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Briggs Nursery in Receivership

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Details are sketchy, but a news report from Washington State says that Briggs Nursery of Elma, Washington, a well-known propagator and supplier of rhododendrons and other woody ornamentals (not to be confused with Briggs Garden & Home in Massachusetts), has gone into court-appointed receivership. That means the business has essentially been taken over by the receiver, who will determine how and if the business continues and how creditors will be paid.

The Daily World, a coastal Washington daily newspaper, reported on January 29 that the Bank of the West has instituted a lawsuit against Briggs Nursery, claiming in excess of \$5 million is owed to the bank. The loans date back to February of 2008, and “the company has not been able to keep up with the payments and is officially in default,” according to the lawsuit.

Green Profit did a bit more digging online, and found a Washington State Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) filing dated January 26, in which Briggs planned to lay off 150 people permanently due to business closure. A WARN filing must be made 60 days prior to any closures or layoffs.

Seeing how the paper reported only a “skeleton crew” at the facility when they visited, we didn’t expect an answer when we called the nursery. However, the customer service person who answered told us they’re open for business as usual, have had no layoffs and are “shipping like crazy.”

Calls to a court-appointed receiver have gone unanswered. Briggs celebrated its 100th anniversary last year. **GP**