

New Plasticulture Center Building Opens

(Continued from Page 1)

The center was established in 1998 as a clearinghouse for research and educational efforts in the field of plasticulture.

According to Lamont, the project is attempting to come up with best management practices (BMPs) to use in the construction of the houses and the use of the houses to extend the season, provide early grown produce, and to supply produce off-season.

The high tunnel, he said, is not a greenhouse, "though it looks like it," he said. It's a nonpermanent structure that can be moved.

The tunnel creates a "microenvironment" that supplies protection from wind, cold temperatures, and other elements that can be detrimental to vegetable, fruit, and ornamental production.

Commercially, high tunnels are available in sizes ranging from 14-, 17-, and 21-feet wide to about 96 feet long. The tunnels at the center at Rockspring measure about 17 by 36 feet long.

The tunnels allow growers to pick in the rain, provide a constant supply all along, and extend the season. The downside: the conditions can be ideal for powdery mildew development and insect controls need to be implemented.

Tunnels have been in-

stalled in many southeast portions of the state, including Lancaster, Dauphin, and Bucks counties. Additional ones have gone into Elk County and others.

The 17-foot by 36-foot buildings took about a day to install with four people at a cost of about \$1,200 each. The structure is designed to last 25-30 years and the plastic about four years.

Some who use the technology believe that tomatoes, for instance, last 5-8 days longer on the shelf than field-produced product.

One at Penn State houses tomatoes on a Florida-weave stake and prune system. Another houses okra.

Some houses have been equipped with a specially designed access door on both ends. A drip irrigation system is installed to allow precise watering. Penn State also plans to purchase a couple of hives of bees to help in pollination.

"The technology is a useful tool — and what you want to do is make money," Lamont said.

Dr. Mike Orzolek, professor of vegetable crops at Penn State, noted the technology produces a wonderfully colorful cut flower.

The technology "opens up a large variety of opportunities," said Orzolek.



Dr. Bill Lamont Jr., associate professor of vegetable crops at Penn State, inspects the newly constructed Tom Wentzler Building at the Penn State Center For Plasticulture during a special Ag Progress Days tour. Photo by Andy Andrews



Some houses have been equipped with a specially designed access door on both ends. A drip irrigation system is installed to allow precise watering. Penn State also plans to purchase a couple of hives of bees to help in pollination.



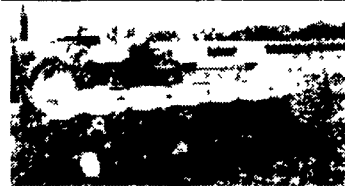
FLOWER BULBS
for Roadside and Farm Market Sales or Garden Beauty


Our catalog lists 100 selections of gladiolus including Pixiglads, Dahlias, Asiatic Lilies, Gallas, and others; Offers commercial collections, bulbs for counter resale, cultural information and pesticides . . . Sent **FREE** on request

The Waushara Gardens
Plainfield, WI 54966
e-mail: skimel@uniontel.net

Early Order Sale In Effect Now
Ask For Merv and Place Your Order Today!

MONOSEM Specialty Precision Planters

 * Proven Precision
* Fertilizer, Dry or Liquid
* Heavy-Duty 7"x7" Frames

 * 2 Row to 12 Row Unmatched Accuracy In The Metering & Placement Of Corn, Sweet Corn, Edible Beans, Squash, Melons, Cucumbers, Sunflowers, Sorghum & More.

PNEUMATIC PLANTER MODEL MS
PLANT WITH PRECISION
RAW • UNCOATED • SEED
CARROTS • LETTUCE • ONION • ETC.
CALL FOR INFORMATION - *Ask For Merv Nissly*

BINKLEY & HURST BROS. INC. 133 Rothsville Station Rd. P.O. Box 0395 Lititz, PA 17543-0395 (717) 626-4705 1-800-414-4705 Fax 717-626-0996

GREENHOUSES - EQUIPMENT - ANIMALS

www.bradyimg.com

16'-30' Wide
Any Length

Heavy Duty Frames
Vinyl Covers

2" square galvanized steel supports

 Straight Wall

 Peaked Frames

FRAMES FOR ANY NEED!

 Cold Frames

 Large Quonset Frames

Low Direct Cost\$

BUY DIRECT! LOWEST PRICES!
FRAMES FOR ANY NEED
SPECIALS: End of Season Save on Straight Wall & Quonset Frames to 3/1/01
* Fans/Heaters/Steel * Home Owners & Small Farms
* Custom Frames for Animal Shelters, Equipment Shelters, Etc.

BRADY Manufacturing • 580 N. Cty Line, Jackson, NJ 08527
Phone: 800-927-0257 • 732-928-0257