

The Gardening Ganns

By David Segal

Long-time locals Linda and David Gann are well-known in Montrose County. She is the spokesperson for the Montrose-Olathe school system, and he is a former Montrose County Commissioner, now the western Colorado director of the Nature Conservancy program.

However, they have recently added something new to their list of accomplishments and activities. The Ganns have begun a business that teaches people how to grow an organic garden. Forget the fertilizer, can the chemicals, trash the toxins. Grow your flowers and vegetables in a clean, safe way.

The Ganns, Western Slope natives who've been married 34 years, have been gardening all their lives. But it was the experience of becoming grandparents that led them down the organic path.

"About a year ago, we had our first grandchild," David said. When he came for a visit, the Ganns immediately noticed little flags all over their yard that said "no children, or pets in the yard for 24 hours."

The garden had been sprayed with insecticides and pesticides. "We thought - this is crazy. We don't want this."

That led them to investigate organics, including natural fertilizer with no chemical additives or toxins. Their search culminated in the discovery of a product line called The Happy Gardener. They liked the products so much that they decided to sell them. In their spare time, the Ganns have become Independent Garden Consultants for "The Happy Gardener", turning their passion for gardening into a business opportunity.

"One of the things that I really like about The Happy Gardener," said Linda, "is that it's an educational program." The Ganns now teach their

fellow gardeners how to use organic techniques in a systematic way. "We're educating ourselves to understand the chemistry and the science behind it."

The couple uses the Internet to market their products and services. "We have our own web page," he said. "People can buy organic gardening



Luke Yeager, the Gann's first grandchild, is happy in their garden.

products directly from us. Or, they can join "The Happy Gardener" as a member, and that allows them to buy these products at a 20 to 30 percent discount." Membership in "The Happy Gardener" costs \$39 for the first year, and \$20 a year thereafter. Orders are delivered

directly to the customer's doorstep.

Linda is enthusiastic about spreading the organic gardening gospel. "It's great! The thing that I like about it is getting the awareness out, one backyard at a time."

And, it's not hard to learn, David added. "You really don't need to have a strong background in gardening at all. These products are self-explanatory. Organic gardening is a system. We plant flowers that attract birds and beneficial insects, and we let them do the mosquito control for us, instead of pesticides."

"It's also about learning how to compost," Linda continued. "You can even compost your morning coffee grounds. Everything we're doing to make a bountiful garden is also conditioning the soil, and therein lies the whole system."

Linda says that they're also interested in talking to businesses. "I think that having a 'green' conservation outlook to your business is just smart these days." ▲

You can contact the Ganns at www.thehappygardener.info/davidgann.htm, or 240-8904.