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Front Lines

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Behnke Nurseries to Close

Ellen C. Wells

I got word recently that this spring will be the last for Behnke Nurseries Garden Center of Beltsville, Maryland. The family business, which was established in 1930, will close its doors for good sometime in June.

A post from Behnke's VP and family member Stephanie Fleming on their website includes the store's closing announcement, a portion of which reads, "My family has been discussing what to do with our aging property and, for many reasons, the ultimate decision was to close the nursery."

According to a piece written by Susan Harris on GreenbeltOnline.org, the decision to close wasn't because business was bad but because there were no more family members coming up to take over the business. Other alternatives were investigated—selling the property to another garden center, for example. And rather than selling the 10-plus acre property to a developer and calling it a day, the family is actively participating in the development of the property into something that will be a benefit to the community.

It's sad to see the closing of a third-generation garden center business, but there's some comfort in knowing the family wants their legacy to be one which will continue to benefit their community. Best of luck in that endeavor, Behnke Nurseries. **GP**