

Farmstand puts special emphasis on 'fresh'

By SARAH KICKLER KELBER
For the Capital Press

Nancy Hendricks' phone buzzes, and she pauses to look at the message.

"I got an order from a chef just now," the owner and operator of Fresh to You Produce says. "I need to look and see if we need to go harvest something."

If you were wondering whether the "Fresh" in the farm name is a marketing gimmick, the answer is a resounding no.

In 1980, Hendricks got her degree in horticulture from Oregon State University and promptly bought a 6-acre blueberry farm.

After several years in the



Sarah Kickler Kelber, for the Capital Press

Nancy Hendricks points out some of her favorite seeds in a display at Fresh to You Produce.

berry business, she and her husband, Carl, a third-generation farmer, sold that 6 acres and bought their current 15 acres just

down the road in 1999.

"In 2000, we put up an 'on your honor' box, where people could just pay for what

they took," she says.

They expanded to a larger stand, then another, and then in 2005, they purchased their current building. Originally a log-truck repair shop, their farmstand building now houses their just-picked produce, seeds, locally made products that complement the fruits and vegetables, a line of jams and syrups and more.

"Everything we sell in here is related to food," Hendricks says. Besides the produce and the other products, there are seeds, starts, fruit trees, potting soil and compost on offer.

Fresh to You recently refocused its mission, she adds. After about 10 years as a full-ser-

vice nursery, "this will be our first year with only edible plants and no landscaping."

Hence the new tagline: "All things edible."

It's a strategy that seems to be working. In addition to their sales at the shop, they sell produce to their local Roth's Fresh Market grocery store.

"Katie the produce manager tells us what she needs, and we go harvest it," Hendricks says.

They also have a partnership with Bon Appetit Management Co., which connects restaurants and schools with local growers.

Carl Hendricks walks in with a couple of bags of just-picked salad greens that are bound for Oregon Episcopal School via Bon Appetit.

A few minutes later, he mentions that a local chef has put in a request for mixed berries, and he and Nancy discuss how they'll fulfill that order with their frozen stock.

Even with the need to constantly be harvesting their crops, one of the dominating issues in the winter is planning.

"This time of year, we're talking with our chefs and Roth's to plan our crops and order seeds and starts," Nancy Hendricks says.

She and Carl are particularly

Fresh to You Produce

Owners: Nancy and Carl Hendricks

Where: 41639 Stayton-Scio Road, Stayton, Oregon

Contact: (503) 769-9682

Online: www.ftyp.com, www.pinterest.com/freshtoyou

Crops: strawberries, carrots, chard, corn, kale, green beans, snap peas, tomatoes, peppers, fennel and more

Farming since: 1980

Acres: 15

Available: At farm store year-round and at the Salem Public Market

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