

Kreiders' Mums Are Full Time Hobby This Month

By Mrs. Charles G. McSparran
Farm Feature Writer
"Flowers is my hobby, I just love to work in them."

So says Mrs. Harold B. Kreider of Pleasant Valley Mum Farm on Kreider Road, Lititz RD2.

Their mums are at their peak this week-end.

With two acres of plants and about 300 different varieties, this is truly a beautiful spectacle of color. You'll find all sizes and kinds in white, shades of pink, lavender, gold, yellow, bronzed and red. Kreiders invite people to come and see them and there's no charge to look.

Mrs. Kreider says, "We get our most enjoyment on Sunday from the mums because we don't sell on Sunday. We enjoy seeing faces year to year." Tourists from all over the United States, but not quite from all states, go there and buy mums.

To get to the Pleasant Valley Mum Farm from Lititz, take Route 501 north about two miles to Lexington Road. Turn sharp left and travel about a mile to Kreider Road. Turn right and it is about a quarter of a mile.

Pleasant Valley Farm is spelled out on the road bank in mums and the banks on both sides of the road are a mass of blooms.

Kreiders have a beautiful rock garden planted in mums and beds of mums around the house and lawn, plus the field they dig blooming plants from. The rock garden has a wishing well, an old fashioned water pump with water running from it and a water fountain with steps winding up and down through the garden. They made the rock garden six years ago. Mrs. Kreider has the rock garden and flower beds planted in petunias until mid-September, when she pulls them up and moves the flowering mums to take their places.

The first blooms come about September 10 and the last ones sometime in November, depending on the weather. They started digging the plants about September 1.

October is the best month for them. In September the colors tend to bleach some and in November you get some freezing.

Frost damages the white ones more than colored ones. Most of the blooms get prettier with frost. Cloudy weather forces the blooms and causes the bronzed ones to get darker.

The Early Kathleen starts

blooming in early September and lasts until sometime in November.

Kreiders stick mainly to hardy varieties. Fuji mums are delicate and they lose some every winter. Spider and some Spoon varieties are delicate also. It is advisable to take a few of the large patented varieties in winter.

This hobby is practically a full time job this time of year for Mrs. Kreider as she digs the plants to sell and makes mum arrangements to sell.

Kreiders raise a few pie pumpkins and pie squash which they sell on the farm and use for mum arrangements.

Their plants are most reasonably priced. Their price is the same to everyone. If you buy a dozen or more plants they are cheaper than by the piece. This mum business started as a hobby, but the past four years they have sold enough to make expenses.

Kreiders have grown mums eight years to sell. They plant around 40,000 mums each year. They buy about 40 new varieties from wholesale houses to try. They dig up their old plants and divide them and take cuttings from them. They do this from a week before Memorial Day till a week after. They should be planted about 12 inches apart, unless you want a solid mass of blooms by planting closer.

The patented varieties may not be reproduced. You must sign a statement saying you will not reproduce them.

They use tobacco stems to mulch their bed. Kreiders also sell tobacco stems. The tobacco stems conserve moisture, keep weeds down, keep insects away and fertilize. There is some potash and nitrogen in them. Mums prefer acid soil. They do not put fertilizer of any kind on them, nor spray them. The little black mites you see on the buds sometimes disappear with the rains and do not harm the plants or buds. Too much moisture in the ground in winter tends to cause the plants to freeze out.

Chrysanthemums should be cut back half way between July fourth and fifteenth, but must have two or three leaves left on the stem. This keeps the plant from getting so tall and makes the plant sturdy. If this isn't done, the blooms will cause the plant to become top heavy and go down. If you want to produce large blooms all the buds should



Mrs. Harold B. Kreider, Lititz RD2, loves to make mum arrangements and keep her rock garden a mass of blooms.

be removed from each stem except the first one showing color.

Mrs. Kreider was born and raised on this farm. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph C. Garman bought this 67 acre farm in 1914 and farmed it until 1953. Mrs. Garman lives now with the Kreiders.

Harold came here in 1945 and bought the farm in 1960. He worked in Mr. Garman's garage at Halfville seven years before starting to farm in 1953.

Before working in the garage Harold helped his father do carpenter work. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Eli Kreider of West Willow. His father grew up on a farm so this was Harold's desire to farm. He used his carpentering experience and built a large chicken house in 1960 and a wing on the steer barn two years ago. He also built an addition to their house and a garage.

Kreiders have a son Larry who graduated from Warwick High School and has been helping on the home farm since. He will marry Laverne Heller, also of Lititz RD2, on October 23 and will leave November 15 for volunteer service on Johns Island, South Carolina, where he will be doing construction work. He likes to work with chickens.

Mr. and Mrs. Kreider have a daughter Linda Kay who is

enrolled in Home Economics course in ninth grade in Warwick High School. She likes to sew, cook and bake. She makes all her own clothes. She helps a lot with eggs.

Kreiders keep 9,000 Leghorn laying hens and get about 6,500 eggs a day at their peak. They buy the hens at 20 weeks and keep them one year. They have automatic waterers and feeders and belt egg gatherers. They do not have a cage operation, but have half slats and half litter. They keep the lights on to make a 17 hour day with the aid of an electric eye to control the lights. They have thermostatically controlled ventilation. They gather eggs four times a day. Most of the eggs are laid from noon to 3 p.m. All of the family helps with eggs, but Mrs. Kreider

and Larry do most of the egg gathering.

They sell fertile eggs to Veety Poultry Farm, north of Allentown, who produce vaccine. They sell some eggs to R. W. Sauders of Lititz and also sell a lot locally.

They have about 1,200 Muscovy ducks which they bought day-old. Until this year they hatched their own every two weeks from breeder hens. They raise them for the Thanksgiving market. They sell some live and have some dressed at a dressing plant. They often have frozen ducks till Christmas.

Kreiders raise three-way cross swine. They are crosses of Spotted Poland China, Yorkshire and Hampshire. They have eight brood sows and about 60 young.

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