

## **Grace Schipporeit: the Spark of Sunnyview Vegetable Farm**

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When Grace Schipporeit was young, she loved picking berries. She thought it was a great way to make a living and envisioned being a farmer, but it wasn't until after she worked for the U.S. Government and for the New York Stock Exchange branch office in Salem, that Grace became a farmer.

Grace grew up in southeastern Washington, but has lived in Salem, Ore. most of her life. She met her husband of almost 50 years, Harold Schipporeit, in Woodburn, Ore. Together, they now own and operate a five-and-a-half-acre farm in Salem called [Sunnyview Vegetable Farm](#). The couple have owned the property for over 40 years and began cultivating the vegetables about 10- to 12-years ago.

"It was a fun project," said Grace. "My husband started it for our daughter and we just evolved from there. Now, I am also the owner and we have our year-round workers help us. It's run by about three or four people."

According to Grace, she and Harold are a great team and work very well together. Harold worked in marketing at NW Natural Gas Company for 25 years before he retired and started farming. Grace says he is a farmer at heart and is the one who gets the projects started.

Originally, the farm was a monocrop farm until the Schipporeits diversified to grow alfalfa, Christmas trees and clover. Today, Sunnyview Vegetable Farm is a produce farm with lots of variety to offer. They grow tomatoes, tomatillos, zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower, beans, cucumbers, artichokes, onions, beets, melons and lots of pumpkins. They tried growing sweet corn for the first time this year, as an experiment. In addition, hazelnut trees and Christmas trees are grown and harvested.

Grace really enjoys farming. She has made friends with those who come to the farm and takes pleasure in watching the crops grow. For Grace, farming is also a learning experience.

"I like watching things grow and learning the difference between pole beans and bush beans and how long it takes to grow a certain crop," said Grace.

She finds it challenging to know when to plant crops and when they will be ready.

"You really have to know that. After October, nobody is really going to want a pumpkin so you have to be sure that they will be ready. You also have to know how many rows to plant and replant," said Grace.

Sunnyview Vegetable Farm is very customer-oriented.

“We really like to have our customers come out and tell them about our crops and help them select what they need. We take orders and we do some wholesale, but we are pretty busy with retail right now,” said Grace.

Grace and Harold really like being on the [Marion Farm Loop](#) and find it beneficial to the farm. “It’s been really helpful. People come out as they see us on the brochure and they ask for brochures. We try and help other farmers, too. It’s been a good cooperative effort and we like it,” said Grace.

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