

Carriage House Features Floral Arrangements In Antique Containers

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SHIPPENSBURG (Franklin Co.) — Rose and Fred Dillner have been deeply involved in agriculture, and now they have moved that involvement into their own back yard with the opening of the Carriage House.

It's the place to go if you are a fan of dried flowers, herbs, and

pretty arrangements featuring the two.

The idea for the Carriage House arose after the two retired.

Fred is best known in the local farming community for his years as an agriculture instructor and head of the Young Farmer program for the Shippensburg School District.

He and Rose also spent many

years running the local farmers market.

With those jobs behind them, Rose suggested one day, "Why don't we turn our vegetable garden into a flower garden for dried flowers?"

So, Rose said, they grew an acre of flowers that they felt would be good for drying. Some of the plants were planted as seeds and

others as seedlings.

Those plants included sunflowers, statice and cockscomb. Herbs that were suitable for drying were planted also.

She and Fred said that they learned a lot during their first year as flower growers.

"It takes a lot of work cutting the flowers and getting them ready for drying. One of the things we discovered is that to preserve the color they need to be dried in high heat in a short amount of time," Rose said.

The loft of the Carriage House, which the couple built last year, seems to be the perfect spot for that.

Along with the perfect building for drying them, the flowers are grown in a perfect setting on the Dillners' farm, which was built in 1754 when Shippensburg was on the colonial frontier.

For the Dillners the busy season doesn't end with the growing season.

Once the flowers and herbs are dried, Rose sets busy making many types of arrangements such as wreaths and swags in all kinds of containers. She has a great time shopping for some of the accessories that go with the home-

grown materials.

"I try to get really interesting ribbon that you would see on the arrangements from the florist shops," she said.

The containers she uses are unique also. Many of the antique containers have come from as far away as Massachusetts and Ohio, although many of them are of local origin.

The Dillners have made a point of traveling to some very unique antique fairs in other states to get the containers.

The Dillners are planning to make their new enterprise no more than a part-time occupation because they want to leave plenty of time to enjoy their retirement.

Rose said she and Fred plan to have only seasonal openings at the Carriage House so they can pursue their other interests, including going to antique fairs.

One of those openings ends at 6 p.m. today (December 3). Other openings are scheduled for 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 7 and 8 and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. July 7 and 8.

The Carriage House is located at Blythstead, the Dillners' home, at 217 Means Hollow Road just outside of Shippensburg.



Rose Dillner displays some of her arrangements in unique antique containers.

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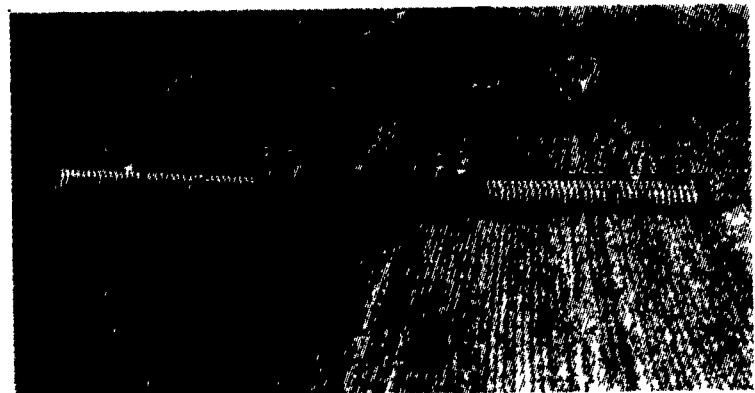
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