

Grangetto's planting seeds of knowledge

By: SHANNON WINGARD - For the North County Times | Posted: Saturday, February 3, 2007 12:00 am

NORTH COUNTY -- Farmers, landscapers and gardeners alike may already know that an one-stop shop for supplies can be found at a 50-plus-year-old North County business, Grangetto's Farm and Supply.

Grangetto's is not just a place where people can buy farming and gardening supplies by such leading suppliers as Ames, Hunter Irrigation or Toro, to name a few.

The business also offers expertise on issues faced by residential and commercial gardeners, farmers and landscapers, said Kevin Grangetto, owner and son of founder Edward Grangetto Sr., who is now retired.

Grangetto's has retail store locations in Escondido, Encinitas, Valley Center and Fallbrook, and a main office is in Escondido, where it was first established in 1952.

Like similar stores, it sells items such as sod, gardening tools, pesticides and fertilizers as well as decorative items, including outdoor flags and garden fountains.

However, Kevin Grangetto said the employees' expertise on agricultural issues is what most sets the business apart from "box stores."

"That's where we shine," he said. "We have salespeople with the knowledge to tell a customer how to get the best results and can give them specific advice."

Being specialists in this area is somewhat easy for members of the Grangetto family.

For years, the family has grown citrus and avocado trees on an 80-acre Escondido ranch, which is now owned by Edward Grangetto Jr. He also serves as a sales representative for the store.

Kevin Grangetto said the family's experiences have helped them to understand how such things as weather, fire or drought can affect the industry, and this knowledge is invaluable for offering advice.

Recently, Grangetto said the company has been trying to offer advice on a broader scale by creating a monthly electronic newsletter with information such as gardening tips and clubs in it. They also offer in-store seminars on a variety of issues. To learn more, go to www.grangettosnews.com.

In addition, the owners share their knowledge with employees by requiring each new hire to attend Grangetto's University, which is a multiple-week crash course into understanding the industry.

"It gives us the confidence that these employees know what they are saying," he said.

Grangetto said he believes that having educated employees is essential for the company's success. In fact, he has initiated a "secret shopper" program that allows employees to be constructively critiqued or praised.

Grangetto, who owns the business with his wife, Martha, said he has been interested in agriculture and its supply industry since he was a child. He completed his family experience with a formal education at UC Riverside, where he earned his bachelor's degree in entomology and his master's in pest management.

Grangetto said he enjoys what he does, and has plans to continue to expand the business that was once his father's.

He said his primary goal, which is "to keep the business going," will be achieved by maintaining the company's standards that were set from the start.

"We are just going to continue doing what we do best," he said.

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