



# SECOND NATURE AT READS CREEK: Plants, trees and so much more

By Leah Call

“Come for the plants. Stay for the experience.” That’s the irresistible invitation calling visitors to Second Nature at Reads Creek, a retail nursery and arboretum-in-progress, on Hwy. 14 just north of Readstown and 7 miles south of Viroqua.

When Dave and Jen Tubbin first stepped onto the property that would become Second Nature at Reads Creek, they envisioned turning the site into something very special—a backyard for the whole community, a tranquil place to relax and unwind, with children playing in the creek, families having picnics, and, of course, a vast variety of vegetation to

peruse and purchase.

That was seven years ago. Today, Second Nature at Reads Creek, powered by Vernon Electric Cooperative, is everything the Tubbins dreamed it could be. It’s a destination greenhouse, nursery, landscape design center, and so much more.

“Our nursery is a safe haven, a place of renewal and rejuvenation, and a place where the worries of the outside world fade away,” said Jen Tubbin.

Second Nature has a wide selection of annual and perennial plants, trees, shrubs, and landscaping inspiration. The nursery alone takes up 10 acres of the 240-acre property with thousands of unique, zone-hardy, healthy plants. In spring, the greenhouse is bursting with hanging baskets, vegetable starts, succulents and houseplants.

Two waterfall areas, ponds, a class A trout stream, and a beach and swimming area beckon community members and others to stop by and stay awhile. There’s even a gift shop where customers can find unique items to dress up their homes and gardens.

“Our gift shop, housed in a 10-year-old former tobacco shed, is a destination in itself. From fun, trendy home décor to vintage wares and handmade items, we have a little bit of everything,” said Jen. “You will find local goods, quirky items, garden and outdoor decor, mugs, stoneware, towels, fairy garden delights, memorial gifts, along with soil amendments, garden pots and statuary for garden enthusiasts.”

Marketing and Event Coordinator Karen Solverson, who



has been with Second Nature at Reads Creek since its start, encourages people to wander and enjoy themselves. “When people come here, they should plan to spend two or three hours to take it all in, though we can get customers in and out quickly if they have something specific in mind,” she said.

**Landscape with a Pro** Second Nature has several professional landscapers on site, ready to help customers with all their landscaping needs. Plan with a Pro sessions are available for expert insight into creating your own backyard haven.

“We will take your measurements, look at pictures of your home, and within an hour or two, we will create a computer vision of what you could do at your home along with a printed list of the plants to create your new space,” explained Solverson.

Those wanting to do the heavy lifting themselves can purchase their plants, take them home and get started. Or let Second Nature’s landscaping team do the work. Solverson says those with spring landscaping plans should schedule a time now to meet with their design team in order to be ready to roll when the ground thaws.

Second Nature at Reads Creek also offers spring and fall cleanup and monthly maintenance services for homeowners and businesses.

“Our landscaping and maintenance part of the business has absolutely exploded,” said owner Dave Tubbin. “I think people are tired of having a cookie-cutter backyard, and they are coming to us to create a backyard sanctuary, just like we have created here.”

Another service that has taken off is the memorial tree planting and customized tree tag creation to honor a loved one who has passed away or to celebrate a significant life event. “People can come here and choose a tree that speaks to their heart, and we will come out and plant it and hang a personalized memorial tag on the tree for them,” explained Solverson.

**Family, Fun and Community** Dave and Jen Tubbin have lived in the area for almost 30 years. Together they started and grew a successful home décor business called Second Nature by Hand, which they sold along with another business, Sweet Bird & Co., in order to focus their attention on their family and the growth of the nursery.

In true family-business style, the couple along with son Severin and daughter Siri all pitch in to make Second Nature at Reads Creek a success.

Educational and social events at Second Nature help to



Dave and Jen Tubbin with their children, Siri and Severin.

solidify Dave and Jen’s dream of bringing the community together. One of their most popular events, the Live Raptor Meet & Greet, brought in several hundred people. This fall, they will host the second annual Gem & Fossil Event on August 21, 2022, featuring rock and fossil hunting in the valley and a beach seeded with semi-precious gems for kids and adults of all ages. The Third Thursday Market takes place at the nursery from 4-8 p.m. every third Thursday from May through October. That event features local vendors, food trucks and live music on the porch.

“We started the Third Thursday Market with the goal of lifting up other small businesses. We were crafters for more than 20 years, and we know how important it is to just have a space and a presence somewhere, so this is just one way we can give back,” said Dave Tubbin.

The event draws a growing number of people, who gather to enjoy fun and fellowship, while feeling the stress melt away. And that’s exactly what Dave envisioned.

“This is my happy place,” said Dave.” How can anyone come to a place that is this beautiful and NOT be happy?”

*Photos courtesy of Karen Solverson*

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