

Luckhardt Nursery



Asparagus is the crop that fast-tracked Nancy and Jim Luckhardt into the market garden business. Satisfied asparagus customers started to enquire about other vegetables. So the Luckhardts just kept planting. Their market garden now covers 25 acres, and includes 21 acres of sweet corn and two of asparagus.

The Luckhardt's farm is certified by *My pick*, an agency administered by the Ontario Farmers' Market Association (see guidelines at www.mypick.ca). New to Grey Bruce, the program verifies that vendors are also the growers of the produce they are selling. Knowing the farmer who is growing their food carries weight for most customers. According to Jim, "If they have confidence in the farmer, they have confidence in the food."

Thirty-five Black Angus cows supply the manure that is composted and added to improve soil fertility and tilth. The Luckhardts occasionally add a bit of chemical fertilizer but prefer composted manure which they say is like gold for the garden. As one of only 500 certified crop advisors in Ontario, if there is anything that Jim doesn't know about soil, water and pest management, he certainly knows how to find it. To qualify, Jim had to take two exams (one international and one from Ontario) in addition to having experience with crops on his own and other farms. To maintain his standing, he's now required to spend forty hours every two years attending approved seminars. The knowledge gained helps with all aspects of production and handling.

Quality comes first at **Luckhardt Nursery**. Jim explains that "we can never be the cheapest but we can be the best". Although a bag of seed corn can be purchased for \$350, the Luckhardts choose instead to spend \$950 to ensure they are getting the highest quality. The fact that they sell pretty much everything they pick is proof of their excellent products.

Jim and Nancy value the help of two Amish neighbours, who work with them all summer to bring forth the bounty. You can find Luckhardts' asparagus on the menu at the **Rocky Raccoon Café** in Owen Sound. Their vegetables, perennial flowers, ornamental grasses, and eggs are available at the **Owen Sound Farmers' Market** and at the farm gate. ▪ 802356 Grey Road 40, Chatsworth ▪ nluckhardt@everus.ca

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