

■ Study Guide: Starting a Permaculture Nursery

Based on the presentation by Greg Peterson

Why a Nursery Business? (Timestamp: 3:05–4:05)

Key Takeaway: Plants are self-replicating — grow more stock from what you have. Keep it fun to make it sustainable.

Action Steps:

- Start with plants you love.
- Track which propagate easily.
- Make fun part of your process.

Accidental Beginnings in Phoenix (Timestamp: 5:14–7:53)

Key Takeaway: Greg's nursery began when he sold off surplus wholesale fruit trees.

Action Steps:

- Look for unmet local demand.
- Experiment with surplus sales.

The Big Problem with Conventional Nurseries (Timestamp: 8:11–9:15)

Key Takeaway: Big-box nurseries sell trees that won't fruit locally — a niche for regionally adapted plants.

Action Steps:

- Research local climate needs.
- Offer only adapted species.
- Market climate-fit plants.

Pop-Up Nursery Model (Timestamp: 9:23–10:15)

Key Takeaway: Seasonal pop-ups (20 days/year) keep costs low and life balanced.

Action Steps:

- Test a pop-up model first.
- Align sales with planting windows.

Education First, Sales Second (Timestamp: 11:11–12:07)

Key Takeaway: Education builds loyalty and success — free classes drive sales.

Action Steps:

- Host seasonal workshops.
- Offer free intro sessions.

Seasonal Sales Calendar (Timestamp: 12:51–14:14)

Key Takeaway: Greg uses a year-round cycle: June pre-orders, Sept early bird, Jan pickups.

Action Steps:

- Build a seasonal calendar.
- Use pre-orders to finance stock.

The Power of Free Education (Timestamp: 16:43–18:36)

Key Takeaway: Free tours and classes attract large audiences, donations, and loyalty.

Action Steps:

- Offer free tours or webinars.
- Use donation-based models.

Bare-Root Trees vs. Potted Trees (Timestamp: 19:04–20:25)

Key Takeaway: Bare-root trees avoid transplant shock and establish better.

Action Steps:

- Offer bare-root stock.
- Teach customers why it works.

Guarantee Model that Builds Responsibility (Timestamp: 23:35–24:19)

Key Takeaway: Split replacement costs to share responsibility with customers.

Action Steps:

- Avoid full refunds.
- Use shared replacement guarantees.

Consulting and Diversifying Income (Timestamp: 24:33–25:16)

Key Takeaway: Supplement sales with consulting, podcasts, and events.

Action Steps:

- Offer consulting services.
- Explore podcasts or online courses.

Customers Don't Read Instructions — Teach Them Anyway (Timestamp: 21:13–22:50)

Key Takeaway: Repeat planting info across classes, emails, and signage.

Action Steps:

- Reinforce key info everywhere.
- Plan 3+ reminders for each message.

The Newsletter as a Sales Tool (Timestamp: 25:46–26:28)

Key Takeaway: Newsletters drive sales by blending education with offers.

Action Steps:

- Start a monthly newsletter.
- Mix care tips with promotions.

Partnerships with Other Nurseries (Timestamp: 27:00–28:14)

Key Takeaway: Collaborations expand plant diversity without extra overhead.

Action Steps:

- Partner with local growers.
- Offer consignment or wholesale resale.

Niche Crops: Citrus and Fruit Trees in the Desert (Timestamp: 29:04–30:11)

Key Takeaway: Focusing on desert-suited trees made Greg's nursery distinct.

Action Steps:

- Identify 5–10 region-specific crops.
- Make them your brand foundation.

Success is About Relationships, Not Just Plants (Timestamp: 33:44–34:29)

Key Takeaway: Community networks are the foundation of long-term nursery success.

Action Steps:

- Focus on relationships over transactions.
- Host volunteer or community days.

■ Inspiring Quotes

"Plants make more plants — nurseries are self-replicating businesses."

— Timestamp ~3:05–4:05

"Most big-box nurseries sell trees that will never fruit here."

— Timestamp ~8:11–9:15

"Our nursery runs only 20 days a year — the rest of the time, I have my life back."

— Timestamp ~9:23–10:15

"Customers don't read instructions — you have to teach them over and over."

— Timestamp ~21:13–22:50

■ Final Advice from Greg Peterson

1. Keep overhead low — pop-ups beat high fixed costs.
2. Lead with education — informed customers become loyal customers.
3. Adapt your calendar — align sales with regional planting seasons.
4. Diversify income — consulting, online, and partnerships support resilience.
5. Focus on relationships — community is your strongest asset.