

One in a *Ver*Million

Meet Kristy Bothwell

By David Lias
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This is the time of year that Kristy Bothwell's dreams come true.

She jokingly admits that during the winter months, she sleeps with seed catalogs under her pillow, mentally picturing springtime full of growing plants and flowers bursting with color.

That's a good description of her world right now. Kristy owns Rosewood Greenhouse, located on the western edge of Vermillion at 1400 W. Cherry Street.

Her facilities include one greenhouse structure filled with vegetable plants of nearly every variety. A second greenhouse structure, at first glance, appears filled to the brim with rows of colorful ornamental and blooming plants.

She began "working to own" the greenhouse business about six years ago. "She's been my baby for the last two," Kristy said.

The year she purchased the business, Vermillion suffered a tough winter, with a severe storm that caused one of her greenhouse buildings to collapse. "We put a new frame on it – a nice heavy frame – so we're ready for the winters now."

Currently, the greenhouse is a "seasonal" business. The expense of electric heat and other

factors make operating the greenhouses year-round cost prohibitive.

"I purchase from other places, but I also start some seed," Kristy said. "My heirloom tomatoes are started in my own house, and any new varieties that I can't get anywhere else. I also buy about 5,500 little baby plugs (of all kinds of annuals) and it's just like a momma chicken expecting.

"I purchase from a lot of different places so I can offer the biggest selection that I possibly can," she said. "A girl's got to have choice."

Kristy has a pretty good idea of what people in Vermillion and surrounding area yearn for when it comes to garden plants and flowers, thanks to her years working at and now owning Rosewood Greenhouse.

"Most people really like to have something different," she said. "They don't really want the same old. You need to offer some different things, and introduce people to new stuff."

The desire of people of all ages to "grow their own" when it comes to garden variety vegetables also keeps Kristy and her greenhouse crew busy.

"In the last couple of years, gas prices have risen, and food prices have risen, and there's more of an interest in growing your own," she said. "There are a lot of new people that have



Kristy Bothwell (left) and her assistant, Angie Kralicek, are surrounded by flowers at Rosewood Greenhouse.

(Photo by David Lias)

decided to begin gardening. They are learning, for the first time, how to plant and how to grow their own produce.

"It's becoming more important," Kristy said. "When you plant something in your own garden, you know how it's been treated. You don't have to wonder about what kind of place your food was grown at, or what types of pesticides may have been used on your vegetables."

She also knows one aspect of her business appeals not only to one's taste buds, but also to other senses – sight, smell, even the touch of a fragrant

blossom or cool leaf.

In other words, flowers. Lots of them.

"I try to cover all the bases," Kristy said, talking about the wide variety of blooming plants she has on hand.

She's discovered that people's taste in flowers is as varied as people themselves.

"What's popular is anything that's bright, and anything that's different. We're so used to having a 'cookie-cutter same thing' offered to us that a lot of times we want something

that's different than what the next door neighbor is growing," Kristy said with a laugh. "And there's nothing wrong with that."

She witnesses firsthand the need for people to be "connected" with the plant world. Giving a brief tour of her greenhouse, Kristy stops beside a group of small pots, each containing a "sensitive plant," known also as mimosa pudica or "touch-me-not." Touch the leaves of the plant, and they gently fold inward.

"A lot of it (being connected) is the sight and the smell, and going in and pinching the herbs and

smelling them," she said, "or touching a 'sensitive plant' and watching it respond, and seeing how different that is."

Kristy is a Master Gardener, and she often is asked by local residents for tips on how to best grow vegetables and flowers.

"I know I don't always have all the answers to people's questions, but I'm in touch with the Extension route, so if somebody has a problem and I don't know the answer, I know where to send them for help," she said.

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Thank You

I would sincerely like to thank everyone who made my 100th birthday a very special and memorable day. Thank you to all my family, friends and neighbors who sent cards, flowers, candy and baked goods and especially those who attended my birthday party, it was all greatly appreciated. Thank you to the women of my Alpha Lambda ESA Chapter and St. Agnes Catholic Daughters for serving at the party. A special thank you to my daughter Margie, who's planning made this day so wonderful.

Margaret Melby

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