

“We had 100 feet worth of greenhouse and we just started building,” Bill said.

Roll-up sides and fans were incorporated to offset heat and a bunny fence was erected to protect the garden beds, particularly the peas.

Necanicum Farms embraces natural gardening

The tomatoes, including sakura, sun gold and marbonne varieties, were the biggest crops volume wise this past summer, producing up to 40 pounds weekly during peak season.

Anita sells in local markets in Cannon Beach and Seaside, and offers delivery with a minimum purchase.

The salad mix, a blend of salanova lettuce, has emerged as best seller.

“The women say, ‘My husband will actually eat salad now,’” Anita said.

Onions, peas, beans, zucchini were also productive crops, all grown from seed with a natural gardening approach, free of pesticide, herbicide and synthetic fertilizers.

“I don’t use Miracle-Gro,” Anita said. “It’s more like cottonseed mill, kelp and



LUKE WHITTAKER

Anita Dotson quit her dentistry job of 30 years to become a farmer full time. “I’m outside everyday and I love it,” she said.

a lot of lime, things like that.”

Lime is sometimes added to neutral-

ize the acidic coastal soil.

“The soil is the main key,” Anita said.

“Your plants will tell you what’s going on with the soil.”

This fall the Dotsons plan to attempt winter gardening for the first time, hopeful to extend their growing season.

“I’ll try to do some winter gardening in the greenhouses. We can maybe push it through December, it depends on the daylight hours as to how long I can do that,” Anita said.

She considers peas, beans, potatoes, kale among the most conducive crops to grow on the coast, while carrots, onions and squash ‘do OK.’

“Tomatoes and cucumbers you really need to have in a greenhouse,” Anita conceded. “They need that extra heat.”

Overall the Dotsons consider their first official year as farmers a success, and plan to add new crops and vegetable starts next season.

Among their biggest lessons was the amount of time and effort that goes into harvest.

“Growing it is easy. Getting it harvested, packaged and out the door is the hardest part,” Anita said. “It’s been amazing though — I’m outside everyday and I love it.”

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