

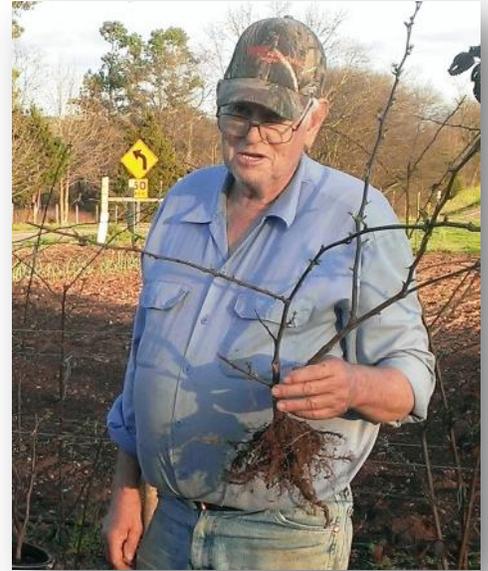


Vendor Spotlight May 5, 2017

Howard County Farmers' Market

James Dennis

James Dennis, born March 6, 1945, grew up in Garland, Texas. It was there he met his future wife, Betty. James and Betty had an unusual courtship. They met when she was four years old. They went to the same church, same Sunday school, rode the same school bus together and were in the same classes together. In September 2017, they will have been married 51 years.



James was reared on a farm and was the only one of 6 siblings who enjoyed the idea of farming. He says "It's either in your blood, or not." While living in Garland, James operated a 2,000 acre farm growing wheat, milo, corn and cotton. At one point he became ill from Parathion poisoning but recovered and continued to farm.

In 1989 James developed heart trouble. But he just keeps going, and going, and going. And is now on his 4th or 5th pace maker. He sold his farm in 1988 and promptly volunteered for the Army Corp of Engineers. In 2014 James finally retired, but he didn't quit working. He and Betty moved to Nashville where Dennis' mother lived. There he started raising a vegetable garden.

In 2015, a little mishap led him to the Farmers' Market. James happened to have some excess squash and cucumbers from his garden and was delivering them to the Senior Citizen's Center, which sits side by side to the Market. Unfortunately - or perhaps fortunately - he pulled into the wrong driveway and there met Debra Bolding, Co-Manager of the Market. The rest, as they say, is history. James now supplies the Market with cabbage, squash, garlic, tomatoes, peppers, purple hull peas, sweet potatoes and eggs.

James and Betty love to cook. He says sometimes it doesn't turn out as envisioned, but they eat it anyway. And James just loves to grow things. This year he is experimenting with growing a Chinese Apricot tree, also called a "sweet-pit" apricot as its pit is edible and tastes of almond.

James hopes more young people will get involved in gardening and selling produce at the Market. Drop by the Market this Friday, May 5, and make it a point to introduce yourself to James. He would love to meet you!