

July 17, 1997

Dear Ted and Sandy,

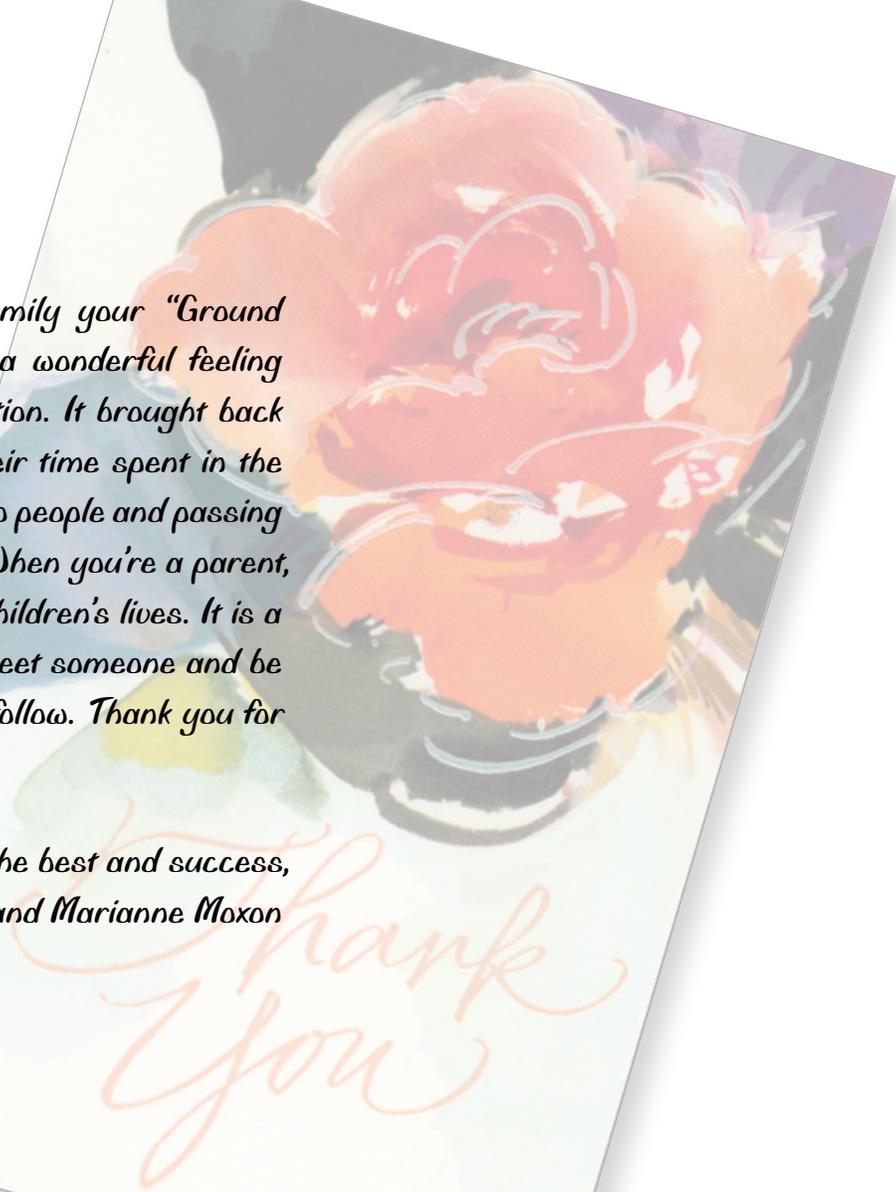
Pat and Stirling McGill had given the family your "Ground Covers Unlimited" catalogue. There was a wonderful feeling went over us when we read your introduction. It brought back happy memories of Mom and Dad and their time spent in the greenhouse business. Dad enjoyed talking to people and passing on what he knew about flowers and so on. When you're a parent, you hope to have some influence on your children's lives. It is a special gift if you manage in your life to meet someone and be able to give without knowing a direction to follow. Thank you for your thoughtfulness of remembering them.

We wish you all the best and success,
Bob, Charlene, Julie and Marianne Moxon



Recently my sister Pat McGill gave us a copy of your brochure. We were overwhelmed by your tribute to our Dad. He was a father and friend to Ross and I, Ross having lost his father in childhood. His love was unquestioned and unconditional, a special bond we will always cherish. We are so grateful that his compassionate and giving spirit has touched other lives. He was a very special man, quietly giving of himself and his wealth of knowledge to enrich the lives of many people. Your cover drawing will keep Moxon Gardens alive for those who knew him and appreciated his talent.

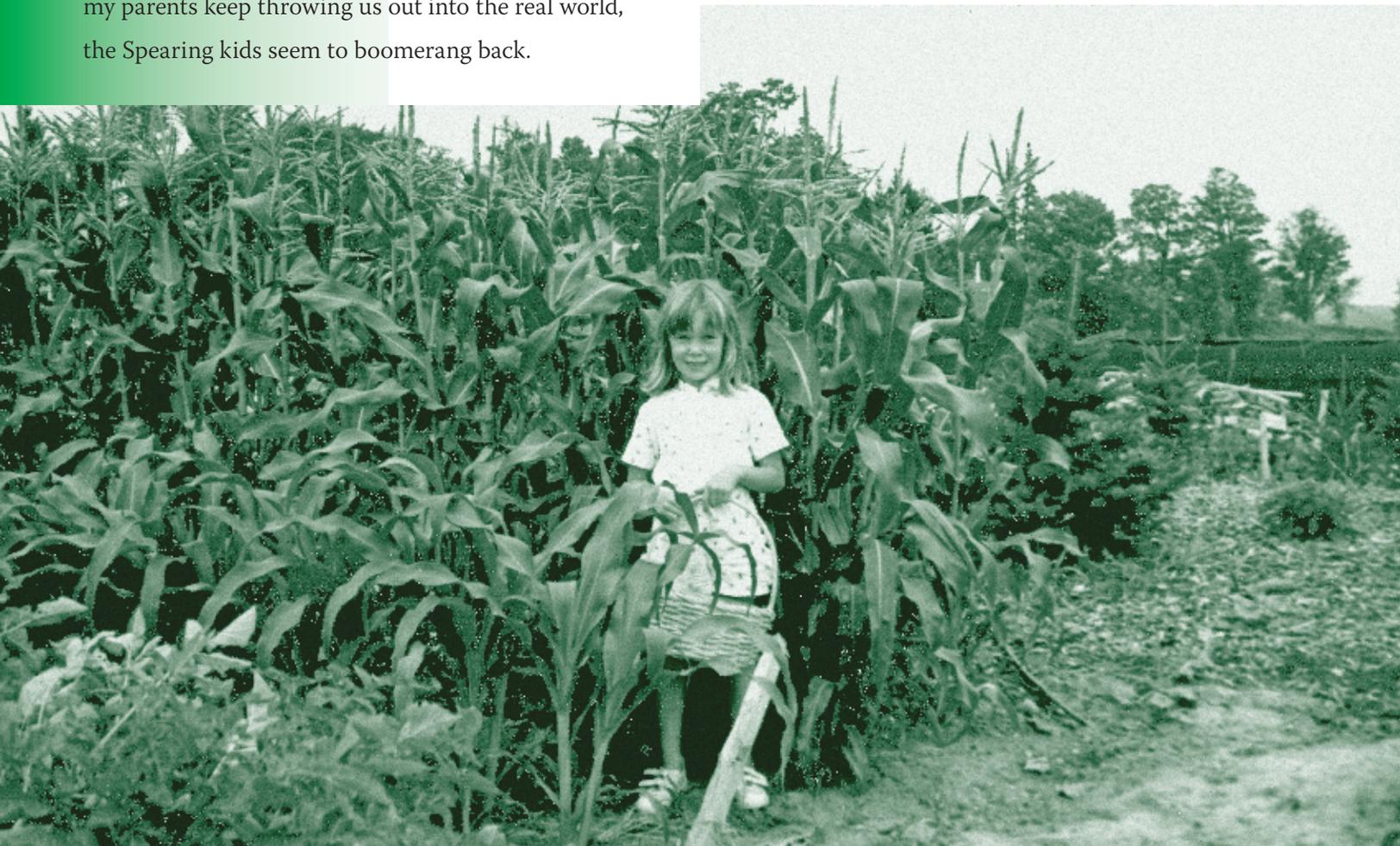
Thank you and continued success in your business,
Ross and Rosemary (nee Moxon) Goodmurphy



Back in 1997, our catalogue featured a story on local nursery owner, Harold Moxon. He was an obvious influence on his family, my Dad and the community; an honest, humble horticulturalist raising a large family through the Great Depression and beyond. When I read the thank you letters addressed to my parents, it made me realize the immeasurable value of what we are all capable, and that as my Dad has said in years past – a nursery can be much more than a nursery.

And now it is my turn to be eternally thankful. As the oldest daughter in the Spearing clan, it is with great excitement and determination that I have left my advertising job in Toronto to return to Ground Covers Unlimited. Landing a job with my parents was not as easy as it might seem. They did their best to emphasize the hard work, the long hours, the fresh air, but as much as my parents keep throwing us out into the real world, the Spearing kids seem to boomerang back.

I wrote the cover letter for our 25th Anniversary catalogue in 2004, on the theme of how agricultural roots well prepared me for the “real world”. Turns out the real world was expensive, tiring in its rat-race pace and aggravating when you see others with so little responsibility for themselves and the environment. At work I felt personally guilty printing advertisements on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper, selling SUVs. While it was one thing to scold my roommates for not recycling, it’s another to have to participate in the corporate double standard of promoting consumerism candy-coated in conservation. While I was good at advertising, I found my efforts plagued by nagging doubts in its stability, sustainability and true value to our society. And then as if sleeping on a gold mine, I realized the tremendous opportunity lying under my nose at home. I have come back to the potato patch finally knowing the contentment in making the right choice.



Having a family-owned nursery brings to light the fact that the green industry's sustainability is based on more than how we grow a plant. Our current shortage is the "who" – young people considering this a worthy career. Equally important is the necessity to pass your knowledge onto them. I am extremely lucky that my parents are willing mentors for knowledge not easily accessible (not many growers have time to write textbooks or post blogs!). But wanting to learn begins with knowing the option is available. Your mentorship can be responsible for lighting the fire of enthusiasm in a young person. The offer of a first job or access to resources is often the open door that is needed. Young people are already interested and energetic about environmentalism; this industry needs to continue cultivating that interest. They look at what we do with new perspective and technology. This new enthusiasm can collaborate with your well of practical knowledge for real working efficiencies. This kind of open-minded decision-making will only go further in promoting ourselves as a cornerstone to the green movement, not another two-faced contributor to its demise.

However, my few years in advertising were not a waste by any means. Continual contact with friends and coworkers is enticing them out to the nursery to learn more about horticulture. I have advanced my marketing, computer and IT skills enough to bring some timesaving benefits to this business already. I'm happy to announce a new spam-free email address! Yet despite all the available technology, I haven't figured out a way to download my parents' brains into mine. I guess I'll just have to learn the nursery trade the old-fashioned way.

*All the best,
Melissa Spearing
(aka Missy)*

