

FLAT TACK + SPROUT & BLOSSOM

Halfway up on the east side of Esther Street, you'll find the Flat Tack and Sprout & Blossom booth. Even if you weren't looking at their banners, you would recognize them after one glance of the offerings on their tables. They offer a wide variety of produce – the cucamelons were all the rage this year – alongside beautiful bouquets of flowers.

The distinctive selection of produce is not the only thing that is unique about this booth. The bounty is a result of a collaboration between the two farms: Flat Tack and Sprout & Blossom. Each farm is an independent business, but they farm on the same land in Vancouver, share equipment, and cultivate some crops together.

Patrick Dorris and Kelly Peters began Flat Tack Farm five years ago after doing work exchanges on farms in Australia and New Zealand. There, they studied permaculture – a method of agriculture that aims to tap into symbiotic plant and animal relationships to create a self-sustaining system. They implemented these lessons on their farm through the creation of a food forest that packs 70 fruit trees, 50 shrubs, ground cover, strawberries, and mint into a ¼ acre space. While the food forest required a lot of work up-front, now it requires almost no maintenance. Flat Tack grows a wide variety of fruit, such as ground cherries, gooseberries, Asian pears, and currants. "If we have a calling card, it's that we grow unique things," Patrick said.

Lyndsay Jacobs founded Sprout & Blossom in 2017 after getting her start on a small farm in Hood River through the WOOF program, studying permaculture design, and working as an apprentice at Zenger Farm in Portland. While veggies have been her primary focus, she has grown more flowers and medicinal plants every year. Lyndsay believes that food is a great connection point among people and grows in a way that nourishes the land and the community. "Unfortunately with industrial agriculture we have lost touch with our food and I want to do what I can to heal and restore our earth, fuel our local food systems with nutritious food, create community, and get food to those in need," she said.

