

Former Dairy Farm Transformed Into Autumn Breeze Nursery

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 NEW WINDSOR, Md. — It's a family affair at Schmidt's Autumn Breeze Nursery. Suzanne Schmidt and her husband, Bruce Schmidt, who is 'retired', keep busy through the week looking after the family's nursery business. The Schmidts reside in a large Federal-style brick home that is situated along McKinstry Mill Road, New Windsor.

The house is at the heart of the 65-acre operation and it is big enough to accommodate two families and serve as a refuge for their son, Greg, and his family on weekends. The Schmidts' daughter, Wendelyn, who holds a PhD in pharmacology, lives in the former slave quarters of the rambling homestead.

"We love this house," said Suzanne Schmidt. "We've enjoyed fixing it, and have done a

fairly decent job." When Greg Schmidt, who holds a degree in horticulture and works as a landscaper in the Silver Spring, Maryland area, was searching for just the right location to start his own nursery, he settled on the former dairy farm, complete with barn, outbuildings, and a fixer-upper of a house.

"We chose this area because we wanted to develop clientele in the area. It is fast-growing. We



Suzanne Schmidt reads her Federal-style home for visitors on the New Windsor Heritage Committee's Tour of Historical Homes.

wanted to be in a 30 to 40-mile radius of the Baltimore-Washington area," explained Mrs. Schmidt. The nursery is just a stone's throw from Carroll County, but officially, it is located in Frederick County, Maryland.

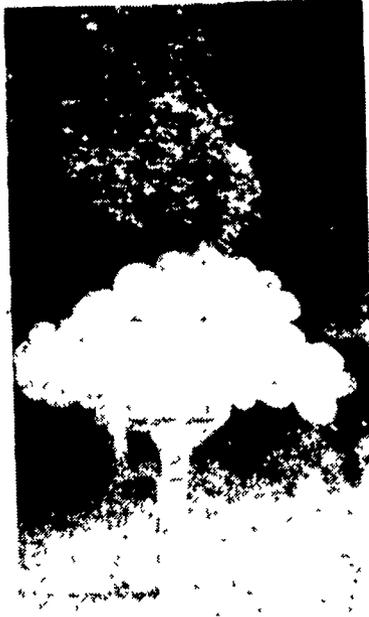
"We have only deciduous trees," said Mrs. Schmidt of the nursery stock. Not far from the large established maples around their home are neat rows of young maple trees and flowering trees. "We plant two thousand trees per year," she added. They have planted 12,000 trees since they first established the nursery in 1987.

The family agrees that running the nursery is "labor-intensive work." On any given day, visitors might find Bruce Schmidt behind the rototiller or operating equipment that is crucial to the nursery such as the tree spade, backhoe, tractors, auger or mower. Daughter, Wendelyn, is quick to jump in when she sees that a task has become a 'two-man job.' "I'm the gardener," she quipped.

"I'm the salesperson," said Mrs. Schmidt. "I enjoy it." I let them know what we have and distribute price lists to the nurseries.

Schmidt's Autumn Breeze Nursery is a supplier to the public, as well as to landscapers. The Schmidts' son, Greg, founder of the nursery, oversees all facets of the business and performs his duties on weekends.

The outbuildings at the farm have been converted to accommodate the needs of a different 'branch' of agriculture, so to speak. And the splendid house, which dates to 1812, has been renovated to serve as a lovely and comfortable homestead. The double fanlights above the front entry bespeak the elegance that lies



Schmidt's Autumn Breeze Nursery supplies landscapers and homeowners with deciduous trees.

within. The home will be featured on a Tour of Historic Homes, sponsored by the Heritage Committee of New Windsor, on October 3.

The eight rooms of the main house are home to Bruce and Suzanne Schmidt, while the adjoining former slave quarters are home to their daughter, Wendelyn. Each room is a showcase for family heirlooms, antiques, collectibles and the handiwork of family members.

"My father was a tinsmith," said Mrs. Schmidt. His tool chest now serves as a table in the sitting room, and his tools are part of Bruce's collection of antique tools that hang on the wall.

Adjoining the room is a large, eat-in kitchen, which features a fireplace mantel with punch and gouge woodwork. "There is a fire-

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Suzanne tends to her herb garden. The farm buildings in the background have been converted to accommodate the nursery business.



Suzanna Schmidt's stenciling wraps around the kitchen near the 12-foot high ceiling. The mantel, at left, is an example of "punch and gouge" woodwork.



This bedroom features a pegboard decorated with vintage clothing, antique dolls, and a 10-piece rope bed.



Many meals were cooked in this fireplace when it served the main house. It is now a feature in Wendelyn Schmidt's kitchen. Note the original crane on the hearth. Wendy's collection of harness brasses decorates the mantel. This room was once used as a garage.