

Grower & Marketer

Promoting The Eastern Vegetable, Fruit, Nursery, And
Direct Marketing Industries

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'Mountain Of Mums' Draws Customers To Ott's



Visitors can scale up the "Mountain of Mums" at Ott's Exotic Plants, Schwenksville. About 40,000 in-

dividual blooms light up the mountain on a dazzling fall day. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

ANDY ANDREWS
Editor

SCHWENKSVILLE
(Montgomery Co.) — What do you do with a mountain of soil?

Create the "Mountain of Mums," of course.

That's what happened beginning back in 1963, when earth was moved into a pile to build some greenhouses for Ott's Exotic Plants on Rt. 29 near Schwenksville.

The story goes, Godfrey Ott told his children, Godfrey H. and Clarke, to "go pull some weeds," out of a pile that had gone unsightly, said Godfrey H. Ott. Ott said that the weeds, being an eyesore, were replaced by some mums, and then pansies in the spring, for customers to appreciate.

So why not make a hill of yellows the color of lemonade, from an unsightly lemon?

"We made the dirt pile with plants," said Ott. "And

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A Garden Grows In Philadelphia

Urban Farm Connects With Community, Rural Producers

DAVE LEFEVER

Lancaster Farming Staff

PHILADELPHIA —

"Farmers wanted."

That's the rallying call of The Food Trust, a farmer's market association operating in the Philadelphia area.

The Farmer's Market Trust — as the organization was known until recently — was started 10 years ago at Philadelphia's Reading Terminal Market, according to Duane Perry, founder and executive director.

"The goal was to create farmer's markets operating in community settings," Perry said.

During the 2001 growing season, the nonprofit organization operated 10 markets in eight locations within Philadelphia and its suburbs.

Set up in a variety of settings such as sidewalks and parks, the markets are attracting a growing number of urban people who care about the sources of their food, said Perry.

"There's a really solid group of consumers interested in connecting with farmers," he said.

Twenty-seven farmers in 2001 supplied a wide array of agricultural products to the markets, from baked goods, cut flowers, and conventionally-grown fruits and vegetables to organic produce and specialty items such as "high end" salad greens.

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Food Trust Matches Farmers With Customers, Local Communities

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PHILADELPHIA —

Mary Corboy lives in downtown Philadelphia and bikes regularly to the farm she manages.

From her home, the farm is a few dozen blocks away on an abandoned industrial or "brownfield" site in a residential neighborhood on the east side of the city, near

Route 95.

"It was just a trash dump," Corboy said of the 3/4-acre site before she took it over in 1998 and established the Greensgrow Philadelphia Project.

Made possible through a lease agreement with the local community development corporation, the project was started from scratch. No plumbing, electricity, or

useful structures existed on the site — except for a metal wire fence around the perimeter of the property.

Originally started as a hydroponic operation for growing lettuce, Greensgrow has since expanded to include methods for cultivating a wide variety of crops including tomatoes, specialty vegetables, and flowers.

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Mary Corboy of the Greensgrow Philadelphia Project with spinach grown on raised beds built out of clean fill, compost, and horse manure. Crushed stones and PVC piping serve as a drainage system underneath the beds. Photo by Dave Lefever