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# Fewer farms dot landscape, but Shell's Feed still going strong

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Along with garden tools and seed starter kits, the store carries a large selection of flower and vegetable seeds as well as starter plants and a variety of grass seed. Owner Greg Shell says the business specializes in customer service, helping customers find the products they need.

**NORTH TAMPA** – Although it opened in 1961, Shell's Feed & Garden Supply at 9513 Nebraska Ave. has kept current with the times.

When the store first opened, large areas of Hillsborough County and most of Florida were devoted to agriculture and ranching. Original owner Charles Shell delivered feed to farmers as far away as Levy County.

Despite there being fewer area farms, Shell's Feed & Garden Supply still sells a wide variety of feed, but current owner Greg Shell has altered the focus of the store to meet the demands of contemporary customers.

Organic gardening has been growing in popularity, and Shell's carries a wide range of supplies for the new or seasoned organic gardener, including compost bins, Earth Box growing containers, potting soils and topsoil.

"We carry everything from fertilizers to pesticides and fungicides that are USDA-certified organic," Shell said. "We have a new organic fungicide that was just approved for homeowners within the last year. There weren't a lot of options for organic fungicides, but this one is the silver bullet. It really works."

Shell's sells individual fertilizer components, including seaweed, kelp, corn gluten meal and flood meal.

Shell's has created its own blend of organic fertilizer, so customers can buy it pre-made. Along with garden tools and seed starter kits, the store carries a large selection of flower and vegetable seeds as well as starter plants and a variety of grass seed. Staff members are always happy to share their expertise regarding organic gardening with customers.

Shell said that chicken feed is his biggest seller, and the store carries horse feed, small mammal feed, wild bird feed and feed for domestic birds, including parrots, parakeets and finches.

Customers can find birdhouses, bird feeders, rabbit hutches and supplies for raising poultry. The store sells live baby rabbits, a variety of chicks and, usually in the spring, baby ducklings and turkeys. Three different types of hay are available in bales, as well as straw for bedding.

Shell's carries a full line of pet supplies for dogs and cats, including Blue Buffalo, Iams and Diamond food, kitty litter, collars, harnesses, leashes, toys, beds, dishes, flea and tick treatments, and crates for dogs.

Whether it is feed in bulk or smaller packages, pet supplies, garden supplies or specialty products such as Bag Balm, a skin moisturizer with countless other uses, Shell's Feed & Garden Supply, with its distinctive red and white checkerboard façade, has built a reputation as the place to go.

"A lot of people have told me, 'if Shell's doesn't have it, quit looking,'" Shell said. "That's not my saying, that's what other people have told me.

"We tend to carry items that you wouldn't typically see in big box stores, especially in our organic gardening department. What we really specialize in is customer service. We try to help our customers find the products they need and to answer any questions they may have."

Visit Shell's Feed & Garden Supply at [www.shellsfeed.com](http://www.shellsfeed.com) or call (813) 932-9775.