

Extend tomato season beyond killing frost

FLEMINGTON, N.J. - One of the most frustrating experiences a home vegetable gardener can have is to lose a crop of good-sized tomatoes because of a killing frost. A little planning and quick action can avert this disappointment, says Robert Schutski, of the New Jersey Cooperative Extension Service.

Tomatoes that are green but fully mature can be

harvested and brought into a protected place to ripen before the fatal frost if a close watch is kept on weather forecasts.

To determine which green tomatoes will ripen and which will not, select a few fruits of different sizes and slice them crosswise. The ones with well-developed seeds and plenty of juice will most likely ripen. You can be sure they will ripen if they have a little yellow or pink color inside. Once you have determined the maturity of the fruit from the inside, you'll know the right size to harvest. Fruits with small seeds can be harvested to make relishes or pickles.

There are two ways you can ripen green tomatoes or those that are just turning color:

The easiest method is to place the tomatoes in a single layer on a bench or in shallow boxes. The fruit will ripen very well in complete darkness with the temperature between 65 and 75 degrees.

Large quantities of tomatoes should be divided into three or four groups. The fruits that are totally green should be isolated from those that are just turning color. The ones that are turning color should be separated from the fruits that are mostly yellow or

pink. Inspect the tomatoes daily for spots or signs of decay. These should be discarded immediately.

The second method of ripening tomatoes indoors is to cut the stem of the plant about six inches above the soil line and bring the whole vine, tomatoes and all, into a protected area such as a garage, breezeway or cellar. Tie a piece of strong twine to the base of the stem and hang the plant on a nail or

other supporting device with the stem end up, making sure the entire plant is suspended.

If the plants are on stakes or trellises, extra care should be taken to cut the ties from top to bottom and gently lay the plant on the ground before severing the stem.

The "whole plant" method will result in better fruit ripening than harvesting green tomatoes. You'll have a messy clean-up job to do after all the fruits have matured, but once you taste the red-ripe flavor you'll say it's worth it.

Grange meets

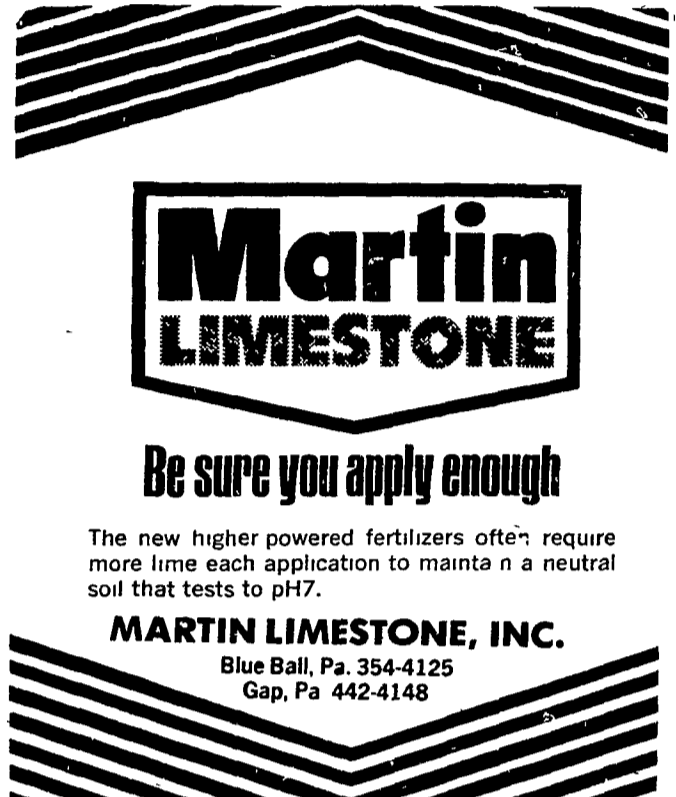
VIRGINVILLE — At a recent meeting, the Virginville Grange announced that Mr. and Mrs. Keith Treichler were chosen as the Young Married couple of the state.

There will be a bus trip to Flemington on October 21, leaving at 7:30 a.m. On October 27, there will be a bus trip to the Ice Follies, leaving at 6 p.m.

The Virginville Grange appreciation banquet will be held November 4 at Bernville.

Psychic Pain?

A psychiatrist recently reported that half his patients went to him because they weren't married — while the other half went to him because they were!



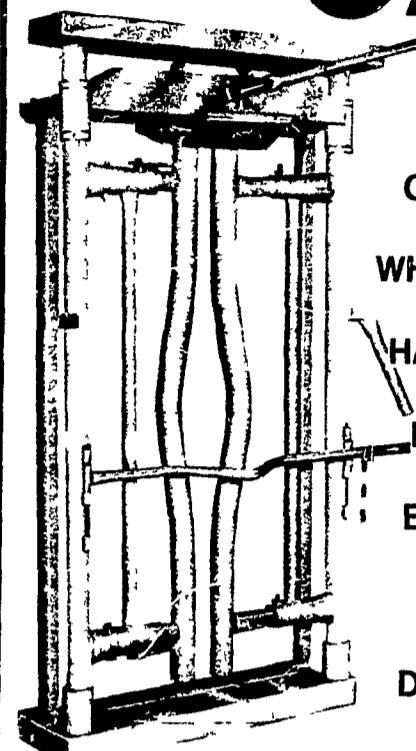
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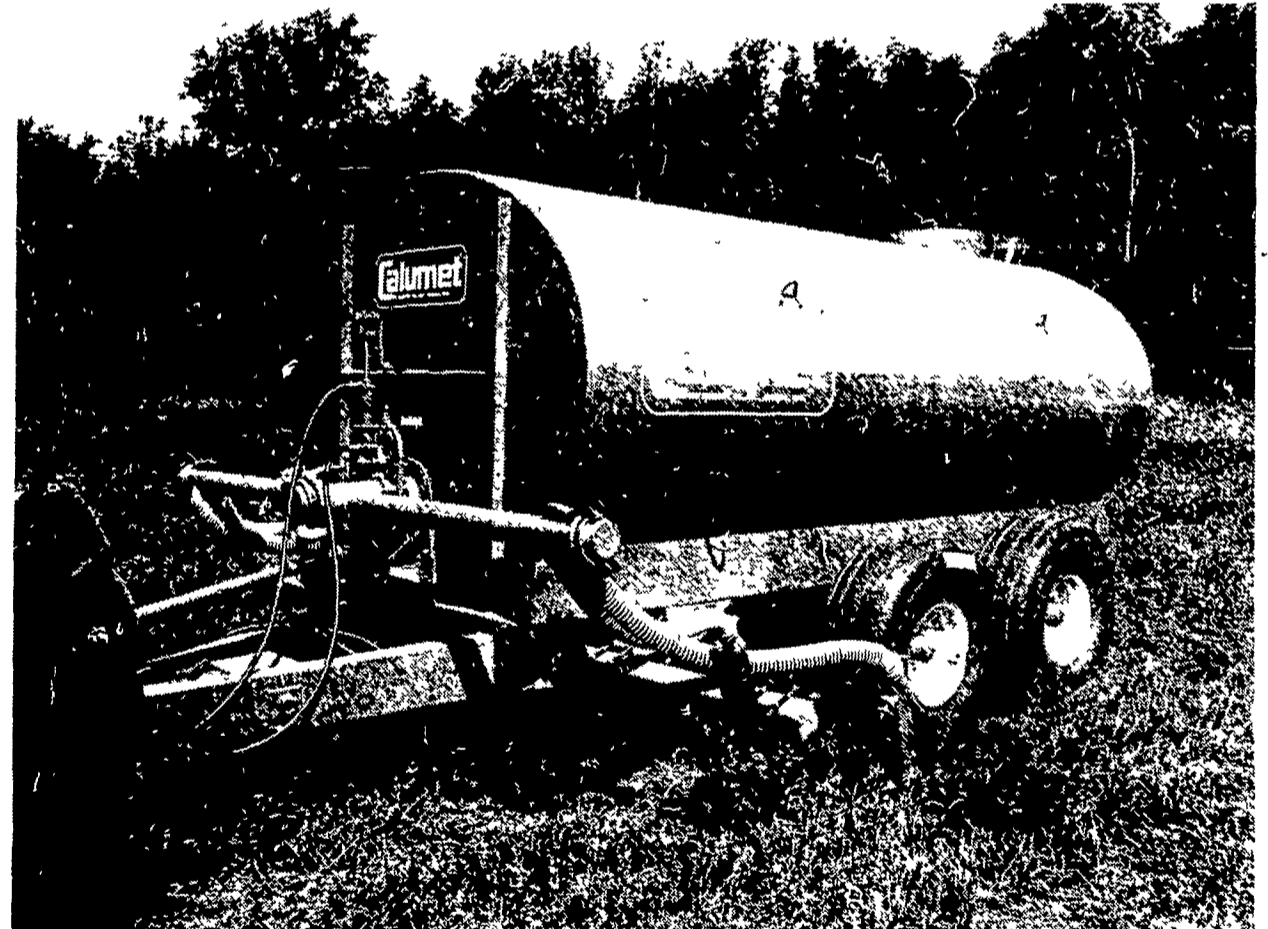
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