

Plant sale aids SHS programs

Future Farmers of America turn soil in order to turn a buck

BY DANIELLE KUEHNEL
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The sun is shining. The birds have flown back. The daffodils are blooming.

It's that time of year again.

And in celebration of the new season, Silverton High School's Agriculture Department and the Silverton Future Farmers of America (FFA) members will play host to the second annual Spring Plant Sale.

The sale will feature colorful, blooming bedding plants such as zinnias, marigolds,

pansies, petunias and snapdragons, in addition to edible favorites like cherry, roma and



Danielle Kuehnel / Appeal Tribune

Plants like these will be on sale at the second annual Spring Plant Sale this weekend at the Silverton High School Greenhouses.

celebrity tomatoes; peppers and cucumbers. This year's gala will also include shrubbery.

Silverton High School senior Jessica Ditchen, 18, has owned and maintained her own nursery for the past four years as part of her Supervised Agricultural Experience project (SAE). Her nursery boasts a hefty 28,000 plants, and she provide five to 10 varieties of shrubs for the sale.

"I've got everything from boxwood to arborvitae," Ditchen said. "I'm very excited. I love the sale."

Ditchen isn't the only one who's excited about the number of plants accrued for the sale.

"We're selling a larger variety of plants than last year," said Agricultural Science and Technology instructor Andrea Kuenzi. "We've got a lot more bedding plants."

Kuenzi said the students — mostly juniors and seniors — started all of the featured plants either from seeds or "plugs," a small plant starter. Quite impressive when looking at what the students now have to offer: a multitude of surreal-hanging baskets overflowing with impatiens, flats full of orange marigolds and miniature greenhouse forests of lush, leafy greenery.

"It's a lot of work," Kuenzi said, "but I think for [the students] to see their work really come to life is kind of cool for them."

"They've been working on these plants since February," she said.

Potting plants will range in price from \$1 to \$2, while other plants, like hanging baskets, can range from \$13 to \$18. All proceeds go to the Silverton FFA chapter and to Silverton High School's Agriculture Department.

The proceeds earned from the sale of Ditchen's shrubs (ranging from \$4 for 1-gallon plants to \$8 for 3-gallon plants) will go back to her nursery for soil and plants.

"[Money] will mostly go back into the nursery," Ditchen said, "but I'm going to Western Oregon University next year, so I'm saving money for that, too."

"The nice thing about the sale," Kuenzi said, "is that it's all student money. The funds go directly back to the students and the continuation of the [horticulture] class."

The plant sale will be from 3 to 5:30 p.m. Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, 2 to 5 p.m. May 12 and

8 to 4 p.m. May 13 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Silverton High School Greenhouses, behind the tennis courts on the Schlador Street campus.