

## The Severn Journal

# Willow Oak Farm offers shopping alternative

By [Karen Sampson Hoffman](#)

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Willow Oak Flower and Herb Farm employee Heather Carr, proprietor Marie Price-Nowakowski and close friend Jan Cartright greeted visitors on Sunday during the farm's pre-Christmas open house. (Photo by Karen Sampson Hoffman)



Shoppers browse during the pre-Christmas open house. (Photo by Karen Sampson Hoffman)

**The lights are up and the season's decorations adorn** the shops. The winter holidays are coming to Severn and local businesses are preparing for the heaviest shopping days of the year.

Arundel Mills Mall is preparing to opening at midnight for Black Friday, with more than 70 percent off at various stores. On the other side of Severn, the Walmart Super Center in Quarterfield Crossing Shopping Center is open 24-hours with pre-Black Friday deals already underway.

Away from the hustle and bustle of the two shopping centers, down Telegraph Road, is the Willow Oak Flower and Herb Farm. A slower paced country-style shop, the herb farm offers

an alternative to the busy crowds at the retail centers. For the past 32 years, Willow Oak Farm has offered winter greens for decorating, fresh flowers for holiday center pieces and classes on making traditional holiday decorations. The Christmas Barn is filled with plants from around the world, beautifully decorated Christmas trees and the scent of dried herbs and teas. This past weekend, during the farm's annual pre-Christmas open house, live music and the scent of homemade goodies filled the air of the shop.

A Christmas garden will feature the Polar Express Trail, based on the popular children's book, winding its way down to Santa's Cabin across from Penguin Pond. On Fridays and Saturdays from now until Christmas, Santa Claus will greet visitors and listen to children's wishes.

Further from the pond, visitors can stop at the stable to spend a few minutes with the pony, goats and sheep.

"I love doing stuff like this," said proprietor Maria Price-Nowakowski. "We try to add something new every year to the trail. We used the herbs in the garden in the foods we prepared for the open house. Our greens are beautiful and last really long."

Price-Nowakowski explained that each of the farm's herb gardens has a theme and a purpose. Many offer medicinal and culinary herbs; others grow the farm's flowers for cut arrangements. The indoor garden offers plants from more tropical climates, including the plants that produce cinnamon, chocolate, coffee and vanilla. Visitors are encouraged to wander the gardens before browsing the herb shop.

"I use the gardens educationally," Price-Nowakowski said "I practice good organic methods. We have a variety of plants; the more variety the better. It's so important to diversify."

Inside the Christmas Barn are a variety of unique teas, some produced with the farm's herbs, and decorations for the holiday season. Price-Nowakowski is teaching several classes on making holiday wreathes, Christmas tree ornaments and hosting holiday teas with discussions on the symbolism of various plants used at Christmas time. There are a variety of gifts available for sale, including many handcrafted and traditional holiday items.

To make reservations for the any of Willow Oak Farm's classes or for the Polar Express Trail and Santa's Cabin, contact the farm at 410-551-2237 or by email at [contact@willowoakherbs.com](mailto:contact@willowoakherbs.com).

### Related Links

- [Events at Willow Oak Flower & Herb Farm](#)

URL: <http://www.zoomvillage.com/newsStory.cfm?newsID=12007>