

# Meet the Farmers: Josie Nicotra

## Nicotra Farms

Kirkville N.Y.

Josie Nicotra is one of the friendliest farmers at the Downtown Farmers Market. Not only does she know her customers by name, she knows exactly what they're looking for when they come to peruse the produce at the Nicotra Farms stand. Josie loves her job, and looks forward to seeing her customers week-after-week at the Downtown and Regional Farmers Markets.

"So many of my customers are my friends, so it makes for a really fun day," she smiles.

In the span of just a few minutes, Josie says hello to a woman named Katherine, who she knew would be looking for collards. "How are you, Katherine? We have collards!" Josie calls out.

Then, there's Julie, who helps the Nicotra family out behind their booth. "Julie walks all the way down through the city to come visit us," Josie says, going on to explain how Julie's route takes her 1.5 miles, from Park and Oak Streets to Clinton Square and back - every week!

"She loves the Market so much, she walks every week back and forth," says Josie. "We've been friends for a long time, and now she's getting so that she helps us out."



*Julie, who walks 1.5 each way to the Market every Tuesday, is such a dedicated customer she helps out at the Nicotra Farms Stand as well!*

"This year, because we had so many people that wanted it, we decided to add kale," Josie says. The leafy greens have been a big seller at the stand which features a wide variety of vegetables including tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, zucchini, collards and cabbage. But, Josie says her most popular produce are cucumbers and cauliflower.

Speaking of cauliflower, don't be worried that you haven't seen it yet! Josie says customers can expect cauliflower next week at the Downtown Farmers Market. "We always have it, it was just a little later this year because of the weather."



*Josie, Sammy and Melanie represent Nicotra Farms at the Downtown Farmers Market*

A fifth-generation farmer, Josie runs Nicotra Farms with her husband, Rosario. She has represented the Kirkville-based family-run farm at the Downtown Farmers Market since 1973, but says the operation is very much a team effort. Responsibilities are shared and distributed among the whole Nicotra family and three employees who have worked for the family for several years.

"We all work together," Josie says proudly. "We all help out in the fields." And each member of the team has their own special niche.

"My husband, Rosario is the farmer - he was born into it," Josie explains how when Rosario's father passed away - when Rosario was just 13 years old - Rosario begged his mother not to sell the family farm. Rosario was committed to one day making it his own business. After he graduated from Cornell, he returned to harvest his dream.

Rosario and Josie's daughter-in-law, Melanie, handles the plants and tackles seeding, which starts as early as January. Because of her labors, many of the flowers arrive at the Market in June - before even the produce is ready.

Then there's Josie's grandson, Sammy, who drives the "big truck," making it easier to transport the plants and produce.

"Everybody has their skills and talents," says Josie. And they all aim to please, granting customers' requests.



**Make sure to say hello to Josie, Melanie and Sammy at the Downtown Farmers Market every Tuesday!**