

A growing concern

By Sarah Junkin

A Water Valley couple have followed their dreams and combined forces to bring beauty and creativity to local gardens.

Bruce Kay graduated from Olds College in 1987 and was excited about a future in landscaping when the unthinkable happened.

He broke his back in a skiing accident and was compelled to take a less physical job in the city.

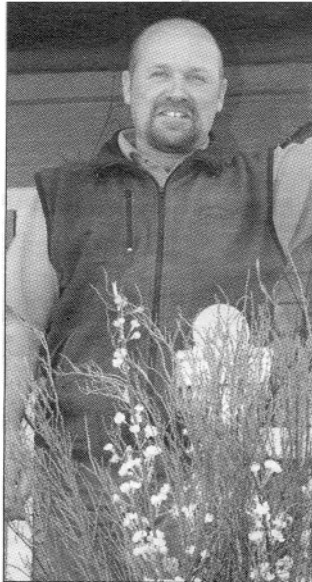
"I was a suit and tie guy for eight years," he said. "Even though I was still managing projects I missed design and construction. I missed it every day."

Finally, having healed sufficiently and taking what he calls "a leap of faith," Bruce took off his tie for the last time and launched On Growing Works, a Cochrane-based company with a focus on the long term landscaping.

"I'm not interested in cookie cutter homes," he explained. "We like to plan for birds; we use natural stones. Basically, we're trying to be more thoughtful."

Certainly, the name of his company is thoughtful.

"On Growing Works is a play on words, but also comes from our life," Bruce explained. He and wife Dawn purchased an old 1914 rail-



Bruce Kay company.

way house in Olds and transported it to their farm.

"We've been renovating it ever since," he said. "We're not wealthy people, but we learned that phasing the project was mandatory, and that like all projects it would continue to develop and grow as we grow as people, and as we change with the phases in our life."

Kay brings that same philosophy to his

"I have the best team," he said.

"I want the company always to be growing and developing so we can all grow and learn as people."

Meanwhile, Kay's wife Dawn has been running her own company, Homespun Interiors, for 12 years that is now meshing well with Bruce's business.

"After Bruce's wonderful landscaping goes dormant for the winter, I go into action to make custom containers with year-round arrangements," she said.

"After the summer annuals are done, I pop them out and put in a fall arrangement and later pop them out and put in a Christmas one."

Bruce too says he incorporates many of his wife's ideas into his own landscaping designs.

"We've created an alliance," he said. "She's my best friend."