



Interspersed among a busy day of gardening and operating a produce stand, Ruth and Russell Sauder find time for hobbies. Ruth enjoys growing flowers. Here she examines the large delicate blooms of the passionflower. According to legend, the intricate parts of the lacy-appearing flowers are said to represent Christ's crucifixion. Russell is shown with part of his collection of toy tractors and pedal tractors that he restores. His expertise in restoring the tractors spreads by word of mouth and he has completed work for collectors across the U.S.

Sauder Home Blooms With Rewards Of Their Labor

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MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) —

Ruth Sauder fingers a large vine that grows by the porch of her home. The 12-foot tall vine blooms with large delicate purple flowers and is heavy with fragrance.

"These are blooming like everything, but you never know. Some days they don't open at all or only after three in the afternoon," she said.

Ruth is referring to the blooms of a climbing woody vine called passionflower.

The intricate lacy-appearing flowers bloom for only one day and then die, but enough blooms remain on the vine to provide color for at least one month.

According to legend, passionflower is a plant whose elaborate flower parts are said to represent Christ's crucifixion. Early missionaries are said to have named the plants.

The missionaries believed that the 10 colored petals represented the 10 apostles present at the crucifixion. Inside the flower, colored filaments form a showy crown, which was thought to represent the crown of thorns. The five pollen-bearing anthers suggested Christ's wounds. The divisions of the pistil represented the nails of the cross. The bladelike leaf was symbolic of the spear that pierced His side. The

coiling tendrils suggested whips and cords.

Ruth has always loved flowers, but said that she didn't have time to grow them until she and her husband Russel moved off the farm where they also had operated a bed and breakfast.

"In those days, we gave them lodging, breakfast, and supper," Ruth said. The couple had five guest bedrooms open for guests over an 18-year-period.

The supposedly retired couple now live in a brick rancher located on the edge of the Sauder's Century Farm, which is operated by their son Glen, his wife Shirley, and their children. A daughter Nancy Stoltzfus and her husband Jay live nearby.

Don't let that word "retired" fool you. Ruth, who is 77, and Russell, who is 78, operate a bustling farm stand and grow produce in their one-half acre garden to sell. Ruth keeps busy with her many indoor and outdoor plants. Russell has a large collection of toy and pedal tractors and makes wooden benches and wooden riding toys to sell. He also refinishes furniture and restores sewing machines and chairs.

As she talks, Ruth keeps busy straightening the assortment of colorful bell peppers, filling containers with freshly washed sweet potatoes.

"These are the best cantaloupes

you can buy," said a regular customer. "You won't find better tasting ones anywhere."

The colorful produce picked during the peak of maturity attracts a steady clientel.

"We only sell what we grow," Russell said.

"This keeps us busy," Ruth said of the produce stand and shakes her head in affirmative when asked if she enjoys outdoor work.

Stuck in the flower bed are two wrought iron plaques that sum up the reason why she and her husband enjoy working with the soil. One reads: "He who works in the garden works hand and hand with God."

Another proclaims: "The kiss of the sun for pardon. The song of the bird for mirth, One is nearer God's heart in the garden than anywhere else on earth."

"God is good," Ruth said. "I have a heart condition so I couldn't do this on my own. But my daughter plants the flowers for me so I can

take care of them after that."

Their son and son-in-law help erect poles for the 80 tomato plants in the garden. A grandson grows the cantaloupes.

Inside the couple's modest brick home, Ruth has a large wooden ladder from her parent's farm. The ladder hangs from the ceiling and is used for hanging plants attached with meat hooks, another relic from past days.

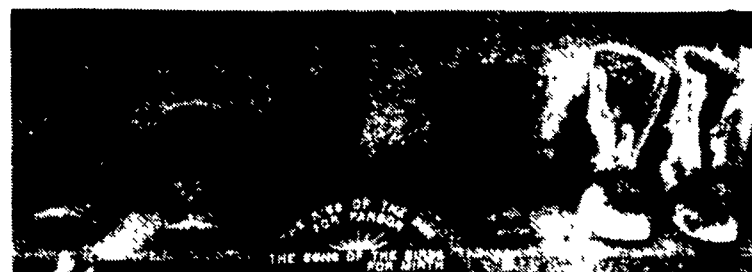
Russell has a fascinating collec-

tion of pedal tractors and toy tractors. Some are new and some he has restored.

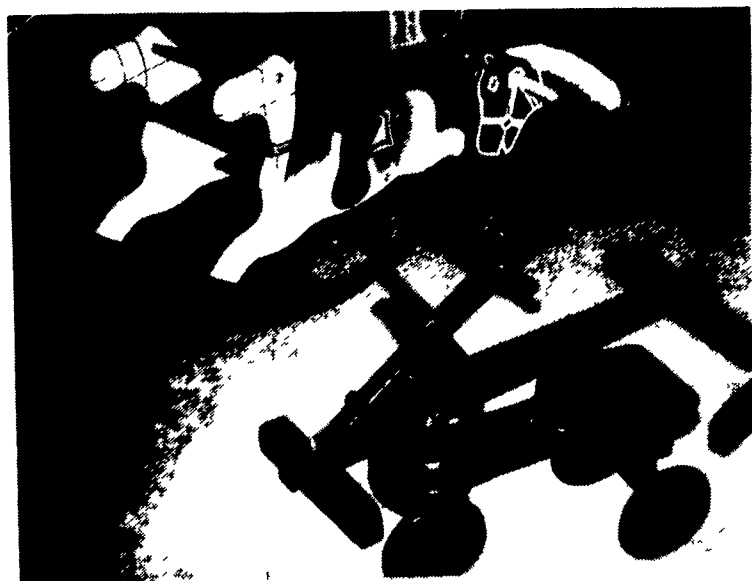
He said, "I restore pedal tractors and ship them all over the U.S."

"One person tells another person and that one tells another one," Russell said of the word spread about his hobby and restoration work.

The couple's home is located across from the Pleasant View Rest Home along Penryn Road.



A row of old shoes and boots bloom profusely with "chicks and peeples." Ruth said that she cuts holes in the sides of the discarded footwear and the plant spreads through the holes.



Russell also makes toys and benches to sell at their roadside stand.



Russell grows all the produce sold at their roadside stand and delights in providing only the best at the peak of flavor.

HOMESTEAD NOTES

