

Nursery specializes in succulents

By **JANAE SARGENT**
Capital Press

After a career in the recreational vehicle industry, Barbara Diamond followed her son's interests to start Dancing Lizard Gardens — one of only a few specialty succulent nurseries in Oregon.

Dancing Lizard Gardens is a 12-acre wholesale nursery in Junction City, Ore.

Diamond sells hardy succulent arrangements to homeowners, garden centers and online gift catalog companies. Her succulents have been used as gifts for a variety of occasions including weddings.

Diamond was laid off from her 23-year career at RV maker Country Coach in 2005 and started looking for other sources of income.

While she was figuring out her next steps, she took a trip to Decker Nursery with her



Photos by Janae Sargent/Capital Press

Barbara Diamond stands by her selection of succulents at Dancing Lizard, a specialty nursery she started after 23 years of working in the recreational vehicle business.

son, Jerry. Walking around the nursery, he begged her to buy succulents for him to take care of.

"He really got into them," Diamond said. "He had them all over the place."

When her son went to college in Ithaca, N.Y., and left his succulents at home, Diamond thought she would give a succulent nursery a try with her husband, David.

Diamond started out sell-



The Dancing Lizard Nursery's most popular products are succulents planted in frog and bunny containers and a variety of potted succulents.

ing to Bi-Mart, Jerry's Home Improvement and Market of Choice and expanded the business to do drop shipments for catalog companies.

Diamond said succulents are good plants to have because they are easy to care for and people are attracted to the vi-

brant colors.

In addition to selling potted plants, Diamond designs arrangements for specialty containers, wreaths, birdhouses and baskets. Her most popular items are specialty arrangements she designs in bunny, frog, cat, owl and seashell containers.

Diamond studied landscape horticulture at Oregon State University and had experience with succulents.

Designing arrangements is Diamond's favorite part of owning Dancing Lizard Gardens. She said she looks for complementary colors and interesting textures when designing her container gardens.

The nursery is managed and maintained by Diamond and her family.

Diamond's busy season goes from Valentine's Day through Mother's Day with the majority of her plants selling as gifts. She also stays busy year-round shipping for catalogs and selling to garden centers.

Diamond said if she had started Dancing Lizard Gardens when she was younger, she would have expanded it to be a large operation but that she is happy with where it is for her.

"I'm not the kind of person to sit around and do nothing," Diamond said. "There's always something to do here and I really enjoy it."



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