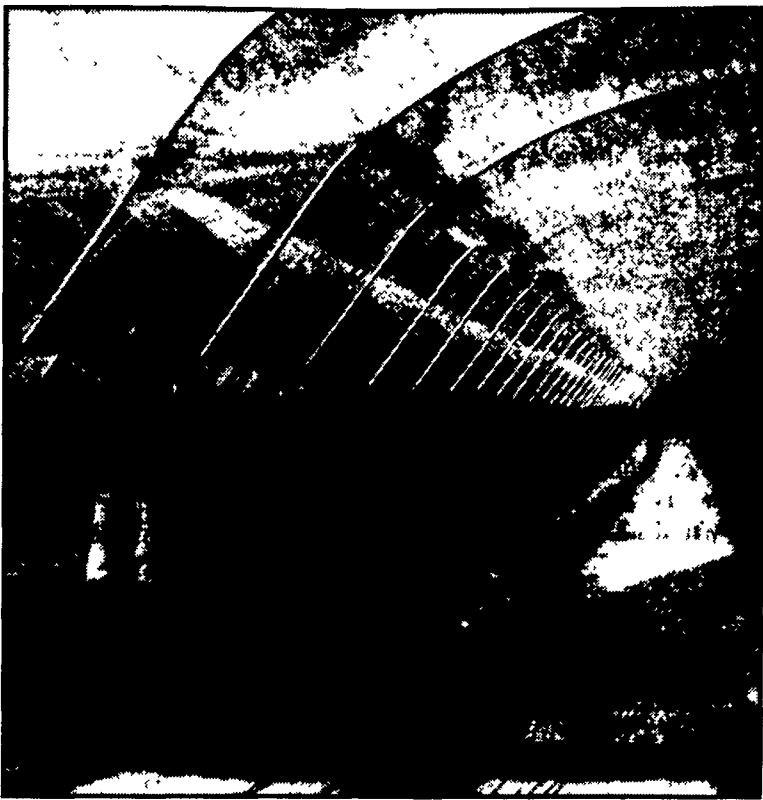


# Lancaster Grower Extends Growing Season With Tunnels



Ignacio Esparza opens the ventilation for a new tunnel system in Elizabethtown.

**MICHELLE KUNJAPPU**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
**ELIZABETHTOWN**  
(Lancaster Co.) — Motorists who drive by the six bays of large plastic-topped hoops probably do not give them a second glance.

To Ralph Cramer, however, these poly-covered inventions are a step into a new growing and marketing strategy.

Cramer is the owner of "Cramer's Posie Patch," a flower and herb farm in Elizabethtown. Although dried flowers constitute half of the operation, Cramer has also moved into wholesaling cut

flowers. A farm store on the property offers dried flowers and arrangements.

### Tunnels Explained

In European terms, said Cramer, there are two kinds of crop protection systems. One hoop is considered a "French tunnel," while multiple bays are known as "Spanish tunnels."

"What makes anything a tunnel is a single layer of poly" (plastic) and in general it is manually operated and climate controlled, noted Cramer. "It extends the season by offering protection, a warmer environment, and

accelerating the growth of the crop.

Cramer said, "Spanish tunnels were low and small and homemade — the originals, anyway — and the hard work was inside."

"The Haygrove Company in England designed these tunnels. The owner bought and used the Spanish tunnels for strawberries and found them to be inadequate, so he improved them. They have bigger open ends for tractors," said Cramer, which decreased the hand labor that Spanish tunnels required. Haygrove tunnels cover more

(Turn to Page 8)



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18.4R34**.....	<b>\$695</b>
18.4R38*.....	<b>\$642</b>
20.8R38*.....	<b>\$864</b>



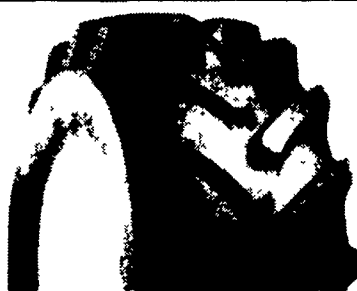
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## Pot-In-Pot Method

(Continued from Page 4)

ever, the largest investment comes in initial setup — especially in clay soils, according to Kuhns. In such cases, trenches for the socket pots are generally dug and lined with drainage tile.

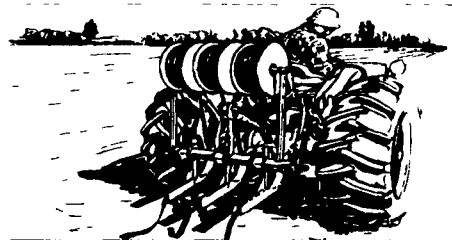
Irrigation lines can be installed in the trenches after several inches have been backfilled.

According to Jim Sellmer, Penn State associate professor of ornamental horticulture, the pot-in-pot method is one of several options available to nursery managers, including above-ground pot and bare root methods as well as ball-and-burlap.

The pot-in-pot method helps eliminate soil compaction and keeps topsoil on the property rather than sending it out in root balls, Sellmer pointed out.

One disadvantage of the pot-in-pot system is that trees need to be watered more frequently for about two weeks after being permanently planted, according to Kuhns.

An increasing number of growers have begun to use pot-in-pot in the past five years, with more than 10 percent of the nurseries in Pennsylvania likely employing the method, Kuhns estimated.



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