



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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September/October
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316-942-1443

EAST STORE

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(21st @ Woodlawn)
Wichita, KS 67203
316-687-5451

RIDGE ROAD STORE

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Wichita, KS 67212
316-943-0494

LANDSCAPE DESIGN & INSTALLATION NIGHTSCAPING

316-943-6886

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This Greenhouse Manager is "For the Birds"

Carolyn Utter, Editor

After 12 years of owning a local wild bird store, he recently landed as Greenhouse Manager at Johnson's Ridge Rd. Store. And although Mike Hargrove's love for wild birds is already making an impact on the bird feeding supplies offered at Johnson's, he does have a love for Johnson's greenhouse plants, too.

But Mike wasn't always so lucky to be working with nature. Before opening his wild bird store, Mike worked for 20 years as a service manager for a heating and air conditioning company. "I just didn't like working for a large corporation. I was looking for something different" he commented about that career change. The recent downturn in the economy played a big part in Mike's decision to close the wild bird store; and in March of this year, he found a new home at Johnson's.

Mike's list of outside activities is impressive. He is currently Chairman of the Wichita Garden Show, Master Judge for the American Iris Society, and on the Board of Directors at the Great Plains Nature Center. He's been involved with the Wichita Garden Show for over 8 years; the American Iris Society for 20 years; and the Great Plains Nature Center for one year.

In his free time, Mike's gardening passion is irises. He has over 400 different varieties and likes to collect all types available, especially the more unusual ones. He's made lots of wonderful friends with his involvement in the local Wichita Iris Society including "one of my best friends" 92-year-old Helen who's been growing irises since the 1930s.

And although Mike's wife of 30 years, Sansi, also enjoys gardening, they often take a different approach as to how to landscape the yard. "I'm a collector ... she's more of a painter" he noted while trying to explain their differing approaches to gardening. Mike and Sansi have two children. Their son is in the army in Germany and their daughter is living in Michigan with her family of five children, ages 9 to 2.

Mike's passion for birds remains strong. He has five bird feeders in his yard right now and during the peak feeding season he has 10 to 15 feeders going. Feathered friends who routinely visit at this time of year include orioles, goldfinches, brown thrashers, yellow billed cuckoos and hummingbirds.

As we visited, Mike passed on a few tips about how to attract hummingbirds; and then, with a little coaxing, he agreed to conduct future birding seminars for us at Johnson's! Mike also agreed to share his expertise in upcoming issues of "Garden Talk" so stay tuned for great birding advice. ■

