Good afternoon and thanks for joining us I am Judy Simpson. It's the outdoor growing season but your green thumb doesn't need to be limited by the weather. A greenhouse extends the growing season. We learn more from our gardening experts.

Leonard.: Kathy you have a lovely greenhouse hear why would someone want to think about a home greenhouse.

Kathy.: Most people think about a greenhouse for growing seedlings which is a really good reason to have a greenhouse and I do grow lots of seedlings. But there are lots of other uses for greenhouse. I use my greenhouse in the spring for growing early greens. In the summer for growing tomatoes which love the heat. They keep it busy all year round.

Leonard.: You just talked vegetables I mainly due flowers. I use it over winter. Plants that won't quite make it outside I can put in a greenhouse.

Kathy.: Yes that's another use and inside of there you'll see a lot more than vegetables. There are a lot of flowers in there.

Leonard.: Another thing is green houses are pretty affordable now. They're not prohibitive and you can find them a lot of places.

Kathy.: That's true there a lot more available now. I don't actually heat my greenhouse. I am thrifty in that way. Even without heat I get a lot use out of it.

Leonard.: It's amazing here in the north that you get enough heat and there. Let's go feel some heat.

Kathy.: Yes. All right.

Leonard.: Wow Kathy there are a lot of plants and here.

Kathy.: It gets pretty full by May. I've had the greenhouse going probably from the beginning of April. It started with a lot of stuff and some things have already gone out. Now Tomatoes are really eager to go outside.
Leonard.: You really start a lot of these things in early April late March early April.

Cathy.: Most of the stuff like tomatoes and things like that I start indoors under light then bring them out to the greenhouse. I don't put extra feet into the greenhouse I just wait until it's warm enough and the sun doesn't get killed by the cold and bring it out from the house.

Leonard.: So you don't have to pay for a lot of heat than it's very environmental that way.

Cathy.: Yes.

Leonard.: It gets enough heat and even at night it stays warm enough.

Cathy.: It does hold he pretty well.

Leonard.: That's great. So you start these. I guess the first thing is you have so many different things how do you know what to start?

Cathy.: Well obviously I'm not discerning enough because I have way too many kinds of things I probably have 12 different kinds of tomato plants and one packet of seeds of course we'll start 25 plants are so. I tried to control myself but the good thing is you can always find somebody who wants tomato plants. I have over the years tried a couple new things each year and I have some old favorites that I go back to that have performed really well for me. I have some heirlooms I have some hybrids. The hybrids you can count on. Big Beef is a good one. Beginning gardeners probably want to start was some of the hybrids that depend on for disease control and productivity. Then get into some of the heirlooms. I have orange blossom that and some more unusual varieties that are little bit more unique.

Leonard.: More and more you can find heirlooms and some of the different ones and seed packets or you can find them online in seed catalogs.

Cathy.: There are probably 100 tomatoes I'd love to grow. It's fun to see them.

Leonard.: Do you start everything inside under lights?

Cathy.: I do pretty much but you can see here I have some broccoli and kale and fennel. The second crop of fennel started here so once it warms up I'm getting the second crops going so when I take out the early lettuces and things like that I have some of the midsummer fall crops ready to go in. As far as sewing you use regular seeds starting mix?

Cathy.: I do and all kinds of different pots. I happen to like these fiber pots they go right in the compost bin after couple years of use the cost like 20¢ each or so. I probably get four years out of them and in this case I've dropped seeds one by one and here but for some of those smaller seeds you can just broadcast them or sprinkle them on and pull some out or separate them into a larger container. I did that with basil here is a six pack of basil so I sowed the seeds and broadcasts them into one of these pots when they got a second set of leaves I pull them out and put them into individual things like this and all grow them for another couple weeks until they get big enough and it's warm enough that they can be outside.

Leonard.: That's the type I usually use just the individual six-pack. I know a variation on that a combination is egg cartons I know some people use.

Cathy.: Yes I haven't tried that I should give it a try.
Leonard.: So then you grow these here give them water. Any fertilizer as they start growing?

Cathy.: They get a Duluth fertilizer once they have like these are too young to get fertilizer once they have a couple sets a weeds on them eyesore fertilizing them maybe once a week. It really is important to keep every single you need to be in the greenhouse it is a commitment. Because a sunny day they're going to need water at least once if not twice a day.

Leonard.: These have been started and these are going outside that looks like some have just gone in on the side over here?

Cathy.: Yes I use is greenhouse all year round actually and I have a big threat in the ground here that I plant right into. In the fall when I did was I seeded spinach and lettuces probably in September or so. They got a good size maybe this call and I cover them up with fabric and left them there for the winter. I took the fabric off in march and began watering them and I've been eating salads in here. You can see over here are some going to seed but I got plenty of lettuce and spinach.

Leonard.: Starting back in late winter.

Cathy.: Yet they go to sleep in the winter and then as soon as the days get longer and light comes on they start growing. Inside the greenhouse to get a lot warmer temperatures obviously and tomatoes love heat. Their tropical plant. They grow better they're protected from the elements that fruit gets sweeter so that's what I do. These will be in here until September when a rip them out and put in the greens again. The biggest problem is that they grow so vigorously that by the time it gets to be late summer you sort of have to fight your way into the greenhouse.

Judy.: We will be checking the greenhouse through the summer season to see how things are progressing. Our next segment takes us to one of Vermont’s top Taurus to attractions. Students from Norwich university produced this piece on the Vermont teddy bear factory in Shelburne.

30 years ago John Sorrentino started selling Vermont teddy bears on church street in down to Burlington finding a need for domestically made teddy bears at the time. He started to produce them locally and here we are 30 years later.

It was founded by John Sorrentino. He was an entrepreneur back in 1981 with a little push cart on church street and then it went public in 1993 and it was publicly traded until about five years ago and it became a private company again.

It's local is what Vermont teddy bear is grounded in. A lot of are values and how we conduct our business is reflective on what you would expect from a business in the state of Vermont.

Vermont teddy bear is a very well-known company and a lot of people come to visit us and give wonderful tours. We take great pride in our bears we want you to have your bears for your lifetime it's sort of a friend for life.

Our mission continues to be connecting a gift giver with a gift recipient through Vermont teddy bear. We have the ability to offer over 100 different outfits. Multiple different bear styles and we can also personalize our bears with the message directly from you to your recipient.

The first step is sewing the legs and then the parts move to the next station. It's going to go around to 14 different stations. Step two is sewing the arms and then we have two steps to sewing the heads first we set intact the ears and then we join the heads together then we put the eyes in. They go through many different
steps along the process and each person takes care and the bear gets looked at many times during the process to make sure its top notch quality and one of the reasons that we switched to modular teams is so that the quality can be caught one bear the time and sent back to someone earlier in the process if something needs to be fixed.

We have rigorous standards we are producing a product of not only for adults but kids as well and we want to make sure that we have a safe product out there for anybody.

Some of these bears that come in. This pair was put on a light bulb and it shows that are bears melt and they don't catch on fire which is a safety feature of are bear. We also have a bear that somebody tried to cook dinner and their one to help but he got a little cooked himself.

What they want again is the connection and in Shelburne Vermont we provide them not only with an opportunity to see multiple their styles they also have an opportunity to see how our bears are produced right here in Shelburne Vermont.

We have are classical four colors the butter cream the honey the vanilla and dark chocolate. Those are the main bears that we have and we've had those as long as I've known and then we have the espresso bears and the Maples which are fairly new and we have the kaleidoscope there which is fun it's all different for mixed together into one there it's pretty awesome looking and that's a newer one.

We have a great custom their program as well. Anything you can think of any bare design within reason can be produced right here in Shelburne.

It's interesting because most people think that teddy bears are only for kids but the majority of our customers are actually adults buying for other adults. It's mostly men buying for women and Valentine's Day it's sort of our niche market but the teddy bear is such an emotional gift and it really helps one person say to another in a really emotional kind of personal way of what they're trying to say.

It's easy to tell sometimes what people want because you have the I'm sorry pillow or I love the pillow that comes with a teddy bear. Sometimes you wonder I wonder what he did to have to send an I'm sorry bear. They are special.

Actually probably our most popular is the classic bear with a bow tie it suits any occasion but new baby bears are very very popular because you can personalize the bear with the name of the baby and the birth date so it's a real keepsake an heirloom quality bear made just for that one occasion. That is really one of our strengths.

The busiest season is Valentine's Day followed by mother’s day and Christmas which are similar. Christmas is a little bit bigger than it used to be mother’s day hands on the year you're asking about but definitely Valentine's Day is our biggest season.

I think the appeal of a teddy bear is timeless. Over 100 years of great bear a tradition have been considered in part of our thought process as we continue to develop the bear line here at Vermont teddy bear.

Sometimes if you're having problems you have someone you can talk to that listens to you. They go places with people all the time. We of people that take their bears on vacations the photograph them to make books. We do have a hospital admittance form that you fill out and it tells the bears name and their age if it has any allergies and what's wrong with the bear and who we should send the bareback to. When the bear is fixed I get a lot a male thanking me for taking care of their bear. We get pictures of dogs that have gone
after the bear and children sometimes sending pictures and I hang those in little cubbies with the bears so they won't be lonely well they are here.

Again I think if you don't come to work at the all you have to do is walk into the bear shop and you'll get perspective really quickly. We tried to provide an environment where everyone feels great about the work we're doing here and we do not have a lot of unhappy people here.

It's a wonderful place to work it's a lot of fun people enjoy themselves here so it's a really fun place to work.

I've never had a bad day in the eight months I've been working at Vermont to be there. If I ever start to lose my focus a comedown spend time in the bear shop is just a terrific item. We have individuals that work on our team who do work with trauma victims they use bears as a way to connect between the caregiver and somebody who might be struggling at a certain point in their lives. It just seems to be a universal opportunity to create a bond.

My favor part about my job is being here. Like I said I've been here over eight months and came out of a pretty intense work environment prior to coming to Vermont teddy bear. Again it's a beautiful campus here it's really hard to lose your perspective when you're dealing with teddy bears on a daily basis so I really enjoy coming to work every day.

Our thanks to communication students at Norwich University for sharing their work with us. And thank you for joining us that's our program for today I'm Judy Simpson I will see you again next time on Across the Fence.

Across the Fence is brought to you as a public service by University of Vermont Extension and WCAX TV.