



The Vermont Wildflower Farm was established in 1981 and continues as a working farm with a retail store and an online presence. The seed shop (above) sells garden and nature-based gifts as well as seeds and flower bulbs.

“got annoying,” she remarks. She and Chris began looking for a small business to buy. Driving by Vermont Wildflower Farm (then in a state of decline) was tantalizing. “Oh, I wish they’d sell that place,” Diana kept telling herself. “When it came on the market, I didn’t think twice,” she says. “We jumped on it. It couldn’t have been more perfect.”

The couple have renovated the inside and outside of the building, introduced new product lines, and improved the gardens behind the store. It wasn’t easy. “The soil was very bad,” Diana recalls. “There was a lot of clay and rocks. And it’s bordered by wetlands, so there was a lot of flooding.” Today there is a neat gravel path that loops through the meadow and woodlands with signs identifying some of the 354 species of plants found on the site. One of the current challenges is controlling the invasive purple loosestrife, which a young employee digs out by the roots.

The knowledge base that Diana and Chris acquired from their horticultural backgrounds is an asset to their business. Diana is careful, for example, not to send seed mixes to states where one of the flower species in the mix could become invasive. Both are able to intel-

ligently advise clients, from beginning gardeners with postage-stamp backyards to landscape architects managing large-scale land restoration projects at places such as resorts, golf courses, estates, and private airstrips. Diana and Chris call their business a “hands-on company” and enjoy talking with customers very much. “It’s all a lot of fun,” Diana says. She doesn’t do onsite consultations but looks at lots of photographs, including aerial shots, and then consults with clients online. She finds the work fulfilling.

“When someone calls with a bare plot and then later sends pictures of a beautiful, rolling field of wildflowers, it’s very satisfying to know you helped create that,” Diana continues. She also feels the couple’s work has a mission.

“The U.S. is losing a lot of natural areas to urban development,” she explains. Providing plots of wildflowers can help to offset those losses. “People want beauty, but they don’t realize wildflowers also benefit songbirds, honeybees, butterflies, and other pollinators.” Diana notes that honeybees are struggling to survive and calls all the pollinators “super important” to the environment. Vermont Wildflower Farm donates seed to apiaries and hopes to

have their own bees onsite someday.

Most wildflowers will adapt to different soils, Diana says, but where people have cleared out wooded areas, they may need to amend the soil. Although the flowers thrive in full sun, Vermont Wildflower Farm does sell a mix for partial shade and one for woodlands. Other mixes are specially adapted for different regions of the country, or for dry areas, wet areas, for hummingbirds and butterflies, deer resistance, fragrant cut flowers, and for wildlife habitat. All new seed mixes are tested for two years on the farm’s own property before marketed. The farm also sells hand-gathered and rare species, such as Jack-in-the-pulpit, the edible lavender hyssop, moonflower, which opens in the evening to be pollinated by moths, the graceful Virginia bluebells, and jumpseed, a woodland favorite of birds.

Chris and Diana take pride in what they’ve accomplished with their business, particularly in the quality of their products and the reputation they’ve earned for outstanding customer service. “We’re virtually a complaint-free company,” Diana comments. “Our seed goes through extensive testing to get germination rates of 85 percent and above.