

Spring planting is underway in county

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5 p.m. CT, and closed on Sundays.

Caterpillar Crossing

Summersville, like many communities in Green County, is experiencing growth. Diann Paxton is part of this progress. In 2017, Paxton stepped away from her state job as a CPS therapist. She prides herself in chasing her dreams and encourages others to do so as well. She will admit it is hard work, but rewarding.

"I love my community and all the fine people in and around us, seeing them and providing fresh foods for them and their families is the best feeling!" Paxton said.

Caterpillar Crossing is a roadside market and deli located just before the caution light in Summersville. Customers feel welcome and at home upon arriving to the location, right in the heart of Summersville. Paxton and her crew offer fresh deli sandwiches and more with seating available inside. Caterpillar Crossing also carries a large selection of fresh sourced produce from Paxton's greenhouse and other local and fresh produce during the off season.

"All the items we offer in our store are purchased from other locals. During spring, summer and fall the vast majority of our produce excluding some fruits, comes from either our farm or a local farmer," Paxton said. "We strive to stock the store with all local items whether it be veggies or other products we offer. Supporting local is our main goal and has been since we opened! We also support other small business vendors that offer an array of items that they may enjoy."

Nick and Diann Paxton live a mile down the road from the market, where chickens are raised and the store's eggs are sourced. This also houses their greenhouse originally built in 2018.

"I have always wanted one (greenhouse) and when I left my state job, to come home and 'hobby farm', I decided to get one to raise my plants in, for the produce I grow and to just enjoy," Diann

Paxton said. "The best part is watching something grow from a seed to a plant, and the peace I feel in my greenhouse. It is a very calming feeling being surrounded by plants and flowers; some days I just go and sit in it and relax."

Diann can be found in the summer shelling corn and freezing it for her customers on her back porch.

"It's not too often you can say your food was sourced a mile down the road; we hand pick everything we sell," Nick Paxton said.

They both see the importance of teaching children and others where food comes from, other than the grocery store.

From seed, to farmer, to table, customers can be a part of that locally.

"Last year was a tad bit challenging and definitely forced me to get creative," Paxton said. "We opened a drive through service, call in or text orders, we offered curbside pickup. It was definitely different, but it also allowed me to grow in my knowledge of what my customers liked and disliked."

They currently have a plentiful supply of seed products and also will offer more vegetable plants.

"We not only went through COVID in the spring, but most folks had their gardens planted and we had a hard freeze, so they lost what they had planted, so they had to have more to replant," she said. "That was definitely challenging trying to provide plants. We grow ours in different cycles and we couldn't provide a big or strong enough plant quick enough for them! But they were patient and waited."

Store hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There is seasonal produce, bedding plants, ferns, hanging baskets, Penns Ham, Uncle Charlie's products, local honey, molasses, syrups, deli meats and cheese, farmhouse decor, and CSA boxes available to order. (A CSA box is a monthly subscription to various locally grown seasonal fruits and veg-

etables.)

Bethany Rose Flowers and Vegetables

Josh and Bethany Peachey met through a Bible school and moved to the Gabe community in 2019. Josh Peachey knew what it meant for his wife to work in a greenhouse, since her family owns and operates one in Missouri.

"My husband offered for me to have a greenhouse at our home and it is a way for me to serve my community, get to know others, and I just love it." Bethany Peachey said. "I love growing plants and meeting people."

The quaint greenhouse, located at 35 North Gabe Henderson Road, has many gardening treasures. Bethany Rose Flowers and Vegetables is packed full of unique flowers, beautiful hanging baskets, annuals, vegetables plants, custom fairy gardens, succulents, and more.

Bethany works early mornings until often after suppertime, with general upkeep and maintenance of running a greenhouse. She is always learning and says that there is always new plants available to learn about. Her growth last year during COVID has prepared her for this year to serve her customers.

"Don't be afraid to ask questions; it can look intimidating sometimes, but just continue to ask questions," Bethany said. "And finally, just get started, it's always a learning experience growing a garden."

Bethany Rose Flowers and Vegetables is open Wednesday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT. She will be fully opened to the public starting April 8. She wants customers to note that she only accepts cash or check at this time. She can be reached by phone or text at (270) 405-6692.

Green County FFA Greenhouse

The National FFA Organization makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential

for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The FFA Greenhouse plays a big part of this.

Many current and former FFA students have been a part of seeding, transplanting, all the care and education of the variety of plants, the business side, and customer service of operating a greenhouse. All greenhouse sales go towards supporting the FFA Chapter and their local, state, and national endeavors.

The William F. Lobb Laboratory, which houses the local greenhouse, was named after former retired agriculture teacher, Bill Lobb, who instilled his love of horticulture along with Mr. Bob Olt, when they began the greenhouse adventure nearly 30 years ago.

"It was built to provide another source of agriculture for our students (plant science) that we didn't have at the time, to learn marketing skills, basic crop production, customer relations and more." Lobb said.

"It was an opportunity for the students to live out the FFA motto, 'Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve.'" Lobb said. "In the early days, it was the only greenhouse in the county."

The greenhouse is primarily operated by students, with the instruction of advisors.

Abigail Milby, a junior at GCHS waters hanging baskets and anything else that needs to be completed in the greenhouse.

"My favorite thing about working is the greenhouse is that it's not something you just study about; you get your hands dirty and are able to experience it," Milby said. "You also get to work with the public, so you gain job skills through it."

As COVID hit last year, the greenhouse was forced to close down in March 2020, according to Mr. James Bonta and Mrs. Samantha Clark, agriculture teachers at Green County High School.

With all the restric-

tions still in place in the schools and balancing in-person and virtual students, educators are missing much of the traditional teaching and mentoring that goes into the greenhouse. Limitations on customers and students in the greenhouse have made it challenging to navigate this season.

"Last year was tough, but this year is a different kind of tough," Bonta said. "If you don't have your students here to work, it makes it difficult."

"On March 12, 2020 I lost students and it was a hardship with everything that it takes to run a greenhouse," Bonta said.

Bonta's two oldest children, Will and Whitley, were the only people allowed in the greenhouse last year to help and provide curbside service.

The greenhouse is currently flourishing amongst hardship and students are working in the greenhouse between class instruction, all while maintaining social distance.

The community has always supported the FFA chapter and are encouraged by the students and the advisors to continue to do so.

"Everyone was supportive last year and we had a great year still, we even received some outside donations," Bonta said.

At this time customers are not be permitted inside of the greenhouse, but may still make purchases.

"We will still be taking curbside orders during school hours 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT Monday through Friday starting April 19." Bonta said. "They can check out our facebook page and call the ag office, (270-932-3293) to place an order."

The school offers a variety of geraniums, annuals, ferns, hanging baskets, and vegetable plants.

All greenhouse personnel state they will accommodate special orders in-person or curbside, minus the FFA greenhouse, which is strictly curbside.

Let the planting begin!

Stay safe when working in the yard this spring and summer

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

A day spent working in the yard is an ideal way to pass the time on spring and summer afternoons. A pristine landscape can add value to a property and instill pride in homeowners who put a lot of thought and effort into their lawns and gardens.

A sun-soaked day can make it easy to overlook potential threats when working in a lawn or garden. But safety precautions are of the utmost necessity when working in the yard, where the risk for serious injury is considerable. For example, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons reports that, in 2016, more than 90,000 patients, including nearly 5,000 children, were treated in hospital emergency rooms for lawn mow-

er-related injuries.

Lawn- and garden-related injuries can be prevented without going to great lengths.

- Know your terrain before mowing. Knowing the terrain in your own yard can reduce the risk for accident or injury. This can be especially important when mowing the lawn with a riding mower. Adhere to manufacturers' recommendations regarding inclines to reduce tip-over accidents that can pin riders beneath the mower. Study hilly areas of the yard prior to mowing so you know which areas are safe to mow with a riding mower and which areas are best mowed with a walk-behind mower. For greater control when using a walk-behind mower on an incline, mow parallel to the slope.



- Apply and reapply sunscreen. Sunburns may not require trips to the emergency room, but they can still be serious. In fact, the Skin Cancer Foundation notes that sunburn is a leading cause in the majority of cases of basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma, which is the deadliest form of skin cancer. The SCF recommends applying

sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside to allow the sunscreen to bond to your skin. Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours, and more often if you're sweating excessively. The SCF recommends broad spectrum sunscreens, which protect the skin from both UVA and UVB rays. Though a product with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 is acceptable when walking the dog

or driving to work, the SCF advises using a product with an SPF of 30 or higher when engaging in extended outdoor activities like gardening or mowing.

- Employ the buddy system. Use the buddy system when pruning tall trees or performing any tasks that require a ladder. The Orthopedic Institute of Pennsylvania reports that more than 164,000 people are injured each year falling off a ladder. Ask a significant other or neighbor to hold the ladder in place while you climb up to reduce your risk of falling. If cutting large branches, cut them piecemeal to reduce the risk of being injured by heavy falling branches.

- Inspect the property for insect hives. The OIP notes that the most common insect

stings in spring come from bees, wasps and hornets. Homeowners who are not careful can inadvertently come across hives when doing spring cleanup, making them vulnerable to bites and stings. That can be very dangerous for anyone, and especially so for people with a history of allergic reactions to insect bites or stings. Inspect areas where you'll be working to make sure insects haven't put down roots in your property. If you discover any hives and are hesitant to remove them on your own, contact a local landscaping firm.

Lawn and garden accidents and injuries can be serious. Thankfully, accidents and injuries are easily prevented when homeowners take a few simple safety precautions while tending to their lawns and gardens.