

# Rooted in tradition

## Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale this Saturday

Cornelia Naylor, The Times

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Whether you're looking to impress mom with a six-pack of petunias or a pot of jalapeno peppers, the Sardis secondary Mother's Day Plant Sale is the place to be this Saturday.

From 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., students in the school's sustainable resources (a.k.a. agriculture) program will be peddling all momma's favourite plants including annuals, perennials, hanging baskets, vegetables and herbs, all at bargain prices.

The sale--taking place in the parking lot outside the school's 1,600-square-foot greenhouse this year--is a popular, long-standing Sardis tradition going back about 30 years.



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## **Sardis secondary school Grade 11 student Kyle Minger sets up for the school's annual Mother's Day Plant Sale on Saturday, May 8 outside the Sardis secondary greenhouse.**

Last year it took in \$15,000.

The money goes back into the program, which has experienced a renaissance recently.

About two years ago, Sardis science teacher Joe Massey took it over with fellow teacher Tania Toth and breathed new life into the program with extensive renovations to the greenhouse and the addition of a hydroponic vegetable growing component to the Grade 11 and 12 courses.

The changes have sparked interest among students.

Another block is being added to the school's schedule next year to accommodate increased registration, and the number of Grade 12 students taking the course next year has gone from six to 20.

"It's been a dumping ground for kids who don't know what else to take," said Massey of the program's past, "but I would love to make this a course where kids see an opportunity for careers and for future school."

Toward that end, Massey has developed some fruitful ties with the community.

A number of local greenhouses have stepped up to share their expertise while a partnership with UFV now gives students the opportunity to earn post-secondary credit for their work in the program.

Massey is even talking with a local restaurant interested in buying some of the cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers produced during the vegetable-growing part of the course.

Last year the produce went straight into Sardis's culinary arts program.

"We call it our 100-metre diet," said Massey.

He has big dreams for the program, which he hopes will someday include berry growing and livestock and eventually extend into the summer months.

"There's money to be made in agriculture," said Massey about the doors the program could open for students. "I mean, what do we do in Chilliwack?"

This Mothers' Day, though, improvements around the greenhouse mean just one thing--better plants for mom.

For more information about the Mothers' Day Plant Sale call Sardis secondary at 604-858-9424 or visit [www.sardissecondary.ca](http://www.sardissecondary.ca).