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Meet the Merchant

Interview by Luke Whittaker lwhittaker@coastriverbusinessjournal.com

When did the business begin?

"In 1971 my dad opened the doors."

When did you first get involved?

"Technically, from day one, because we were all snagged into helping. When they were building the building, we all had little jobs. We were always requested to work. If you don't work, you don't eat."

Do you remember your first job or responsibility?

"Not really the early jobs, other than carrying flats (of plants) around behind my mother as she was transplanting plants."

Has the business changed or evolved much since then?

"It's changed dramatically. The main building is still the same square box, but the inside and greenhouses have changed. This room used to be a greenhouse, but we needed more room for feed and extra stock, so it was converted to a feed room."

What is that giant plant in the back of the greenhouse?

"It's a banana plant. It outgrew its pot and grew into the ground. At the time my dad said 'Oh, I'll deal with it later.' And his 'deal with it later' never happened. It's technically a houseplant since it won't grow outside."

How long has it been there?

"Probably since about 1978 or 1979."

Will it grow bananas?

"Yes, it's creates bananas but I don't know what species. They're small bananas."

Have you ever tried to eat them?

"No, we're too chicken."

Can you tell me about the products you carry?

"We're a full-line lawn, garden and farm store. We've a huge variety of animal foods for horses, chickens, pigs, goats, rabbits, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, ferrets, turtles, birds, etc. The only thing we don't have feed for cattle, because they usually go for just hay or grain, which cattle people buy by the truckload and usually have a supplier."

What's the difference between ferret and rabbit food?

"Ferrets are actually carnivores and the rabbits are herbivores that don't eat meat or meat byproducts, so they're totally different."

What kind of animal feed do you sell most often?

"Probably chicken. There are a lot of chicken people on the peninsula. During the winter we sell more feed than plants. In spring we sell more plants than feed."

When is the busiest season?

"The end of April and the beginning of May, depending on the weather. If it's miserable people don't garden, but if it's 'tweety birds' and butterflies, they are out there and wanting plants."

**Planter Box****Teresa Millner, owner****Phone:** 360-642-4450**Address:** 12706 Pacific Way,
Long Beach**What has been the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on the business?**

"It brought in a number of people that would typically shop in Portland."

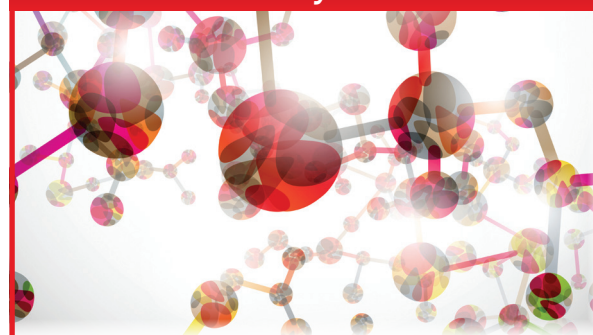
What part do you enjoy the most?

"Working with the plants. I've had a love for plants since I was little and probably always will."

[Continued on page 4](#)

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