

Union Mill Acres Showcases Colorful Ornamental Bounty

(Continued from Page B2)

and squash are exhibited inside the wooden drive-through barn. The old stone walls of the mill provide an eye-appealing backdrop to mounds of pumpkins, squash, and gourds in all colors and varieties.

Orange pumpkins of all sizes are stacked in a massive 10-foot tall pyramid.

Melanie separates the edible pumpkins and squash from the ornamentals, which are clearly labeled for browsing customers to identify.

"Anything called pumpkin and

squash is edible. The gourds are not," Melanie said.

Customers often intersperse edible and non-edible ornamentals for display, but some want only edible varieties and others stick to ornamentals.

In recent years, many edible varieties have been introduced to the market. These include blue, red, and green pumpkin and squash varieties.

The grist mill deeds go back to 1850s, but it is believed to be even older. The mill operation was stopped in the late 1800s.

A flood in 1936 wiped out the head race, so the mill equipment was sold. The waterwheel has disintegrated over the years. A flood in 1986 destroyed the stone tail race, which featured an underground stone arch. For many years, Elias Groff operated a recycled feed bag operation inside the mill.

The Martins use the mill for storage, and a brother-in-law operates a woodworking shop on the third floor of the mill.

"We have dreams of turning the mill into a bed and breakfast," Melanie said. "We have sort of an old MacDonald's farm here,

which is ideal for families to visit. But the bed and breakfast idea will need to wait until the children are a bit older.

The Martins have four children, Moses, 8 months; Hannah, 2; Daniel, 4; and Sarah, 6.

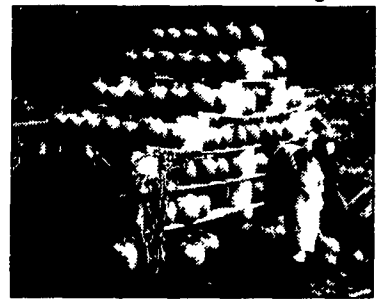
The children meander around outside, helping a bit and exploring the many interests abounding on the farm, while their parents fulfill the farm's duties. Sarah said their animal collection includes two heifers, 50 chickens (Rhode Island Reds), several Nubian goats, four sheep, one dog, and about 15 cats.

Sarah helps gather the eggs from the free-range chickens. These eggs are also sold at the roadside stand.

The original house is believed to have been built in the 1700s. Since then, additions have been added to the house.

Melanie also makes goat milk soap from the goats that are milked on the farm. She sells the soap at Green Dragon and to retail markets.

"Part of the reason we strive to build up the farm income is so both parents can be home with our children. We want to be able



Customers, the Stoltzfus family, choose orange pumpkins from the 10-foot tall pyramid.

to work side by side with them and teach them Godly values," Keith said.

In addition to selling by the roadside, the Martins also wholesale to five markets and sell at Green Dragon market for several weeks.

"We prefer retailing," Melanie said. "We enjoy meeting customers and building up the trade. But we wouldn't be able to do any of this without God. He sends the rain, sunshine — and the energy needed."

Union Mill Acres is located at 3272 Elizabethtown Rd., Elizabethtown.



Keith and daughter Sarah load the wagon with pumpkins that hired help has picked from the vine.

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