

A touch of the tropics in Simnasho

You can almost hear the surf breaking, see the palm trees swaying and feel the warm, damp air on our face. Could there be such an environment on the Warm Springs reservation? No, the tropics aren't to be found here unless you visit the home of Larry and Juanita Bourland in Simnasho. There you will find a lush, moist environment created by the Bourland's white corrugated fiberglass greenhouse adjacent to their home.

In actuality, the breaking surf is the pump which aerates the jacuzzi, the palm trees swaying are really huge corn and tomato plants and the warm, damp air is really the tropical environment produced by a bubbling hot tub.

The Bourlands moved into the 40-year old condemned Presbyterian manse in 1973. Because the house was the first post office on the reservation and because of its age, Tribal Council declared the house a historical site in 1976. The greenhouse is just one of the many improvements the Bourlands have made to the house since they moved in. They have paid for all improvements as part of the custodial care agreement made when they moved in.

Once stepping out of the house into the greenhouse, you feel you've walked onto a tropical island. Lush, healthy greenery of all kinds—vegetables, various house plants and unusual orchids—are growing. One of the reasons for the greenhouse, says Juanita, is the short growing season in Simnasho. "It's frustrating when the last frost of the year is in July and the first frost is in September."

The Bourlands have always had an interest in gardening, and the greenhouse with its "controlled climate" seems to inspire that interest. Orange, lemon, lime, apple, peach, papaya and tomato trees will one day be fruit-bearing. Four different varieties of orchids are flowering, and vegetables, such as egg plant, corn, brussel sprouts, tomatoes and acorn squash, that were planted by seed, are nearing maturity. Having such a garden that will produce vegetables year around is possibly a first in Warm Springs.

Juanita says her thumb is extra green and "probably inherited from my mother," but hard work helps. After working as Tribal Council secretary Juanita looks forward to relaxing in the jacuzzi to help ease daily stress away. The eight-seat tub is kept at about 100 degrees continually. Larry drains the tub every two weeks or so and keeps an eye on the chemical levels daily. It is also Larry's responsibility to watch greenhouse temperatures (from 40 degrees to 85 degrees) and to ensure proper air currents to minimize fungus growth on plant.

Eventually, the Bourlands will be recycling heat from the greenhouse into the house which will help reduce their electric bill. During these cold months, a kerosene heater was purchased to keep the chill off, but with the cost of kerosene being so high, the Bourlands found it uneconomical. As an alternative, water from the hot tub will be circulated through an old car radiator—sort of a steam heater.

Juanita is especially proud of the orchids that seem to be flourishing. They purchased the 10 orchids plants for \$200 and at first intended to sell the blossoms to Kah-Nee-Ta and the Flower Station in Madras. "But I'm getting stingy with them," says Juanita.

The greenhouse appears to be a unique way to bring soil, greenery and relaxation together "fruitfully." It is an especially inventive way for the Bourlands to have fresh blossoms and vegetables year round.



The Bourlands ease their aching and tired muscles in their jacuzzi. There is room for eight, says Juanita, but most of the time it's just the two of them.



These huge tomato and corn plants appear to do well in the tropical climate of the greenhouse. The Bourlands expect to have fresh vegetables year around.



Whoever heard of tomatoes growing on trees? That's exactly what Juanita is hoping for. She says the fruit will be pear-shaped and taste similar to a tomato.



Juanita is especially proud of the orchids which are adjusting very nicely to the humid greenhouse climate. This miltonian orchid is very small in size and lavender in color.



Four different varieties of orchids are producing colorful blooms. The Bourlands intended to sell the blossoms to area merchants, but are now too stingy to part with them.

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