

Plant business flourishes

Perseverance pays — at least when it comes to realizing a dream. Venette and Lynn E. Arfi were involved in completely separate businesses. Lynn was in charge of the service station and Venette handled plant sales at 720 S. Adams, Birmingham.

Two tables of vegetable, herb and annual plants at the back of the property were the beginning of this fledgling enterprise. After 12 years of operating two businesses, they decided to convert totally to flower and plant sales. When Northwood Nursery left, the need for plants increased, so their decision was a good one. The name The Plant Station was retained.

Plants for specific seasons are offered — wildflowers for early spring, summer bedding plants, herbs they were one of the first to carry them in this area), geraniums in many colors, perennials, fall mums and spring-flowering bulbs.

Flowering shrubs, especially those that are assets to the perennial beds are available. The criteria for the

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shrubs are that they have to have blossoms (preferably fragrant ones) and good winter texture such as color and/or berries.

Roses have been added to the inventory, including shrub roses. Fall planting of perennials is being encouraged. The only limit is space.

Other things available are special occasion balloons, gift baskets, cement and clay statuary, houseplants, pumpkins, Christmas trees and greens.

When converting to the flower business, the city planning commission had some specifics — a paved parking area and a brick fence around the property. These have

been an asset. The walls are adorned with large pots of flowering plants and cement lions to welcome customers.

Venette wrote a thank-you letter to the planning commission and the city planner for their input and to report that many compliments had been received because of their recommendations.

The couple are Master Gardeners and taught a gardening class at Highland Lakes. They have given hundreds of hours to the program. She is a volunteer at Clinton Valley State Hospital working in horticultural therapy and has designed and

maintains a garden at the Detroit Zoo.

She said, "One of the things I find about the business which is so precious, is that we are a family. Our two sons, Kelly and Mark, have joined us. The family is together and with 18 hours a day, seven days a week we'd never get to see each other."

"We could not have done it without them and the other employees, Mary Sherrer and Joy Close. We are fortunate to have a great staff. Gardening is a wonderful thing and so is making the plants available."

Writing this column is a fun job, with calls from unexpected places. Irene Chynoweth of Bloomfield Hills told me about a stand of native dogwood (Cornus Florida) on her property with blossoms cascading down from the 40 foot trees. She said another such stand is in St. Joseph. I recently saw the blossoms, which are hand-size. What a bonus to have such beautiful native trees growing on one's property.

down to earth

Marty Figley



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

The blossoms of an unusual 40-foot, native dogwood tree in Bloomfield Hills make a beautiful show in early June.

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