

2/1/2023

Gardener's Supply Founder Passes

Ellen C. Wells

Gardener's Supply Company founder Will Rapp passed away on Monday, December 12. The company, now employee-owned, was founded in 1983 and Will continued to be involved for almost 40 years, including most recently as a member of the Board of Directors.

The company released this statement: "Will was a visionary whose mission was to improve the world. Through his work and his legacy at Gardener's Supply Company, Will believed that gardening could do just that, by nourishing the body, elevating the spirit, growing stronger communities and making powerful connections with our planet. A dedicated steward of the Earth and a pioneer of sustainability, Will always believed that through education and inspiration, our company could encourage more gardeners to adopt Earth-friendly products and practices."

While Will's legacy is too long to detail, just some of his accomplishments include offering ownership to the employees starting in 1987, with the company becoming 100% employee-owned by 2009. He also helped create the Intervale Center, a nonprofit to help revitalize Vermont's food system. From a blog post Will wrote on the company's website: "The Intervale Center was established on a large parcel of forgotten land adjacent to the Gardener's Supply headquarters in Burlington, Vermont. Over the years, the Intervale Center has helped to restore 350 acres of farmland and has cultivated a vibrant community of more than a dozen small farms."

Today, Gardener's Supply Company, which started out as a mail-order catalog, has grown into a major online presence with four brick-and-mortar (and glass) garden centers in Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

GP