

APS BOD Nominee Profile

1) Number of peonies you grow?

140 mature plants with another 400 peonies planted in the fall of 2021 and no plans to slow down any time soon!

2) Number of different varieties you grow?

140 varieties with an additional 200 planted in the fall of 2021.

3) Which of the following labels best represents you? (choose all that apply)

- a. Hobbyist grower
- b. Commercial root grower
- c. Hybridizer - An amateur who has enjoyed hybridizing activities.
- d. Cut flower grower

4) What are some of your strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths

- A blazing, all-consuming passion for the enjoyment of peonies in all forms
- A voracious, insatiable appetite for peony knowledge; a perpetual drive for self-improvement; and an eagerness to learn and incorporate new concepts
- A genuine, altruistic desire to promote the peony and build and serve the community
- Strong communicator with an ability to craft thoughtful and personable responses that give a face to any person or organization being represented
- Expert wielder of diplomacy and disarming kindness
- Unique perspective on peonies from the vantage point of a retail florist and an international cold climate grower
- Strong creative drive with an affinity for visual presentation and media
- Solution-oriented, independent problem solver
- Strong objective-based and creative writing skills
- Enjoyment in producing a glossy, polished finished product
- Detailed oriented to the nth degree
- Existing rapport with community members and a small, self-built platform to promote the activities of the Society

Weaknesses

- Neglect of self care/personal time
- Inability to say no and to ask for help, leading to taking on more than I can manage and being overworked
- Spending an inordinate amount of time on details and a level of polish that only I will notice/appreciate - overambition
- Analysis paralysis
- A lack of understanding of the formal proceedings and processes of the Society

-Proximity - I am a great distance away from most members, making in-person gatherings challenging in certain situations and especially with international COVID regulations.

- Brevity and keeping things simple

5) Which of the following committees interest you? (choose all that apply)

- a. Award of Landscape Merit (ALM) Committee
- b. Mentorship Committee
- c. Awards Committee
- d. Books & Publication Committee
- e. Bulletin Committee
- f. Commercial Members Committee
- g. Convention Steering Committee
- h. Educational Committee
- i. Exhibition Committee
- j. International Outreach Committee
- k. Nomenclature Committee
- l. Publicity Committee
- m. Scientific & Horticultural Studies Committee
- n. Seed Distribution Program
- o. Social Media Committee
- p. Speakers Bureau
- q. Website Committee
- r. Other Committee Not Formed Yet (Specify)

6) What do you hope to accomplish in your first term (two years) if elected to the board?

I would love to build community ties, and in particular, tap into the great potential for growth that lies in young gardeners, hobbyist growers, and cut flower farmers by convincing them to consider membership and to experience the reward of getting involved in the community. There has been an explosion in young, upwardly mobile growers with interest in the peony that range from small but high impact city lot hobbyists to large scale flower farming entrepreneurs who have carved out full-fledged seasonal businesses. I also believe there has been a bit of a renaissance in peonies the last few years, perhaps due to their weighty visual impact on social media coupled with a renewed interest in gardening spurred on by the ongoing pandemic. This presents a unique opportunity to expand the membership base, spread the joy of growing peonies, inform and educate, and distribute the lofty workload by getting motivated individuals involved. The benefits of of APS membership are tremendous and number many, but based on conversations with my peers who grow plants at different levels, they are not always well understood or fully taken advantage of. With the right members in an ambassador role, I think we can make these benefits more visible and recruit a new generation of members who will continue the fine work of the APS with a fresh set of eyes, a new set of skills, and

different perspectives. There has been some outstanding progress and huge strides in this regard in the last several years, and I would love to contribute to these efforts by producing some high quality, high fidelity peony imagery and engaging content that relays information effectively and encourages interaction and participation from members, and to collaborate to generate a social media schedule that provides a structured and continual flow of mouthwatering peony content.

7) What do you want to see change for the APS, as a whole, in the next two years?

The way information is being consumed and processed has and continues to rapidly change in our electronic age. It seems now that visual imagery dominates as it swiftly delivers large bursts of information over a short amount of time. An unfortunate side effect of this appears to be a shortened focus and lower endurance for lengthy and challenging content. While I certainly enjoy the technical nature and depth that APS articles and resources offer and don't think that this is something that should be compromised on, I do think that it may be worth exploring coordinating and introducing companion visual resources and posts that deliver this information in distilled, bite-sized knowledge tidbits to extend the reach of this information to a more casual audience and and to look at adapting the presentation of information to more closely match how it is consumed.

8) How do you think the board's expectations match with your expectations for yourself?
The board is looking for someone who closely matches the following:

- Pre-existing passion for the cause
- Eagerness to participate at every meeting (six teleconferences & convention meeting)
- Willing to prepare ahead for meetings
- Excited to serve on committees
- Strong desire for stewardship to others
- Supportive, but willing to express their own opinion
- Strives to learn as much as possible

This is a point-by-point match made in heaven and would align with the standards I hold myself to and with the enthusiasm with which I would approach Directorship.

9) What skills and expertise would you bring to the board of directors if elected?

I have a well-rounded suite of creative skills, including basic, enthusiast-level knowledge of photography and video capturing and editing, and strength of written word, which I would love to contribute to the cause of engaging and expanding the community. This creative drive is also matched by a strong desire to communicate and connect, which makes me a good fit for writing thoughtful communications that carry that extra personal touch.

I also have a decent understanding of and presence in social media and a natural aptitude and enjoyment for figuring things out and making things happen on the ever-evolving technology front.

10) In what areas would you like to develop your knowledge and expertise?

Thinking about the past and future of peonies when it comes to hybridizing absolutely sends my imagination into orbit, and I can never seem to do enough reading on this topic. Going hand in hand with this is also a desire to learn about the talented plantspeople behind their creations - the lives they lived and the visions, methods, and goals they had when it came to peonies. I would also love to further my knowledge and increase my exposure to the wide array of cultivars that are out there and to gain more experience and a better understanding of the species peonies.

11) How much time are you willing to commit to board activities and committee-level work?

Whatever it takes. It's not uncommon for me to spend 20+ hours a week enjoying peonies through reading, writing, corresponding, ordering, creating, planning, and dreaming. I would love to invest this time in activities that benefit the Society, members, and the community as a whole.

12) What sort of connections do you have that might be used as a resource to benefit the board and organization?

As someone active in the Canadian peony scene, I am fortunate to share treasured relationships with talented Canadian vendors, die-hard enthusiasts, CPS board members, cut flower producers, ambassadors and promoters of the peony, and provincial society board members and presidents. Through my humble social media presence I have connected with budding home hobbyists and the exploding world of emergent cut flower farmers, with which I have some influence.

13) What does success look like to you?

Success is sharing the pure, unbridled joy that peonies bring to me with others, in hopes that it makes them feel the same way. Success is collecting and disseminating information in hopes that it will benefit those that seek it out. Success is supporting, encouraging, empowering, and elevating like-minded individuals to build a self-sustaining community from whose achievements we all benefit. Success is staying humble and grounded, remembering those who inspired and helped you along your journey, and paying the favor forward.

14) What motivates you?

A strong drive to create and to avoid stagnation is what keeps me marching forward. To me, growing something beautiful, and sharing that something beautiful with others, is a quiet rebellion against the dulling of the senses that washes over us with the humdrum of everyday adult life, and the privilege we have of using these amazing plants to express ourselves is something that should be taken full advantage of.

15) What interests you most about being on the board of directors?

I can think of few things that are more worthwhile to me than helping steer and taking ownership and responsibility for a small slice of the future of peonies - a task I would not take lightly. I owe the APS an unpayable debt of knowledge and Directorship seems like a rewarding way to pull my weight, give back, and contribute. I am certain it would also be enlightening, and heaps of fun to correspond and work with and alongside such incredibly talented and knowledgeable Directors.

16) How do you see yourself fitting in socially with other board members?

Swimmingly! I am a people person that is able to find common ground with most others and have had the pleasure and good fortune of corresponding with many of the board members on some level.