

# Neighbors EAST

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*Woodville Road Nursery in Northwood was begun in 1960 as a landscaping hobby*



THE BLADE/JOHN MORRISON

Tom Mlynek, left, began the whole thing in 1960 and was joined by his son, Jim, at right, in 1977 and by grandson, Jim, a Clay H.S. Junior, who works at the nursery after school.

## Grandfather, his son, and his son continue to make land look good

BY ANN WEBER  
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It's only natural that Oregon Clay High School Junior Jim Mlynek should be studying for a career in landscape management.

He's been working in the field since he was 3. His grandfather, Tom Mlynek, started the Woodville Road Nur-

series in Northwood in 1960 as a hobby. Tom's son, Jim, joined the venture in 1977 and built it into a business that he now owns. And the younger Jim works there every day after school.

All that experience and family history paid off for the 17-year-old recently when he took first place in state competition for students in nur-

series/landscape management careers. He and Clay classmates Kurt Everman, Mike Rock, and Dean Willy placed third in the team competition.

The contest was sponsored by the Ohio FFA in conjunction with the Ohio Nurserymen's Shortcourse and the Central Environmental Nursery Trades

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## Land

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Show. Any high school student enrolled in an agriculture or horticulture program in Ohio was eligible to complete in the event, held in Columbus.

Students were asked to identify deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs, perennials, turf grasses, ground covers, insects, diseases, and equipment used in landscaping. They also had to interpret a landscape design, prepare a customer's order, select nursery plants, and determine proper shrub pruning procedures. A written test covered plant selection and care, disease control, and landscape principles.

The Mlynek youth is a junior in Clay High School's agriculture program, which was recognized last year by the National Association of Agricultural Educators as one of the top six such programs in the country. Instructors Linda Rossler and Charles Schneider accepted the award at the organization's annual conference in San Diego in December.

Young Jim said he hasn't considered any other career but the one he has grown up in. "I started out young and I just really caught on

and enjoyed it. I like everything about it," he said.

He said he isn't sure if he'll continue to study landscaping through a two or four-year college program after high school graduation. Meanwhile, he added, he's learning from his dad and grandfather.

"I'm very proud of him," the elder Jim said. The two have been working together for 12 years and recently became partners in a new venture that is to open this spring, a stone yard that will operate in conjunction with the existing landscaping and retail plant sales business.

"Last spring Jim and I put our heads together and started talking about the stone business, something that goes perfectly with our existing business," Mr. Mlynek said. "We figured we could make it work. We really dug in and have been working very hard on it since last May."

Tom Mlynek, founder of the hobby-turned-business, watches the growth from his home on the nursery grounds at 5819 Woodville Rd. He retired from his full-time job as a wood pattern maker in 1994.

"My idea to putter around with a few flats of flowers has really snowballed," he said.