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**Ruhls' give tips on vegetable gardening  
flower gardening, & indoor gardening**



The Ruhls in their greenhouse—left to right; Lisa, Jon, Mary (Sugar), Charles, and Elinore. Daughter Becky was absent when photo was taken.

An interview with Charles and Elinore Ruhl of Ruhl's Flower Shop in Mount Joy yielded some helpful information regarding indoor and outdoor planting.

whether soil is ready to be turned is to take a handful of soil and squeeze it. If it squeezes into a hard, moist ball, the soil is still too wet to turn. If it crumbles instead, the garden is ready to be turned.

cooler outdoor temperatures in the hotbed it is said to be hardened off and is now ready for the garden. Plants that have been hardened off stand a better chance of surviving April temperatures.

protect them from the cold. The last frost usually occurs in late April or early May and most likely will coincide with the full moon.

Radishes, red beets, carrots, beans, and sweet corn may be sown in early May. Warmer soil is required for these seeds to germinate. Eggplants, sweet potatoes, and peppers require even warmer soil and are planted in mid to late May.

Balanced fertilizer can be applied lightly to these vegetables. A balanced fertilizer contains three elements necessary for plant growth—nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Since applying fertilizer may be a shock to a plant, it is important to adjust a plant to one shock at a time before fertilizing it.

Late April is the time to plant tomatoes. Tomatoes require a warmer soil than the crucifers, to avoid shock to the plant. As with the crucifers, tomato plants can be hardened off in a greenhouse and the gardener can buy tomatoes which are already potted to plant. The pots are made of peat and are planted directly into the garden to lessen the shock to the tomato plant. After a while, the peat pot disintegrates into the soil leaving the tomato plant to grow on its own. The peat, furthermore, serves as a moisture retaining medium in the soil. If a late frost occurs, hot caps or peach baskets should be placed over the tomato plants to

[continued on next page]

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**SPRING VEGETABLE  
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Late March or early April is usually the best time to turn over the soil for a vegetable garden. This depends largely upon how moist and how frozen the soil is. Some gardeners even turn their soil in the fall before the frost and let it aerate throughout winter until spring planting begins. The soil should not be turned over if it is too wet, because it will be lumpy and hard for the rest of the summer. The soil should be flakey or crumbly when it is turned. An easy way to check

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