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A SPECIAL SECTION TO THE CHESTERVILLE RECORD/ THE VILLAGER — MAY 19, 2022

Funtastic Pool and Spa dives into online shopping



Winchester's Funtastic Pool and Spa sells and installs in-ground pools, on-ground pools, and hot tubs. For a complete list of services, visit their website. And coming later this month, watch for their new online store where customers will be able to buy many of the business' in-store products, such as chemicals and maintenance tools.

Courtesy Photos

Sandy Casselman Record Staff

WINCHESTER – It's lining up to be an exciting year for Winchester's Funtastic Pool and Spa.

This summer, owner Trevor Carruthers, along with his sister and employee Christina Stewart, are set to celebrate their 15th anniversary running Funtastic Pool and Spa, a business that promises to help homeowners create getaways in their own backyards. Located at 495 May Street, the Funtastic team is not only celebrating an anniversary this year, but they're also adding an online shopping option for customers later this month.

"We're opening up an online store at the end of May," Stewart said. "We'll be selling our chemicals through there, our maintenance equipment, pumps, and filters – everything we sell in our retail store, we'll be selling online. We're going to start small with chemicals and maintenance equipment first, but when we get more of a presence and have a better handle on things, then we'll branch into the pool toys and everything."

Stewart said she has a lot of work to do before the online shopping option goes

live later this month. Once it's up and running, she said they'll have a better idea of what works and what doesn't, and they'll adjust accordingly. Access to the online store will be through the business' current website (funtasticpoolandspa.com).

"Our robotic cleaners are a big seller for us," she said. "Those are very cool." She said that in addition to being available in-store, the robotic cleaners will be part of the online shopping options. Funtastic Pool and Spa is an elite member with the Maytronics group that sells the Dolphin robotic cleaners, which means Stewart's clients are eligible for all rebates through Maytronics.

While the owners of Funtastic Pool and Spa were busy before Covid, Stewart said business has increased during the pandemic. In addition to families being unable to travel in 2020 and 2021, many were unable to get the supplies they needed, such as chemicals, because many stores, if they were open, were unable to get the required stock due to supply shortages. At Funtastic Pool and Spa, however, Stewart said they've made a point of stocking up on supplies whenever possible. The

Winchester shop also provided curbside pickup during the height of the pandemic, and they still do, for those who prefer that option.

"Business has increased. Last year, because of the shutdown, people couldn't get into their normal pool places," she said. "And they had shortages where we stocked up before, so we had lots of products to sell last year. So, we were busy. We got a lot of new customers because of that, which was great. It's been a crazy few years, and we've been planning in advance, because we knew there would be shortages, so we stocked up."

Currently, Funtastic Pool and Spa is working a year in advance for pool installations, so those looking to have something installed next year, need to book now. Stewart said Carruthers does all the installations himself with the help of a team, so they only take on what they know they can complete in the allotted timeframe. Currently, she added, Carruthers is looking for one or two more employees to join the installation team.

"We were booked for this year, last August. We're small. We can only do so

many, so we book up fast," she said, adding that there are still openings for next year for those looking to add a pool to their backyards.

As for how many projects they can complete each year, Stewart said it's impossible to know, as each project is different. Installing an in-ground pool versus an on-ground pool is quite different with the in-ground being more involved and taking longer than the other. Funtastic Pool and Spa also replaces in-ground pool liners. Stewart said her team is sometimes hired to

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Lawn and garden care is easy with the right equipment

Joseph Morin
Record Staff

MOUNTAIN – If you have a lawn or garden that needs a fair amount of maintenance, then you probably have equipment to help you get the job done.

Whether it's big or small, having a healthy lawn and garden takes patience, work and of course the right tools.

BDL Equipment has everything you might need.

Owner Bob Langlois has some tips about looking after your lawn as spring and summer arrive.

“You should have winterized your machines through the winter. It is good practice to have put some kind of additive into your fuel tank.”

He suggested using a higher grade of gas in your lawn cutting equipment than regular leaded gas.

“It is definitely bumping

it up to the premium. The price is a lot more but in the long run you will have a cleaner better running engine.”

Langlois suggested fuel filters should be checked before the grass cutting season begins, as well as air filters and belts and blades.

“You will see that the performance of the blades may decrease throughout the season,” said Langlois.

He said if your lawn or



BDL Equipment in Mountain has the tools and equipment you need to create that perfect lawn or garden. Courtesy Photo

cutting area has no rocks or sand then lawnmower blades should last a great deal longer.

“You are better off at the start of the summer to keep your blades a little higher. If you have it too low you will burn your grass. When the blade is higher you may have to cut your grass more often, but it will be nice, lush grass.”

BDL Equipment can sharpen your blade or if you want get you new ones.

Langlois said he has a regular conversation with his customers about when it is time to replace a blade or piece of equipment instead of just repairing it.

“You might be able to piece older equipment together year after year but at some point you are going to realize it is just not worth it.”

BDL Equipment is a TYM Tractor and Cub Cadet Dealer but can find

parts for most other push lawnmowers and lawn tractor brands. They also have a rental service with different kinds of equipment you can use for a variety of jobs around the lawn and garden.

Langlois stresses the fact that after sales, service is very important to his customers, and having great customer service is something he prides himself on.

“You want a dealer that will look after you,” said Langlois.

BDL Equipment is located at 10510 Loughlin Ridge Rd, Mountain, Ontario.

Their phone number is 613-209-3122. BDL Equipment also has a Facebook and web page you can use to connect with them.

Funtastic Pool and Spa

Continued from page 2B

build the deck and fence for around the pool, as well, which, of course, will add time to the length of the installation. As for what clients prefer – in-ground or on-ground, Stewart said it's about the same.

“We do all of our own work,” she said. “We don't contract anything out.”

While they don't offer pool maintenance services, they do offer a water testing service that is available to both customers and non-customers alike. She said they have a resident expert who can help decipher the results and help customers with what they may need as a result.

“We upgraded it last year,” she said. “It's like state-of-the-art water testing on site.”

Funtastic Pool and Spa also sells quality products, Stewart said, adding that whenever possible, they try to order locally made products. Their hot tubs, for example, are made in Ontario, and, she added, they're available now.

“We try to buy as much ‘made in Canada’ products as

we can,” she said. “Everything that we bring in is quality.”

In addition to installing the hot tubs they sell, the Funtastic Pool and Spa team also services the ones they've sold. In fact, Stewart said that unlike other companies, they service all the products they sell. This includes not only the hot tubs, but also the robotic cleaners. They don't, however, service products sold by other companies. Funtastic Pool and Spa offers opening and closing services for pools, but with only one team, there's a limit to the number they can commit to servicing each year.

Located at 495 May Street in Winchester, Funtastic Pool and Spa is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. To learn more, visit their website (funtasticpoolandspa.com), send an email (info@funtasticpoolandspa.com), or phone (613-774-2341). You can also follow them on Facebook to stay current on what's new at the local shop.



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Create It! Garden Design and Installation offers tailored consultations

Sandy Casselman
Record Staff

CHESTERVILLE – If you’re thinking about starting a garden or maybe updating a current garden but you’re not sure where to start, then Erin VanGilst, owner of Create It! Garden Design and Installation has the answer.

“From consultation to installation, your ideas grow into full bloom with professional, courteous service specializing in perennials, shrubs, and annuals.” – Create It! Garden Design and Installation, Facebook.

In addition to designing, installing, and maintaining gardens, VanGilst is available for one-on-one consultations with those who want to do the work themselves but need a little direction or assistance. Depending on what you need, VanGilst is available for one-or-more-hour consultations. She also has two employees with expertise in gardening who have been working for her for the past six years.

Currently, VanGilst provides garden maintenance to several long-term clients. She opens their gardens in the spring, checks on them mid-summer, and then returns to close the gardens before winter.

“Some of my clients I’ve had since the very beginning, and I still have them,” she said. “I lost a dear client last year, and she was my very first design install. We ripped out what was there and put in a whole new garden. That’s

one of my prized gardens. I love it, and because I’ve been able to maintain it, it just really held its own. And all seasons, like spring, summer, fall, winter, it always looks really good.”

The client in question died in 2021 and a new family has moved into her home. This will be the first year, VanGilst won’t be returning to maintain the garden that got her started in the business.

While she continues to design and install gardens, VanGilst said most of what she’s currently doing is garden renovations rather than new installations. She currently has five projects on the go, she said, noting that some want to downsize or simplify their gardens, making them more self-sustaining

with limited maintenance required.

“Those are my favourite kind of jobs,” she said, adding that clients sometimes find it hard to prune or remove existing plants, but this is one of the areas where she excels. “That’s where my expertise comes in. I’m a very tidy organized person in the sense of a garden and so I can be ruthless maybe a little bit, but that’s, sometimes, what people need.”

VanGilst, who is a mother of two, moved with her husband and children to a new home a couple of years ago, leaving behind her lovingly designed and crafted gardens from her previous home. The new location includes a front garden she designed for the previous owners and she’s planning to

eventually add to the garden landscape over time. Right now, she’s focusing on building a vegetable garden.

While she doesn’t normally design or install vegetable gardens for others, she said she is currently working on one with a client who was looking for a change. She said most people with vegetable gardens want to do it themselves. She does, however, share lots of gardening tips through her Facebook page.

“Most people do their own thing,” she said. “I’ve given advice and whatnot on that, and I do a lot of consultation work where I go in and help somebody with advice.”

Continued on page 5B



Erin VanGilst, owner of Create It! Garden Design and Installation, is pictured in her greenhouse.

Casselman Photo

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Pictured is one of the many garden designs by Create It! Garden Design and Installation owner Erin VanGilst. While she originally created the design several years ago for the home’s previous owner, it’s now VanGilst, along with her husband and two children, who call the Chesterville-area property their home.

Casselman Photo

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Finding the flowers at Laura's Valu Mart

Carolyn Thompson Goddard
Record Staff

MORRISBURG – There is nothing like a sunny, warm day in spring to get

people thinking about their flower and vegetable gardens. Many anxiously await the arrival of flowers and gardening supplies to

garden centres, hardware stores and supermarkets. Laura's Valu Mart in Morrisburg has recently begun receiving shipments of seasonal items on display just outside the store.

Laura Callery, owner of the Morrisburg store, explained for over 20 years the Valu-Mart location has been providing plants and gardening materials to customers. "A variety of annuals, perennials, vegetables, hanging baskets, shrubs, fruit trees, rose bushes, tropical plants and herbs" are available for purchase from the "beginning of May until the end of June," commented Callery.

When asked about sources for the plants, she mentioned there are several as the store obtains different types of plants from different growers. She explained trees, evergreens, rose bushes, perennials and shrubs are guaranteed for one full year. "We have knowledgeable staff that have worked in the Garden Centre for many years who can help answer questions and make suggestions," commented Callery.

She mentioned how the Garden Centre is a way of serving the community, mentioning many



The Garden Centre at Laura's Valu-Mart in Morrisburg provides customers with a wonderful selection of trees, shrubs, gardening tools and of course the colourful flowering plants which bring such joy to people.

Thompson Goddard Photos



Create It! Garden Design and Installation

Continued from page 4B

She said she answers questions, provides suggestions, and, if needed and depending on the situation, she can bring plant materials as well. She said she not only brings plant materials for the jobs she designs and installs but is also willing to do so for those clients who want to do the work themselves.

VanGilst said she orders regularly from various suppliers and said it's easy to add a tree or specific plants to an order should someone wish her to do so. In addition to a Manotick plant warehouse, Peter Knippel's Garden Centre in Ottawa, and Russell's Beyond the House, VanGilst says she buys a lot of her plants from Chesterville's AB Greenhouse.

"They are wonderful people to deal with, so good," she said. "Last year, I did a huge order. Unfortunately, I lost three clients due to age who I always plant annuals for, so my annuals order is much smaller. But they're super helpful. I'm grateful."

Helping people find the right type of garden for them and their home is something VanGilst clearly enjoys. While some are all about the annuals, many others are looking for the ease and convenience that comes with perennials or shrubs.

To stay current on what's new with Create It! Garden Design and Installation, follow the business on Facebook (facebook.com/CreateItgardendesign). In addition to updates, Van Gilst also shares links to gardening-related information and advice, such as what plants are best for repelling mosquitos, for instance.

"I share information I think is good and relevant," she said. "I want them to be able to garden for themselves."

To learn more about Create It! Garden Design and Installation, or to book a consultation with VanGilst, send an email (erin@gardensbycreateit.com) or phone 613-448-1947. She also has a business website (gardensbycreateit.com).

customers return year after year "to add to their gardens, patios and entrances." Callery commented that staff enjoy hearing customers tell them their plans for the beautification of their home's outside area. She noted how each year, customers ask when the Garden Centre will be opened and share their

sense of excitement as they "know spring has arrived when the tent goes up. It's something our customers look forward to."

The long weekend in May is fast approaching, with its tradition of getting out into the garden, preparing, and planting

plants that bring such joy throughout the summer. Remembering the fresh vegetables and herbs, the beautiful flower colours and the joy of getting out into the garden, provides pleasant memories throughout the winter season.



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Crysler Home Hardware is ready for spring

Joseph Morin
Record Staff

CRYSLER – Every spring in Ontario homeowners get out their list of jobs to be done around the house.

That includes getting their lawns ready for another summer or their gardens prepared for another spring planting.

There are tools to be made ready, like lawnmowers and rakes, shovels, and garden equipment. It is a time to take stock of what you have and what you are going to need.

Crysler Home Hardware is ready to give you a helping hand when it comes to meeting spring around the yard head on.

The hardware store has a rich history. It goes all the way back to 1923 when the current owner Mark Beggs' great grandfather bought the building. "At the time it was a window and door factory," said Begg. "They operated it for 50 years selling it in 1973." Eventually Begg was able to buy it back from the people who had purchased it from his great grandfather.

"It has been a hardware store all along," said Begg. "After the window and door factory my grandfather got into building supplies, and

At this time of year we sell a lot of soils, fertilizers and mulches. People are getting their flower gardens and vegetable gardens ready."

– Mark Beggs

eventually hardware and housewares. He joined the Home Hardware franchise in 1965 and it has been a Home Hardware store ever since."

Begg, explained, "At this time of year we sell a lot of soils, fertilizers and mulches. People are getting their flower

gardens and vegetable gardens ready."

The hardware store sells all the seeds you might need along with lawnmowers, tillers and wheelbarrows.

With the spring weather slowly looking like it will soon be moving into summer, people are getting ready to look after the

outside of their homes.

"So far it has been very good especially when [they] get some warmer temperatures and some sunshine. People are anxious to get out and work on their yard projects."

There is no end to the accessories you can add to your garden or lawn.

Begg said birdfeeders and birdbaths are popular as well as lawn furniture so that you can enjoy those warm summer evenings.

"We also have a great deal of barbecue equipment."

You can connect with Crysler Home Hardware at 68 Charles St., Crysler; phone at: 613-987-2802; they also have a Facebook page.



Mark Begg of Crysler Home Hardware continues his family business with deep roots in the Crysler community. Courtesy Photo

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Growing food in communities

Carolyn Thompson Goddard
Record Staff

CHESTERVILLE – A community garden is designed to provide people in both urban and rural communities’ fresh produce. Often a community will provide residents, either for free or at a minimal cost with plots to grow vegetables, fruit or flowers for individual use. In some cases, community gardens are maintained by organizations with the produce made available to the public or are designed to provide fresh food to clients of food banks or similar organizations.

For many years, Community Food Share has assisted clients in need of a helping hand in Stormont and Dundas counties. “In 2018, Community Food Share partnered with St Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Winchester to establish a community garden to provide fresh produce for clients who visit our food banks,” explained CFS team leader Jane Schoones. She continued how initially the garden plot at St. Paul’s was small, however it provided CFS with a wide variety of vegetable donations. Schoones continued the size of the garden has tripled over the past few years, with the group focusing on “growing specific vegetables to have a higher yield of standardized produce. She noted how the dedicated group of volunteer gardeners have resulted in CFS receiving 1,321 pounds of fresh produce in 2021, almost 1,000 more pounds than in the first year.



The ground is being prepared for spring planting at the Ffaith Garden located directly behind Christ Church United in Chesterville. Thompson Goddard Photo

Christ Church United in Chesterville started the Ffaith Garden in 2021. Organizer Christine Cross-Barkley explained Ffaith is an acronym for Fresh Food Always in the Home and was created to help people in the community “in need of fresh vegetables in their homes, or those in need of something to do with their spare time.

Once the vegetables are harvested, they are placed into a basket before being put into the Ffaith pantry, a cupboard located outside at the back of the church and are available 24 hours per day for pick up.

Cross-Barkley continued “Members of our church, friends and family donated seeds, young plants, tomato cages, garden tools, and lawn chairs” as well as a small picnic table, mentioning she hopes to introduce a bird feeder this year! She continued how this year there are plans to increase the size of the garden so potatoes and tomatoes as well as flowers can grow.

“Come on out and grab a rake or hoe and lend a hand. Take 15 minutes a week to help with weed

control or water a couple rows of plants. Pick up or drop off a book or puzzle. Watch for the produce in the pantry as it becomes ready to harvest.” she commented.

The North Stormont community of Finch founded a community garden during the 2021 local growing season. Andrew Jacques of Wholesome Growth Garden explains how last year he began speaking to people about creating a community garden and around the same time people and organizations in the Finch area began the process. He continued, residents donated “their time and wood to build and transport the raised beds, as well as the dirt and compost, used to fill the beds.”

Jacques mentioned there are seven raised beds in the Finch Park and two at the Finch View Villa. He continued he understands there are “another one or two at private residences.” All the produce raised in the Finch community garden is provided to the



Since 2018, St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Winchester has provided Community Food Share with fresh vegetables for their clients. Thompson Goddard Photo

Grow-A Row initiative of Community Food Share.

In response to a question about the importance of community gardens, Jacques replied how he felt “the most important aspect of the community garden is giving back.” He explained the giving back takes many forms, including providing the produce to those in need, establishing relationships with others

with similar interests and the passing on of gardening knowledge and passion to others. He continued how volunteering in a community garden “can be replicated at home for self-sufficient growing.”

During the pandemic, many people either began, continued, or re-started the joy of gardening. Some likened the “pandemic inspired” gardens as akin to

the victory gardens of the World War Two era, while others enjoyed being involved in a process which helped others, while enjoying some time outdoors. Whatever the reason to become involved in gardening, there is something special about planting the seeds, watching the plants grow and then enjoying or sharing the fruits of the labour.

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CHESTERVILLE – Dylan Arnone has always wanted to have his own business. In 2020 he started up, Arnone Haulage in Chesterville. Arnone has always dreamed of operating and owning his own truck and being able to offer Tri-Axle rental services, snow removal, providing clean fill, topsoil and sand and gravel. Spring brings with it all kinds of opportunities to follow through on plans made in the winter to fix up your lawn and garden. If you are looking to improve your driveway, a fresh load of gravel can fix up those potholes. Before you begin to look at patio accessories for your back yard one of the most important challenges will be your landscaping. Do you have the right amount of topsoil and the right kind for what you want to do? Will you need sand to serve as a base for your patio stones or pool, and for areas around your garden. Do you have a spot in your yard that needs to be raised or filled with clean fill. When winter returns Arnone Haulage can help you with snow removal so you can go back to planning that perfect summer garden while Arnone Haulage does the heavy lifting outside your warm home.

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Gardening tips from the Chesterville's Green Gang

Carolyn Thompson Goddard
Record Staff

CHESTERVILLE – The downtown raised flower beds along Chesterville's waterfront are without a doubt one of the most beautiful spots in the community, thanks to the efforts of our own Green Gang of volunteers. Thanks to the volunteers who prepare the soil, plant the flowers, water, and maintain the raised flower beds for residents and visitors to the community can see and smell the fragrances of the different plants.

When speaking with Gail Parker and Shirley Coons, two long-time Green Gang volunteers, a lot of helpful hints were given that are easily transferrable to the home gardener. Shirley mentioned how the Green Gang like to purchase flowers in bloom, so they know what colours will be seen in the garden beds. Gail commented how for her home gardens, when she is purchasing many plants of the same variety, she will choose one in bloom with the others beginning to bud.

Both women shared their suggestions for locating flowers in home gardens. Gail suggested the label found on most commercial flower containers will provide location information; she suggests for shaded areas geraniums, impatiens, and ferns would be good. Shirley mentioned hosta and begonias do well in mixed light and



It was a bright and sunny morning on May 9. Members of Chesterville's Green Gang took advantage of the warm weather by beginning their annual spring cleanup of garden locations throughout the village. Pictured at the waterfront are, left to right, front row: Connie Gruich, Joke Van Winden, Marge Norg, Shirley Coons and Gail Parker. Back row: Ralph Norg.

Thompson Goddard Photo

suggested sunflowers, petunias, pansies, and roses are happiest in sunny areas.

One of the most important elements in gardening is the condition of the soil. Gail mentioned how the Green Gang ensures the soil in the raised garden beds does not become packed which would affect the plant growth. This is done by the volunteers throughout the growing season.

When asked about fertilizer, Gail mentioned many home gardeners put a slow-release fertilizer directly on the ground once a season. Both Gail and Shirley explained the Green Gang volunteers mix the fertilizer with the water used for the raised flower beds. Gail noted how this

method sends the fertilizer directly to the roots.

Watering the plants is another essential element of gardening. People often wonder if the time of day for watering makes a difference. When asked about this, both women agree the evening or morning is the best time to water gardens, mentioning watering in the hot sun will cause the water to quickly evaporate. Shirley explained the raised flower beds along the waterfront require more watering than those in the more traditional flower beds.

Taking care of flower or vegetable gardens requires a lot of work and in many cases can be costly. As is the case with many organizations, the Green

Gang welcomes volunteers who wish to become involved in this beautification project.

Gail explained how while the Green Gang receives financial donations, more fundraisers are needed to cover the cost of our beautiful gardens. On May 20 beginning at 9:30 a.m., the Green Gang is holding a fundraising plant sale in the Rotary gazebo on Chesterville's waterfront. There will be a good selection of plants to choose from as well as helping to have a beautiful home garden; purchasers will be helping to keep our community gardens beautiful.



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Garden shed considerations

Do you need storage space for your barbecue, patio set and gardening accessories? If so, it's time to get a shed. There are many prefabricated models made of synthetic materials, metal and wood. Here are a few tips for making the right choice.

Synthetic materials: Plastic, vinyl and PVC sheds are resistant to water and insect damage. Moreover, they require very little maintenance. Although available in a wide variety of designs, they tend to have a commercial look that may not suit everyone.

Metal: Metal sheds are lightweight, affordable and easy to assemble. If made from aluminum, the shed won't rust. However, metal sheds are easy to dent and come in fewer designs than those

made of synthetic materials.

Wood: Wooden sheds are sturdy and can complement the outside of your home. However, they require considerable maintenance and are more vulnerable to insects and rot than metal and synthetic sheds.

If you're handy, you can design and build your own shed. This way, you can choose its size and appearance. Furthermore, you can insulate the walls to create a workshop. But keep a close eye on your budget. This type of project can easily cost several thousand dollars.

Whether you choose to buy a prefabricated shed or build your own, make sure it's strong enough to withstand inclement weather. Finally, check the laws and regulations in your municipality for building this type of structure.

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