

# News About The Floriculture Department

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Again it is a pleasure for me to give the members of the New York State Flower Growers a report on the developments in the Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture at the New York State College of Agriculture here at Cornell. The fall semester is well under way and as usual time seems to disappear rapidly.

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

This fall we have 58 undergraduate students in the various fields of interest of the Department. In September we welcomed to the campus 16 students of whom several were transfers from other states. We have had a fine start and we are pleased to have these fellows who I am sure will be a good addition to our list of graduates four years hence. (see figure 1).



**Figure 1.** New students, sitting (l. to r.): Lee Alexander, Salem, N. Y.; Victor Ortluff, Babylon, N. Y.; Charles Laugh-ton, North Chelmsford, Mass.; Ken Cunningham, Ar-lington, Mass.; Thompson Shively, Canton, O.; Donald Basile, Larchmont, N. Y.; Standing (l. to r.): Rich-ard Taintor, Mahopac, N. Y.; Stephen Josh, Rochester, N. Y.; David Male, Loudonville, N. Y.; Lawrence Young, Charleston, West Virginia; Charles Elder, Irv-ington, N. Y.; Joseph Lonski, Garden City, N. Y.; Arnold Tschanz, Rochester, N. Y.; John Pope, Hock-assing, Delaware; William Edwards, Willmington, North Carolina, and Bradford Bearce, Pleasantville, N. Y.

## Foundation for Future Florists Awards

The main purpose of the Foundation for Future Flor-ists, a *philanthropic* project of the Florists Telegraph De-livery Association, is to give educational assistance in the fields of Floriculture and Floristry to deserving young men and women who are interested in pursuing floricul-ture as a career.

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for a year and has returned to work toward his Doctor's degree. He is planning to continue research to learn more about flower bud initiation in snapdragons.

Harold Wilkins, a new graduate student from the University of Illinois, is especially interested in the post-harvest physiology and the keeping quality of cut flowers. We are expecting him to make a contribution to our knowledge on this subject and we are sure it will be of benefit to the florist industry.

Roy Mecklenburg, who is in the "writing stage" of his Master of Science thesis has been working on an interesting piece of research to develop a method of determining viability of woody plant materials. He is interested in getting a practical method of determining whether plant material will grow especially after it has been stored or after it has been exposed to low winter temperatures in the gardens. Roy is expecting to continue his graduate work toward his Doctor's degree.

Frank Hilario, who came from the Philippines about a year and a half ago, is conducting research work towards a master's degree. Frank is studying the relationship between soil moisture and soluble salts and their influence on the growth of two varieties of chrysanthemums.

Among several other new students who joined our Department this fall is John Cooke, a graduate of Cornell who during the course of his experience has worked for the S. S. Penock Co. in Philadelphia, and W. Atlee Burpee Seed Company and also Poulsen's Greenhouse in Louisiana. John is especially interested in potted plants. Thomas Pilarczyk came to Cornell this fall as a graduate of University of Akron. Tom is very much interested in taxonomy of Begonias. The last of our new graduate students this year is Theodore Bruszewski who came to our Department in September after being graduated from Hofstra College. He is interested in commercial floriculture.

### STAFF

As usual the staff is busy with the various responsibilities in research, teaching, and extension. I will try to pick out a few highlights in which you will be interested. We are pleased to see that quite a few of our staff members are being asked to speak at conferences and short courses in various parts of the country. This indicates the standing that they hold in the field of floriculture.

Dr. L. H. MacDaniels, after returning from the Philippines, about a year and a half ago, accepted an assignment in Yugoslavia where he has been spending about 6 months in improving the culture of nuts in that country. He has been helping in the selection of superior clones of walnuts, and also in the grafting and other propagation of nuts as a food in Yugoslavia. This makes good use of Dr. MacDaniels' background because he has a wealth of knowledge of this field. As many of you know if you have read his bulletin on the subject. He writes that travel in a Volkswagon in some of that rough country is quite an experience.

Professor Schaufler is on sabbatic leave and is spending a 6 months period in California where he not only is taking formal courses in crop ecology and extension methods but also is visiting with many county agents in California to see how they are handling the 4-H program

and the home grounds program in that State. Speaking of sabbatic leaves, Professor A.M.S. Pridham will be on sabbatic leave during the spring semester of 1961.

No new addition to the departmental staff this year. We have one vacant position in landscape design instruction and we are hoping we can get that filled during this next year so we will have our regular compliment of staff members. Professor Jack Lambert, who is on leave of absence in California, will be resuming his responsibilities in free-hand drawing instruction next fall.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Let's look at some miscellaneous developments around the Department.

#### Greenhouses

We have been rearranging our greenhouse layout to improve the efficiency for both research and teaching. One house has been converted completely into facilities for the use of mist in propagation. This has been of great help for us in our work with both woody plant materials and the various poinsettia research projects.

As some of you have heard, the College of Agriculture has in the early blue print stage a project for the development of greenhouses and bioclimatic rooms for research. This is a project of great importance to our department which works with the greenhouse and nursery crop industries. We have been working on the development of plans for addition of several greenhouses to the present floriculture range and controlled environment rooms for study of plant growth and proper equipment for studying post-harvest physiology. You will be hearing more about this as time goes on.

The series of investigations on the inter-relationship of day and night temperatures with various commercial floriculture crops is continuing. You are familiar with the extensive amount of information that has been obtained by Dr. Robert Langhans and his graduate students in relation to the poinsettia. This is continuing with Easter Lilies and will be done with some other crops also. Professor Langhans has been using a grant from the New York Florist Club to aid him in this work and has been developing equipment for more precise temperature control in the compartments where this research is being done.

#### Laboratories

In the Plant Science building we have taken a former office and have developed a plant tissue analysis laboratory which will be used extensively in our foliar analysis research studies which are under the direction of Dr. James Boodley.

Another laboratory development in the Department has been the setting up of a laboratory for studies of plant growth using radio active isotopes. Part of the work is being supported by a grant from the Atomic Energy Commission and this research is under the direction of Dr. Harold B. Tukey, Jr.

#### Weed Control

Dr. Arthur Bing is continuing his research work on weed control with florist and nursery crops and is starting some studies on proper handling and storage of cut flowers. Those of you who attended the summer meeting

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at Farmingdale last year had an opportunity to see some of the research work in action.

Dr. A.M.S. Pridham, whom the Flower Growers know quite well from the good job he is doing with the commercial nurserymen of the state, has been working with Roy Mecklenburg to get additional information on the viability test methods. Dr. Pridham has an extensive research program on weed control in nursery crops.

### Turfgrass Research

About a year ago the Turfgrass research area which was developing very nicely was taken over for a University Housing Project and we had to move to a new location. Dr. John Cornman, who is in charge of this program, has a new set of experiments set up in a new location and in another year this ought to be rolling along very well. Luckily he has in Nassau County on Long Island a turf research area which is continuing to give information under these soil and climate conditions as contrasted to those of Ithaca.

### Breeding

Dr. Robert E. Lee is especially interested in the cytogenetics and breeding of herbaceous plant materials. He has recently selected some clones of the *Smithanthia* hybrids and is planning to release these to the American Gesneria Society for distribution. Undoubtedly there will be a press release in the *Florist Exchange* and the *Florist Review* when these are ready for final release.

### Retail Floriculture

Dr. Raymond T. Fox is busy with teaching responsibilities as he handles the flower arrangement and the Flower Store Management courses. He has however, cooperated with the Youth Education Committee of the New York State Flower Growers. As you know the Committee with Ray Fox's help has conducted several workshops for high school art and home economics teachers and we are hoping that this will continue to spread throughout New York State. Most of you are familiar with the *Teachers Guide to Flower Arrangement* which he wrote and which was published by the Kenneth Post Foundation. This has received wide acclaim throughout the nation and we are proud of this youth education project.

### Landscape Design

Professor Robert Scannell, who has been handling the course in landscape design, is really busy with his teaching responsibilities since we still have one position open in that section of the department. There is increasing demand for instruction in this area of interest.

### Home Grounds Extension

Our three ornamental horticulture extension staff members, Ernest Schauffler, Arthur Lieberman and Charles Fischer have a very good extension program in the field of home floriculture and ornamental horticulture. Many of you know Ernie Schauffler who has been with us for quite a few years and has major responsibility for the 4-H program in Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture. Professors Lieberman and Fischer have an extension program which not only covers home grounds improvement but also some home decoration subjects such as

flower arrangement and house plants. Their work is conducted through the county Agricultural Agents and the county Home Demonstration Agents.

### **New Research-Extension Project**

Another item of special interest to all commercial flower growers and many others throughout the State is the fact that in the Addendum to the Budget Request of the College of Agriculture, there is included a new research and extension project. The project if supported financially as a regular budget item would enable us to do a much better job than we are doing for not only the commercial industries throughout the State but also the millions of home owners. The project would give better maintenance and operation support to the Cornell Ornamentals Research Laboratory at Farmingdale. It would enable us to set up a definite turfgrass research and extension project which at the present time is being carried out as part time by Dr. John Cornman who also teaches the woody plant materials courses. When one considers the 335,000 acres of home lawns in New York State plus the many golf courses, athletic fields, school grounds, industrial landscaping, etc. there is a real need for this research and extension project. The project also would give increased support to the entire extension program in home grounds improvement and this would be a service to the tax payers of New York State. We are hoping that this project request will be approved.

### **Extension Program**

Our Extension Specialists in the commercial field as well as in home grounds continue to work with county agricultural agents in developing extension programs in the county and also conduct various short courses and conferences and other meetings here at Ithaca. One of the big changes is the shift of the Florist Short Course from January into the week of November 1. In 1961, the Short Course will be October 31, November 1 and 2. This was done because we feel that the better travel conditions will not only enable more florists to get here more easily but will enable many which could not leave their greenhouses in the wintry days of January to participate in the short course at Ithaca.

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