

DEIGAARD NURSERIES (Paterson Avenue Ag Nursery Block)

Deigaard Nurseries was formed in the early 1930s in Monrovia and Duarte California and grew ornamental container plants for home landscaping. In March 1950 Louis and Agnete Deigaard purchased the property in the More Mesa area at 5295 Shoreline Drive, Santa Barbara. The property consist of 32.3 acres and has 600 feet fronting on the ocean and running roughly back 2200 ft into Shoreline Drive near the south end of Paterson Ave. The Nursery was one of the first to grow quality varieties of palms in California, both exterior and interior, in any commercial numbers, in the ground. In 1968 as Monrovia and surrounding areas got built-out Deigaard moved its operations and headquarters to Santa Barbara and concentrated on the palm tree niche market. Many of the specimen palms seen in Santa Barbara such as the Court House, the Biltmore and other landmark buildings came from Deigaard Nurseries.

The Nursery remains in the family with none of the younger generation involved in the daily nursery operations nor succession plans.

In 1978 it became clear that digging palms out of a very marginal clayish soil on the mesa and the watering conditions were not industry competitive, and Deigaard invested and moved palms into a containers and a drip system culture. Later the water availability became more of a problem even with a drip system with potential rationing.

About this time, at the request of Santa Barbara County, Deigaard voluntarily gave as easement on Shoreline Dr. to allow a two lane road into the Orchid Road development. The Road Department then raised the road in front of Deigaard 7 feet with a drain one foot below the road creating a dam and a pond from irrigation runoff. Several years later, and we have no record of why,---- the area was designated a wet land denying this land our use. We heard that this was to mitigating a UCB problem.

Also during the 1980's to 2000 competitive Nurseries were springing up and some moving to the Santa Paula 126 corridor, Somis, and later to Santa Maria (e.g. like a portion of Por La Mar did). These areas are hospitable to agriculture and have agriculture services readily available. They also became a focus for retail nurseries and large landscapers to buy competitively from several nurseries in the same area that could furnish all their needs. Further they do have development in the surrounding area.

Deigaard Nurseries has about 1 acre of hot houses, 4 acres of shade, and support office and barn buildings. A planning department review a few years back said the several of the Paterson Ag nurseries property were not suitable for flower or potted plant hot houses additions a la Carpenteria due to bringing too many additional workers into the Nursery with an effect on the adjacent neighborhoods. Deigaards would not have considered it anyway. Water is supplied by the Goleta Water Company. There is no housing supplied for the laborers who have to seek housing in the Goleta area. One conflict we have had in the past is people trying to access the beach thru our property which is now fenced off.

The Patterson Ave Urban Ag area includes several producers of food row crops, with orchards in the general area too. However, most of the growers are container or potted plant growers for the flower market and interior/exterior landscape needs. With no/slow housing grow in Santa Barbara there is a minimal local market compounded now by the housing collapse, excessive inventories, and cost cutting. The Paterson Ave --More Mesa growers will dwindle in the next years because of competition, remoteness to markets, and the blocks of land because of the soil and Nursery economics are not suitable for conversion to food crops. The blocks as presently zoned will be sold to large home owners and will most likely be minimally used commercial Agriculture purposes unless flexibility is provided.

It would behoove the Long Range Planning Committee to consider other uses as the inevitable demise or sizing down of some of the Ag in the Paterson area will happen. With such a wonderful

location the general area could support modest development consistent with contiguous residential areas and smart planning that would bring such positives for the Community as potential Ocean front viewing (Palm tree lined), loop roads for safety and access, and other community features that can compliment the potential More Mesa conservation initiative. It should be noted that West Covina Nursery and Oceancrest also have 600 feet of ocean front next to Deigaards 600 feet for a total between the nurseries of 1200 feet. More Mesa could well be a mini Montecito by the Beach in 20 years still with downsized Ag but with many positive community features.