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**Growing Stronger Together**

*Chalfant Big Trees Farm & Feed teams up with Eastern Sierra Land Trust to keep the Eastern Sierra blooming*

From a distance, Chalfant Big Trees Farm & Feed appears as a lush swathe of green rising from Chalfant Valley’s sandy soils. As the hands and hearts that have kept this family-owned garden store growing strong since its founding in 2003, Steve and Debbie Blair are firmly rooted in the Eastern Sierra community: they are committed to doing what they can to keep the region beautiful and productive.

So when the Blairs learned of the efforts of local non-profit Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) to protect the region’s wild and working lands, they saw an opportunity to take their commitment a step further by teaming up with ESLT and sponsoring the organization’s work.

Chalfant Big Trees first became involved with Eastern Sierra Land Trust through ESLT’s Eastside Pollinator Garden Project. Begun in 2014, the Eastside Pollinator Garden Project helps locals throughout Inyo and Mono counties create and certify pollinator habitat in yards, gardens, and community spaces. When Steve and Debbie Blair planted their own certified pollinator habitat, the effect was enormous. “For years, we’ve had the best vegetable garden. But we weren’t getting any pollination – the bees just weren’t here,” Steve remembers. After creating a pollinator garden, “every single blossom had a bee in it. It made a huge difference.”

In addition to adding native plants to their landscape, Steve and Debbie Blair have started beekeeping. They now have three active hives, and sell all the necessary supplies at Chalfant Big Trees. They even host free educational classes to teach beekeeping basics to beginners, in addition to annual classes on tree pruning, choosing the right organic soil, and more.

Regardless of whether you would rather keep bees or run from them, Steve Blair knows that there is plenty that every person can do to keep the Eastern Sierra blooming. “It helps so much to take just a small portion of your property and dedicate it to a number of native plants. You don’t have to think big – just a few plants here and there, and the pollinators will come.”

As a business sponsor of Eastern Sierra Land Trust, Chalfant Big Trees Farm & Feed has made generous financial contributions in support of the organization’s work to safeguard treasured Eastern Sierra lands. Steve and Debbie Blair have also helped enhance Eastern Sierra Land Trust’s Pollinator Demonstration Garden, located at the ESLT office (250 N. Fowler St. in Bishop). They have donated supplies and materials to help ESLT’s front yard come to life with birds, bees, and butterflies.

The Blairs’ support of Eastern Sierra Land Trust goes beyond their shared commitment to creating pollinator havens. As hunters, they consider maintaining

healthy wildlife populations a top priority, and view ESLT's work to protect wildlife habitat as critical. From Steve's perspective, "ESLT isn't like other environmental groups... They don't take sides. Instead, they focus on what wildlife needs to thrive."

Indeed, Eastern Sierra Land Trust is dedicated to encouraging, "a healthy balance of land uses that can be sustained forever – ensuring both a strong local economy and healthy environment for generations." The organization works with willing landowners to help protect the scenic, agricultural, natural, recreational, historic, and watershed values of cherished Eastern Sierra lands.

Just a 15-minute drive out Highway 6 from Bishop, Chalfant Big Trees Farm & Feed provides Eastern Sierra residents with a vast assortment of trees, shrubs, landscaping supplies, livestock feed, and much more. After thirteen years in business, the Blairs are busier than ever; they now sell hundreds of plant varieties, in addition to a wide selection of other items. As their website suggests, "you never know what you will find until you look inside the many buildings on the farm."

Chalfant Big Trees Farm & Feed is located at 395 Hunter Ave. in Chalfant Valley. To learn more about Eastern Sierra Land Trust and how to get involved with their efforts – including their Eastside Pollinator Garden Project – please visit [www.eslt.org](http://www.eslt.org) or stop by their office in Bishop.

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*Sample low-resolution images with captions pictured below; high-resolution versions are attached to email. For more images, please contact Marguerite Merritt, ESLT Communications Coordinator, at [marguerite@eslt.org](mailto:marguerite@eslt.org).*



*Caption: As business sponsors of Eastern Sierra Land Trust, Steve and Debbie Blair of Chalfant Big Trees Farm & Feed are committed to helping protect working and wild landscapes, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities in the Eastern Sierra.*



*Caption: In addition to their financial contributions, Chalfant Big Trees Farm & Feed helped supply Eastern Sierra Land Trust with many of the materials needed to create their new Pollinator Demonstration Garden, located at the organization's headquarters in Bishop.*