

Lowell Graves would be the first to tell customers heâ€™s been growing fresh produce for as long as heâ€™s been old enough to do produce. Thatâ€™s nearly 60 years. No fertilizer. No chemicals. All organic â€” every time. Drivers would be hard-pressed to miss Graves along Main and Cherokee in Downtown Wagoner. He sets up shop seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day during harvest season. Whether itâ€™s tomatoes, squash, watermelon, pumpkins or fresh okra, produce enthusiasts are sure to find what theyâ€™re looking for. â€œIt takes a lot of time,â€ Graves said on a sunny, Wednesday afternoon. â€œTo be a good farmer, you need to stay with your crop to make a better crop. You canâ€™t just plant it and let it grow.â€ In fact, heâ€™ll joke that if youâ€™re in the produce business and married, â€œthe husband wonâ€™t have to run the wife off; sheâ€™ll leave on her own.â€ 67-year-old Graves said heâ€™s had a garden ever since he was six, and learned the tools of the trade from his father. His father raised 200 acres of produce and died in 1977 from a heart attack at 60 years old. Graves has lived in Wagoner for over 16 years, and has 32 acres of his own. Thatâ€™s where he does all his growing. Heâ€™s had the produce stand in Wagoner for about six years, and before that, sold in Coweta, Broken Arrow and Bixby. Gravesâ€™ original produce stand in Wagoner was where the Quiktrip sits at the intersection of Oklahoma 51 and 69. â€œIt was a gold mine in that location,â€ he said. Graves was one of six kids, and said he was the only one in the bunch to stay in the produce business. He also has three kids of his own, and three grandsons. As of right now, no one in his immediate family is interested in taking the produce stand over once his body calls it quits. Hopefully for Graves â€” that will change. â€œYour heart has got to be in it,â€ Graves said. It certainly isnâ€™t for the money, although some days are better than others. Days can be sweltering hot. Gardening takes

a toll on your body. Itâ€™s all adds up. Nevertheless, it is still the ultimate way to be one with nature, Graves believes. He also canâ€™t trade in the memories for anything. â€œOne year when I was in Coweta, a guy from Tulsa would come and get one peach and give me a \$100 bill. He just wanted to do it in his heart,â€• Graves said. Graves will start selling produce at his normal spot in Wagoner by the beginning of June, depending on the weather. Heâ€™ll typically be operating until the end of October if the fruits and vegetables hold up. The end of pumpkin season is always the goal to stay open. Some years heâ€™d have to start in July. Itâ€™s all weather-based. He feels over the past 10 years, the Oklahoma climate has gotten significantly hotter. Heâ€™d adamant about not using fertilizer or chemicals, like most big box grocery stores, he said. Everything he plants is strictly by hand. To make a long story short, some may say the city of Wagoner is lucky to have a guy like Graves take his nearly 60-year craft so seriously, and share it with the community. â€œWe never dreamed of living in Wagoner and I never understood why it never had a produce stand,â€• Graves said. â€œItâ€™s not a bad little town.â€• Be the first to know Get local news delivered to your inbox! Sign up! * I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy.