming more meaningfully involved in the growth and improvement of Wilson's. Brianna started during a tumultuous time. Things weren't clicking with her predecessor. The protege I thought I'd found was not the one. At first, this was just a job for Brianna. Her goal was to endure it. As weeks went by, I watched endurance blossom into determination. The seed we haphazardly planted begged for what it needed. We did our best to nurture it. Now, it's grown into one of the most fruitful things I've ever been a part of. There is no greater reward than watching someone embark on the career they were meant for. I am so, so proud of Brianna!

Plenty of amazing ladies from our team have moved on to college, internships and careers beyond. All of them left indelible marks on my memory. Lydia Beaver is the most recent to depart permanently. She is going to make one heck of a cop someday, if she goes that route. Lydia would also make an excellent bailiff, corrections officer, security guard, hell- anything! She's a natural born leader. I've watched her handle very difficult situations with the calm and pragmatism I'd typically associate with age and experience. These characteristics are inherent. She's amazing and I can't wait to watch her future unfurl.

As women in this industry, we have an obligation to support our peers. Getting together is an excellent way to develop meaningful relationships and facilitate strong bonds. I am so grateful to Suzette Nordstrom for cuing me in on the Midwest Women in Horticulture gatherings. Jessi Jacobson and her team at Tonkadale hosted the first event last spring, which I didn't click on fast enough. Still kicking myself for that one. Susie Bachman West and the Lydale Bachman's crew were our gracious hosts this week. Gertens plans to host the next event and I'm really looking forward to it. Hopefully, more of our team will be able to participate. The energy in the building last Tuesday evening re-ignited my creative flame. Thanks for the inspiration, Ladies!!!



Midwest Women in Horticulture event at Bachmans



Claire and I in Bemidji



Brianna proudly promoting our plants at Tonkadale

Wilson's Nursery, Inc | 5730 Yancy Avenue, New Germany, MN 55367 | (952) 353-2762

Wilson's Nursery Inc. | 5730 Yancy Ave. | New Germany, MN 55367 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!