



ENTREPRENEUR

④ ANYTHING CORAL

WHO: Ian McMenemy, 24, grows and sells more than 300 different varieties of coral for saltwater tanks through his business, Anything Coral.

THE BIZ BUZZ: McMenemy worked sweeping floors in a pet store at age 13, and was "mesmerized" by the saltwater reef tanks. He began growing coral for himself 10 years ago, slowly cultivating more exotic species, some of which can sell for \$300 for a quart-sized piece and take two years to grow. In time, coral aficionados began sending McMenemy on paid trips to hand-select rare corals. From a tank set up in a rented former storage room in the basement of an apartment complex, he now wholesales live coral nationally via Craigslist and through distributors in San Francisco, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Boca Raton, Florida. Additionally, McMenemy co-founded Dirt Bags, which makes breathable gardening planters from recycled plastic bottles that are melted and spun into a durable "fabric." These are now available nationally through Down To Earth's catalog. McMenemy has not stopped there, flying back and forth to the Philippines to manufacture his first 40-foot container filled with 35,000 fabric pots for his second fabric-pot company, targeting a different demographic than the Dirt Bags. Although McMenemy was temporarily kicked out of UO's business school due to low grades, he is about to graduate from the university's small business and entrepreneurship program, and was honored as UO Innovator of the Year.

IN HIS WORDS: "In high school I was the one who people thought was never going to make it. I just wanted to skateboard and play music all the time. But I have determination, and I want to show other kids like me that they can be successful business owners if they stick with it."

Anything Coral

anythingcoral.com
pulsingcoral.com

coralboard.com
a coral forum with more than 2,400 members