

Cooperative Effort Builds Variety Trial Greenhouse

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Lancaster Farming Staff
LANDISVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — Commercial plant growers in Pennsylvania, especially in the central and southeastern region where the industry is concentrated, are to have a greenhouse where new and of-interest, decorative plant varieties can be tested for local performance.

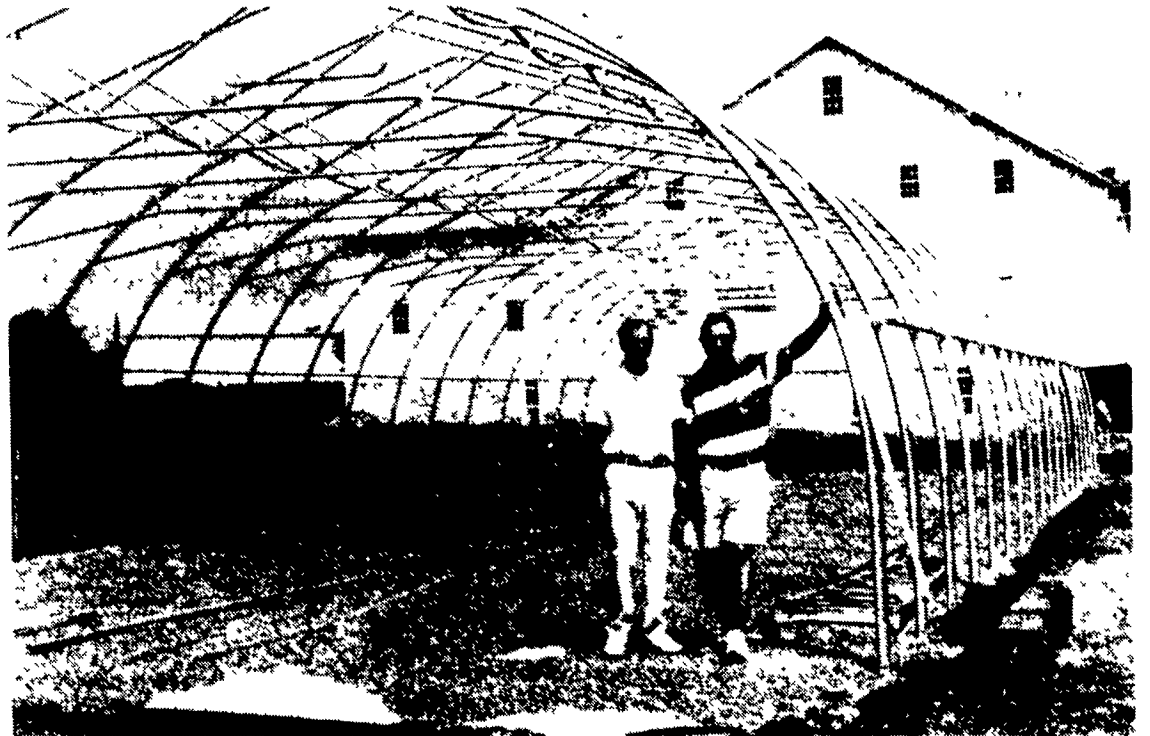
Extension people. As it is, Penn State conducts some limited variety trials through cooperation with the greenhouse production industry.

The problem has been in a lack of consistency of conditions and technology used in the variety evaluations, as well as a lack of available and dependable commercial greenhouse space that can be used for dedicated variety trials.

After people involved with the Pennsylvania Flower Growers Association, the commercial industry representatives, and Penn State talked about the idea of having one, dedicated, leading-edge facility with a consistent staff and growing conditions in order to provide more reliable variety trials, the project began to move forward.

Representatives of the PFGA and the commercial industry approached Penn State with a commitment of \$20,000 in supplies and some cash in order to build the facility, and were met a likewise commitment from Penn State Cooperative Extension.

Even though Penn State has a fairly large horticultural trial gar-

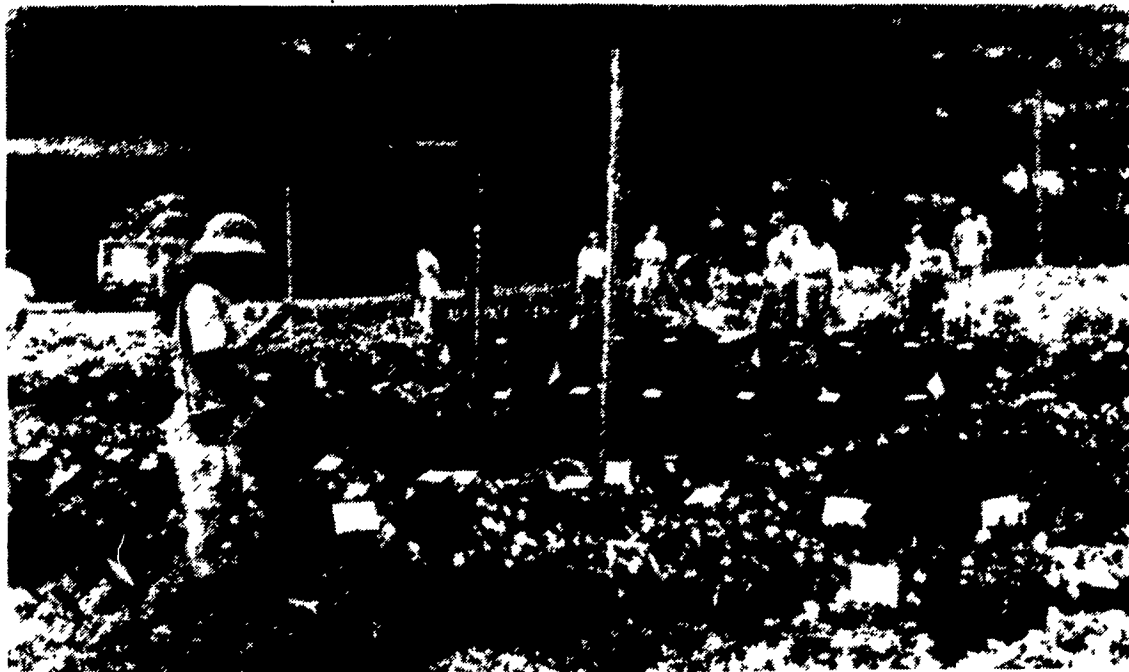


From the left, Dick Berry representing D&L Grower Supplies in Leola, and Alan Michael, multi-county horticultural extension agent, stand under the frame of the under-construction plant variety trial greenhouse at the Penn State South East Research and Extension Center in Landisville. The greenhouse is a cooperative effort between Penn State, the commercial industry and the Pennsylvania Flower Grower Association.

The greenhouse is under construction at the Penn State Southeast Research and Extension Center in Landisville and a ribbon-cutting ceremony and announcement of the facility was held Tuesday, in conjunction with a Penn State flower trial field day at the center.

The welcome and dedication was done by Michelle Rodgers, director of the Capital Region of Penn State Cooperative Extension and Outreach; Jay Sheely, chairman of the Greenhouse Planning Committee; and John Yocum, extension specialist and farm manager.

The facility was the result of long time discussions among commercial growers and Penn State



Participants in this week's two-day Penn State Flower Trail Field Days check out different varieties and their performance. It is the seventh year for the trials.

dens at its State College main campus, the Capital Region was selected as a suitable area for the new greenhouse facility since the industry is concentrated in that part of the state, the plants are to be greenhouse raised from cuttings only, and growing conditions could be assumed to be more appropriate to those experienced by commercial growers.

John Yocum and the staff at the Landisville facility (located along Auction Road, west of Manheim) are to maintain the facility. The research farm is involved in a number of different commercial crop production research trials, such as with controlling weeds, raising tobacco, etc.

The Penn State Flower Trial Field Days were held from 12:30 p.m. Monday through 3 p.m. Tuesday. The greenhouse ceremony was done early Tuesday before guided tours of the trial grounds were initiated.

Participants, many taking notes and some photographs, were able to evaluate for themselves the varieties set out under screened areas

or in display plots.

They also were able to receive pesticide applicator continuing education credits through attending presentations by Gary Moorman, Penn State professor of plant pathology, who provided an update on plant diseases; and Kerry Hoffman, a pesticide education specialist (and integrated pest management specialist) who provided an update on greenhouse pesticides and regulations.

Field trial organizers were Alan H. Michael, Penn State multi-county horticulture agent based out of the Dauphin County Extension Office, and Robert Berghage, Penn State assistant professor of horticulture.

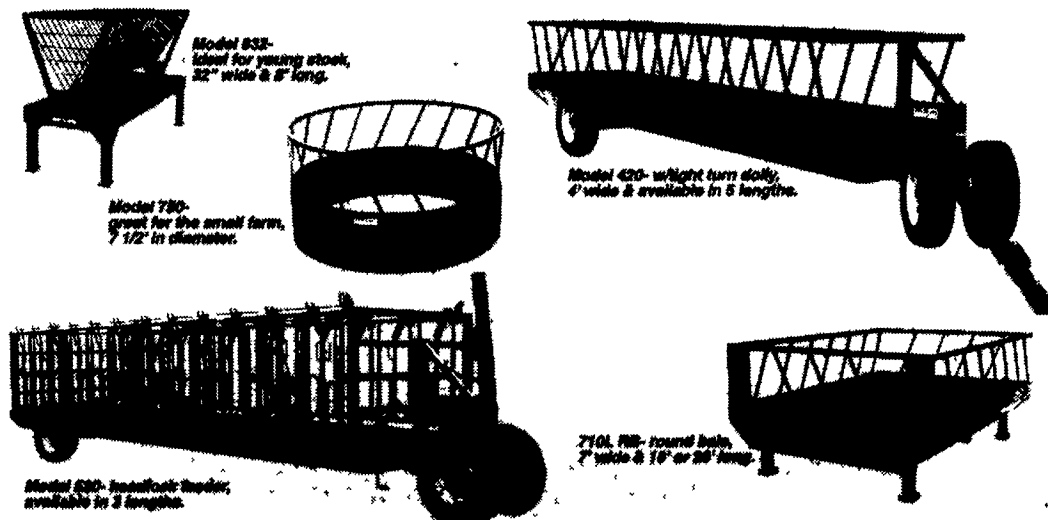
Penn State, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Flower Growers and the general industry, has conducted the trials for seven years.

According to a list of contributors to the variety trials, commercial growers who raised varieties for this year's trials were Esbshade Greenhouse in Litzitz; Green Leaf Enterprises in Leola and

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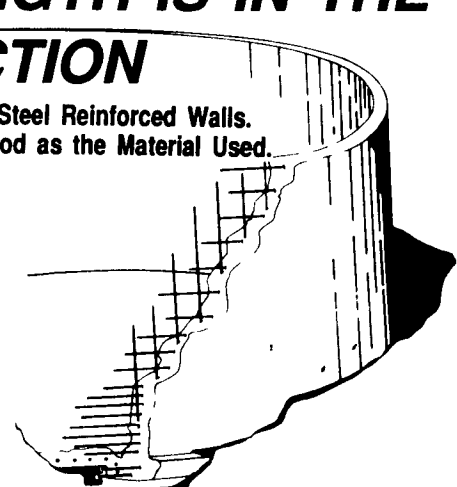
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