



### **Grandma's Stand**

“It has been 69 years of glorious memories and many friendships” said Pat Stroup of Rockford, IL. Stroup has been gardening since she was five years old. It started out as a way to keep her and her two brothers out of mischief but quickly turned into a family Business.

In 1946 Stroup and her brothers started selling the extra raspberries they picked by the side of the road thus, stirring the idea for a larger “fruit stand” and this idea grew quickly from then on.

The family fruit stand was going well. It ran off of the original 3.5 acres for some time. But soon enough, Stroup’s father made the decision to expand the business and rented 40 acres. They took advantage of this land and planted every vegetable imaginable including 10,000 tomato plants.

“Dad dug the holes for the tomato plants, Mom dropped the plants and us three kids planted and hilled them up” said Stroup.

With all the produce being raised, the Stroup family put up a small shed. The family stand finally earned the name “Granma’s Stand” during this time.



In 1986 Pat met her “helpmate”, Jim Stroup. Stroup and her husband had plans to sell ice cream on one side and vegetables on the other. “Neither Jim nor I knew anything about the ice cream business but we learned fast. We made the best shakes in town I have been told” said Stroup.

Stroup’s mother passed away in 1995. “I am so grateful she was able to have been part of the business” Stroup said.

Pat and Jim continued the stand the way it was for 10 years. “We decided it was too much for the two of us to do both” said Stroup. The couple bought 5 acres of property next to their home and turned it into a garden to continue the legacy.

“We plant about 500 tomato plants, 250 peppers, 100 eggplant, cabbage, beans, broccoli, and cucumbers, and 5000 onions and beets. We plant pumpkins and squash, gourds and corn on a farm in Winnebago, the same farm that grew the corn for Mom so many years ago” said Stroup.

Pat’s husband, Jim passed away on November 9, 2014. “It is very difficult but I know he would want me to continue growing a garden. As long as I am healthy I will continue to grow vegetables. I love to see things grow and enjoy people very much like my mom and Jim did. I gave the produce away last year because of Jim’s illness. I plan on doing the same thing again this year. It is my way of giving back to the community of people who have supported my business for the past 69 years. I have been very blessed by the Lord so it is my thank you.”

Pat continues an intensive harvesting schedule. “I spend about 8 hours a day getting the garden ready for harvest. When things are ready I spend from 9 in the morning until sometimes dark picking. I pick and pull weeds in between customers all day long.”

Pat invites all of you to come and see her garden next summer. “I just like to show it off. I hope to have veggies after July 4th” said Stroup.

“If you teach someone how to raise a garden they will never go hungry. It is a great hobby. In the garden you are close to God watching things grow and bear fruit.” (Published June 27, 2015)