

she steers away from using any chemicals on her plants. Though her greenhouses don't have a cooling system, they are equipped with fans and vents to help cool and a furnace to help warm her crop.

Bring Sheila your planter or hanging basket, or even your seeds and she will custom plant them for you. "If I could just do one thing in the greenhouse it would be making up planters and hanging baskets. I love putting different combinations together." She starts off her hanging baskets and planters with a healthy soil, a mat that absorbs water, slow release fertilizer and an insecticide. "There's a lot of stuff in that hanging basket for the customer's benefit for them to be successful that they don't even know about," she explains.

She enjoys helping her customers find their best fit for flowers or vegetables, asking them where they are going to be planting the item and how much time they have to water and fertilize it. "I always feel so blessed because I have a job that I love. When you love what you're doing, the days go fast." Thinking about her customers, she comments, "People are always happy. Who in a bad mood would come in and buy a flower?"

Yankton Nurseries - Yankton, South Dakota

Located on the east side of Yankton, Yankton Nurseries is nestled



in on several acres of land just off of Ferdig Street. Jay Gurney explains to me how his great-grandfather started the greenhouse, originally known as Hesperian Nurseries. His great-grandfather, a civil war veteran, got a job with the State of Nebraska Research Center in Concord, NE, after the war. In the late 1890s,

knowing that homesteaders were coming to the Great Plains, he scouted out Yankton and set up Hesperian Nurseries. Changing names and hands over the years, the nursery became Yankton Nurseries, the House of Gurney, Gurney Seed & Nursery Company and back to Yankton Nurseries.

Jay and Tracy Gurney not only have a large nursery where they can grow a wide variety of plants, shrubs and trees, but they have 10 greenhouses with each greenhouse a specialty of its own. One greenhouse houses the delicate baby plants, one holds only rose bushes, one contains various house plants and one has many unique items including some non-leaf bearing plants. Multi-colored blooms are everywhere you look.

Jay's typical day starts off by tending to the plants and prioritizing what needs to be done first, not an easy task with such a large property. "There's always something to do," he smiles. He waters everything by hand to control how much water each plant gets, with water wands attached to the ends of the hoses. Water wands, he explains, are crucial to watering your plants properly, as they spray water out of the end of the wand nicely, landing right on the plant like a rain shower. He highly recommends them for proper plant watering. He carries a trusty pair of fruit snipers in a holster on his belt, his most often used hand-tool. Clippers of other sizes are also used to trim up his crop, from scissors to lop-shears.

Jay, Tracy and their staff plant foliage year-round. They have three additional employees, two full-time and one part-time, to help keep everything on their grounds in order. January through April are primarily when they do their seeding and cutting, with a goal to have an abundance of items by the middle of May. "May is the big month. June is pretty good too," Jay explains. Timing is very important in his business. Jay explains how they can acclimate the greenhouses to manipulate the plant growth, ventilating more to keep it cooler slows the plant growth down, or turning the heat up speeds up plant growth.

Yankton Nurseries has a vast assortment of plants, shrubs and trees and many unique plants to pick from. They take pride in their wide variety of rose bushes available, with approximately 50 to 60 different kinds in their selection. They are happy to help customers decide what to plant and the best spot to put it, and even offer

❖ GREENHOUSES

continued on page 22



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