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### RETIRED NURSERY OWNERS THROWING THANK-YOU PARTY

**Author(s):** MIKE CASSIDY, Mercury News **Date:** May 5, 2005 **Section:**  
The Guide

Virginia and Louis Saso always understood that their Saratoga nursery business was as much about cultivating relationships as it was about cultivating plants.

So it was hard to say goodbye when they sold their home and business in 2000 and moved to Santa Cruz to retire. They always planned to have a party to get everyone together again. And though it's taken some time to settle in, they're ready.

"It's a thank-you party," said **Virginia Saso**, who is turning 81 next month. "We decided we really wanted to do something for the people who have supported us. A lot of them became friends and have been asking other people, 'Have you heard from the Sasos?' "

For 26 years the couple ran Saso Herb Garden on Fruitvale Avenue. Customers came through looking for medicinal herbs and herbs for cooking.

The Saso taught classes and brought in experts on herbology and horticulture. Virginia led sessions on making wreaths with dried plants. They started an apprenticeship program, in which they taught others to tend a garden.

In all, thousands were touched by the suburban herb oasis. And now Virginia and Louis, 89, have invited all of them to drop in May 14 to say hello.

For those who can't make the party, scheduled from noon to 4 p.m. at the Sasos' home, **Virginia Saso** reports that the couple is doing well.

As soon as they moved to their Esmeralda Drive home they started planting -- herbs, fruit trees, flowers. Louis suffered a stroke in early 2001, but he is still able do some grafting and help those willing to learn.

Virginia would like to hear in advance from those planning to attend. Call (831) 423-8005 or e-mail [virginia@saso.com](mailto:virginia@saso.com). Directions available at [www.saso.com/directions](http://www.saso.com/directions).

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