



2019 Kittson County SWCD Rural Beautification Award Winners

Roger and Judy Dziengel

Roger and Judy Dziengel have been awarded the 2019 Rural Beautification Award by the Kittson SWCD Board due to their beautiful home, outstanding tree plantings, and impressive vegetable and flower gardens.

Their home is located east of Kennedy, MN on Section 3 of Davis Township. This large ranch style home is set back from the road at the end of a well-kept driveway. Work on the home began in 2005 and was completed in 2007. Roger will proudly show you a scrap book filled with pictures and detailed explanations of the house's construction. Locals will find many of the faces of the construction crew familiar. This house is heated with geothermal coils and built to be airtight.

When entering the driveway of their home, you will be greeted with a windmill that came from South Dakota. Windmills like this one were originally designed to pump water for cattle. It is decorated with LED lights that frame the legs and form two stars at the top. This lovely display is powered by a solar panel at the base of the structure. The angle of the solar panel is adjustable which takes advantage of the changing angle of the sun through out the year. This optimizes the windmill's power supply. With

the windmill, Roger has included a horse drawn hay rake and ditching implement from his family farm. He can remember riding the hay rake as a child and collecting flax straw.

In 2012 the Dziengels decided to plant a 73-foot shelterbelt north of their home. They did this to protect their home from fierce winter winds and prevent soil erosion. With the help of the SWCD they planted three tree rows consisting of 125 Redosier Dogwoods, 35 Quaking Aspens, and 35 Black Hills Spruce. They also put in a row of 117 Common Purple Lilacs East of their home that screens them from the road. The total acreage of the project was .8 Acres and they enrolled it into the NRCS Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). In 2015, they worked with the SWCD again to replace the Quaking Aspens with Siouland Cottonwoods, since the Aspens had been hit by disease, and to create a wind break on the land east of their home. They planted another three tree rows. The first row consisted of 34 Redosier Dogwoods. The second row consisted of 18 Siouland Cottonwoods. The third row consisted of 17 Black Hills Spruce. Roger diligently trims and maintains these plantings to keep the trees straight, tall, and full.

As a compliment to their robust tree plantings, Roger and Judy maintain several beautiful flower and vegetable gardens around their home. Many of the flowers in Judy's flower beds came from her family and friends. These special flowers make her think of her loved ones as she works in the gardens. Judy has received yellow Day Lilies and Lavatera from her mother. From her sister, who is a master gardener, Judy has received Calla Lilies. Judy mentioned that she and her sister often swap gardening tips and tricks. Her Hostas were a gift from her brother. One relative gave her wild flax, which is an interesting plant since it has new blooms every morning and loses the petals every evening.

In addition to receiving flowers from friends and family, Judy tests new plant varieties from the NDSU Extension Service. They have sent her Zinnias and two varieties of green beans. After Judy plants the seeds, she takes notes about what she likes and doesn't like about the varieties they send. She reports her findings after harvest and the extension takes that information into account when developing new varieties.

Along with her flowers, Judy grows a large vegetable garden. She grows tomatoes, corn, peas, green beans, cucumber, squash, spaghetti squash, raspberries, rhubarb, and wild asparagus. Like her flower garden, Judy has fruit and vegetable plants that were donated by her friends and family. Her rhubarb plants remind her of a neighbor who has passed, and her asparagus came from a friend's garden.

The Dziengels are resourceful gardeners. Judy's mom taught her to use fencing as a trellis for her peas and to plant cucumbers on either side of them. When the peas have finished producing, the cucumbers will have more room to spread out. They rotate the crop placement in the garden to prevent nutrient deficiencies and disease. They have placed three rain barrels that they designed themselves around the house. The water collected by these barrels is used to water the garden. Any excess water is drained away from the house by a drain tile. Roger is vigilant about preventing excess moisture from gathering near the home. To stop deer and other wildlife from raiding their garden, they built a 7.5-foot fence with live wire at the top. Roger says they've seen no raccoons since building it. For starting seed, they built a lovely greenhouse out of poly carbonate.

Their home is full of family love, local history, and fond memories. Through dedication and commitment Roger and Judy have built a beautiful home with well-established trees and luscious vegetable and flower gardens. The Kittson SWCD wants to thank the Dziengels for welcoming us and graciously accepting this award for their achievements.

