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## The History of the Youth Education Program in New York State

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The idea of interesting school children in the appreciation of flowers is not new. It has been going on in this country since the days of the "little red school house." Children have always brought bunches of flowers to their teachers. In the Catholic Parochial schools, the nuns encourage children to bring bouquets of flowers to decorate the shrines which are set up in the classrooms in May and June. In specific classes in Art and in Home Economics a teacher who was particularly interested in flowers was apt to introduce the subject of flower appreciation into her teaching schedule.

The idea of incorporating a definite project of flower appreciation into a grade or high school curriculum is quite recent. In March 1953 the late Kenneth Post of the Department of Floriculture along with William H. Stimming as a representative of the New York State Flower Growers Inc. (NYSFG) approached Mr. Elbert W. Ryerson, Director of Art in the Elmira Public School System at Elmira, New York with the initial idea of teaching a definite flower appreciation course. Because of his own interest in the use of flowers as an art medium, Mr. Ryerson had already encouraged Art teachers in the Elmira Public School system to introduce projects in landscape beautification, modeling of ceramic containers and making flower arrangements into their classes. One of these lessons was meeting with considerable success in the 5th grade at the Fassett School where a complete program was initiated. This project included the study of flower arrangements and containers, followed by drawing and modeling containers in plasticene, and ending with a student exhibit of flower arrangements displayed in the containers which they had made.

It was at the beginning of this project at Fassett School that Dr. Post and Mr. Stimming contacted Mr. Ryerson. Because of the fortuitous circumstance of Mr. Ryerson's interest, these initial communications were highly successful. A meeting was held April 20, 1953 to discuss Dr. Post's proposals at more length. This meeting included Dr. Post, Mr. Stimming, Mr. Ryerson, Mr. A. P. Hoffman, president of the Board of Education of Elmira Public Schools, and Mr. Oscar Kerlin, Superintendent of Schools of the Elmira Public School System.

### THE "ELMIRA PROJECT"

This first meeting to introduce the proposal of teaching an experimental program in flower appreciation was well received. Dr. Post put the services of the Department of Floriculture at Cornell University at the disposal of Mr. Ryerson. Mr. Ryerson agreed to formulate a proposed outline for the approval of the State Department of Education in Albany. Dr. Post promised that flowers would be made available for the program.

A quote from Dr. Post's letter of April 24, 1953 to Mr. Ryerson following this meeting indicates what arrangements were made.

"Dear Mr. Ryerson—I am indeed very much pleased with our meeting in Elmira on Tuesday and I am glad to know you are going ahead to work out a completed plan for incorporation of flower appreciation and flower arrangement in your art curriculum. As a result of this discussion I understand you will work this out and have it approved in Albany. We at Cornell, including Mr. and Mrs. Fox, who are in charge of our flower arrangement work, will be very happy to work with you in any way you desire. We'll welcome your going through our slide collection and, if necessary in your teacher training schools, we will be happy to have our staff work with you in any way possible."

Mr. Ryerson worked out a tentative outline for the proposed course of study in floriculture which received the approval of Dr. Ernest Frier, Chief of Secondary Curriculum, State Department of Education and Mr. Vincent J. Popolizio, State Supervisor of Art Education. The Elmira Public Schools were selected as the trial area for what became known as "The Elmira Project."

On Monday, May 11, 1953, Dr. Post, along with several members of Department of Floriculture at Cornell, conferred with Mr. Ryerson with regard to the proposed "Elmira Project." The group included Dr. Post, Mr. and Mrs. Fox, Ernest Schaffer, 4-H extension specialist in Floriculture and Charles Cares, Assistant Professor in Landscape Design in the Department of Floriculture. This group observed the previously mentioned 5th grade class in the Fassett School. This was the final stage of their

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project in flower appreciation—the making of flower arrangements in containers which they had made in their ceramics lesson.

The group discussed with Mr. Ryerson the various possible projects which might appeal to children at various age levels. Suggestions for visual aids, pamphlets, bulletins and other materials available from Cornell University and other sources were volunteered.

During the summer of 1953 Mr. Ryerson drafted a general plan for a project in Floriculture and Horticulture in Art classes from the first grade through High School. These plans were later to serve as a basis for his booklet, "Growing with Flowers" published by the Kenneth Post Foundation in 1959.



The 3rd grade students busy making flower arrangements.—Elmira Project 1953.

In September 1953 the "Elmira Project" started off with the new school term. Mr. Ryerson presented the program outlines to the elementary teachers of the Elmira Public School System and participation officially began. A survey in 1954 at the end of the school year showed that approximately 60% of the teachers carried on at least one floricultural subject in their classes. The participation was voluntary. Only 12 teachers used the floral service in which the flowers were to be provided free by a wholesale florist. Of the 42 classes where flower arrangement was the subject, the children brought their own materials, except in the 12 cases.

A summary of a questionnaire sent out to the teachers by Mr. Ryerson showed that the teachers felt that the project was worthwhile and desirable. The main criticism was that the teachers needed help to increase their confidence in presenting the flower arrangement subject matter.

During this first year and in the following years, the flowers used in the Elmira Project were supplied by the Elmira Floral Products Company. Mr. Ryerson was particularly grateful to Mr. Marshall Lowman, Sr., Marshall Lowman, Jr. and Mr. Harold Koenig all of Elmira Floral for their help and encouragement.

During the summer of 1954 Mr. Ryerson revised his study outline and presented it to the art teachers. In answer to the teachers' request for some instruction in basic flower arrangement, plans were made for a demonstration. Mr. Fox of Cornell gave an afternoon demonstration to the assembled art teachers of the entire Elmira Public School system.

State Supervisor, Mr. Popolizio, pleased with the initial success of the Elmira project, informed Mr. Ryerson that he would like to see a similar plan instituted in one of the larger cities of the state.

The Elmira Project was continued through the years of 1954 and 1955 and finished its three year trial in June of 1956. It was termed a resounding success by the Elmira Public School system, and by Mr. Popolizio, Mr. Ryerson's success demonstrated for the first time how a flower appreciation course can be logically and practically fitted into the school curriculum.

Even prior to the end of the experiment, publicity of the Elmira Project prompted many people interested in a Youth Education Program in Floriculture to inquire about the project. The Society of American Florists (SAF) became sufficiently interested in the idea to start planning some work of its own. At their post-convention meeting in July 1956, SAF appropriated money for a Youth Education program. In the Fall of 1956, the firm of Glick and Lorwin was engaged by the SAF, and began to assemble data for the booklets of instruction which SAF produced for teachers and students in 1957.



Kenneth Post 1904-1955

On October 25, 1955 the floriculture world was shocked to hear of the death of Dr. Post whose many accomplishments in floriculture included the original idea of instituting a definite program of floriculture appreciation into the schools. The Ninth Issue of 1955 of the New York State Flower Growers Bulletin carried a eulogy of Dr. Post. The issue also contained a brief article on the work of the Elmira Project. As a result of this article, Mr. Ryerson received many inquiries about the Project. This prompted him to write another article in the Eleventh Issue of 1959 of the NYSFG Bulletin. This article dealt quite specifically with the Elmira Project and the reasons for its inclusion in the school curriculum. These publications gave nation-wide publicity in the Floriculture world to the possibilities of youth education. The same article "Flowers Go to School" was published in the N.Y. State Art Teachers Association Newsletter. It made the Art Teachers of the state aware of the possibilities of teaching flower appreciation in their own classes.

#### THE "GATTY PROJECT"

As mentioned previously, after the results of the first year trial of the Elmira project, Mr. Popolizio, State Supervisor of Art Education, had expressed the desire to see a trial on a larger scale. The opportunity for this project occurred late in 1955 when a graduate student, Ronald Gatty, working with Professor Max Brunk in the Depart-

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ment of Agricultural Economics, started a thesis project to investigate ways of increasing flower sales. Having studied mass-marketing and cash and carry sales of flowers to increase sales, Dr. Brunk suggested following up the ideas of the Elmira Project. Accordingly, in the spring of 1956 Mr. Gatty developed a project of flower arrangement in the art classes of four cities in New York State, namely Utica, Albany, Syracuse, and Elmira. Mr. Gatty's method was to first get approval and cooperation of the Director of Art and School Board of each school system. This proved to be a difficult task in some cases and one of the results of his study showed that each school system must be handled individually, depending on the agreement of the Board, and the willingness and enthusiasm of both the Director of Art and the individual classroom teachers of each school system. In some cases the Directors can be most helpful in encouraging participation and in other cases only the enthusiasm and willingness of the individual classroom teacher to assume all responsibility will insure participation. Although Mr. Gatty was most interested in the economic factors involved in marketing a product, his project of introducing flower workshops into the schools was successful. He proved that the teaching of flower appreciation was entirely possible over a wide range of probable situations.

In a follow-up survey Mr. Gatty found that his greatest response was from Grade School classes. He found greater awareness and participation from girls than from boys both in Grade School and High School.

The short term one-shot test program that Mr. Gatty instituted leaves much to be desired, of course, as far as a method of creating a potential flower buying public, and the conclusions reached do not constitute a very strong proof of final results. The important result of Mr. Gatty's Project was the fact that it concurred with the Elmira Project in proving the feasibility of setting up a flower appreciation program in the school curriculum. Mr. Gatty also pointed out in his conclusions that the cooperation of florists and florist groups on a local, state, and national level was necessary to insure not only the initiation, but the continuation of flower appreciation programs. In both the Elmira project and the Gatty Project members of the NYSFG were helpful in locating sources of supplies and in supplying suggestions for carrying out the projects. The results of Mr. Gatty's Project were presented in thesis form for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Cornell University in September 1957.

#### THE "CLEVELAND HILLS PROJECT"

While these two projects were underway, a third New York State Project was instituted by the NYSFG and the United Florists of Western New York (UFWNY). This became known as the "Cleveland Hills Project." Miss Grace Heacock, audio-visual education director of the Cleveland Hills School System of Cheektowaga, New York, and Mr. Herbert Forbach, Sr., Youth Education Chairman of NYSFG, were largely responsible for establishing the program. A course outline for a "Course in Flower Appreciation" was developed by Miss Heacock and a committee of teachers and Garden Club members in Cheektowaga during the summer of 1956. This outline was accepted by Mr. Forbach on behalf of the NYSFG. Flowers for teaching the course during the 1956-57 school year were ar-

ranged for by Mr. Forbach. The project continued after the initial year under the sponsorship of UFWNY and the NYSFG. The program went farther than the previous ones in the establishment of a Flower Appreciation Club in the school system. This brought members of local garden clubs into active participation. In addition, the active sponsorship of the United Florists group created extra publicity. A Flower Week Queen contest was held and newspaper coverage of the contest plus excellent coverage of the flower appreciation course created a very favorable public impression.



Exhibit of Elmira Project flower appreciation at State Fair in Syracuse 1957 by Elbert Ryerson.

In September 1957 additional statewide publicity for both the Elmira Project and the Cleveland Hills Project was created by exhibit booths at the New York State Fair entered under the sponsorship of the NYSFG. Miss Heacock and Mr. Ryerson were responsible for planning the exhibits which received much favorable comment.

#### SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS BOOKLETS

In the Fall of 1957 the Society of American Florists instituted their public program of Youth Education with the presentation of three publications: "Flowers and You"—a student booklet, "A Teachers Guide"—a leaflet to accompany the student booklet, and a special career booklet, "Is there a Career for me in Floriculture?" School teachers throughout the nation were informed of the first two publications during the summer and many requests for free copies filled the offices of the SAF.

It was the plan of the SAF to refer the teacher requests to State and Regional Florist groups who would in turn underwrite the cost of the booklets and cooperate with the teachers in establishing flower appreciation courses in schools. Since N.Y.S. did not have a statewide retail association and the NYSFG was already embarked on its own educational programs, no one group in the state came forward with an offer to purchase the requested booklets.

When Miss Rita O'Brien, executive secretary of UFWNY inquired about booklet requests for Western N.Y. at the 1958 SAF meeting, the entire state wide request list was shipped to her. Lacking funds and personnel to service the State she mailed out questionnaires to florists in towns where the teachers' requests originated asking the cooperation of the florists in purchasing the booklets, presenting them to the schools, and following up with help in establishing the program in the local schools. This action met with very poor florist response and left Miss O'Brien with the problem of what to do with

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the requests of teachers throughout the State. Requests for the SAF booklets from teachers within the UFWNY area were filled from funds of the organization. In September 1958 a meeting was held in Buffalo to decide what steps should be taken in regard to the State-wide requests for SAF booklets. Those present were Miss O'Brien, Mr. Herbert Forbach, Sr., Chairman of Youth Education of the NYSFG and Mr. Clark Baker, Chairman of Youth Education for the UFWNY, and Professor Raymond Fox of the Department of Floriculture at Cornell University. A tentative plan was formulated to provide more detailed lesson plans for teachers. It was suggested that these plans first be given a trial in the Buffalo School District before being printed for distribution throughout the State. This suggestion was made subject to agreement by the Board of Directors meeting of the NYSFG in October 1958.

### THE "BUFFALO AREA PROJECT"

On October 24, 1958 in Elmira, Mr. Forbach presented the Board of the NYSFG with the proposal to use Buffalo schools as a pilot group for formulating a set of lesson plans for teaching flower arrangement in Home Economics and Art classes in High Schools. The Directors adopted the proposal and appropriated a sum of money for expenses involved. Miss O'Brien followed up the plan and arranged for acceptance by the Public and Parochial Schools in the Buffalo Area. Meanwhile teachers who had requested SAF booklets were sent a notice that lesson plans would be forthcoming after trial in Buffalo.

At this same meeting Mr. Ryerson suggested a program to present the results of the Elmira project at the NYS Art Teachers Association (NYSATA) Convention at Binghamton in April 1959.



Home Economics teachers workshop in Buffalo with Mr. Herbert Forbach and Professor R. T. Fox, February 1959.

On February 3 and 16, 1959 two meetings for the school teachers were held at the Buffalo Museum of Science. The first meeting was a demonstration and presentation of the preliminary lesson plans formulated by Professor Fox. Mr. Baker and Mr. Forbach welcomed the teachers and mentioned the part played by their respective organizations. The second meeting included the presentation of remaining lesson plans and a workshop for the teachers.

Most of the teachers planned to begin their flower appreciation lessons at the start of the next fall semester, but one parochial school. The Bishop McMahon High School, had already planned to use the lessons during the current



The Flower Show held at the Bishop McMahon High School on June 1, 1959. Mr. Harold Brookins of NYSFG compliments contestants.

semester. Here again the enthusiasm of an individual teacher played a strong part in the success of the program. Miss Gertrude Moesch, art teacher at the Bishop McMahon High School, planned an integrated program for her girls in the Freshman class. Using the preliminary lesson plans prepared by Professor Fox, she taught a course of flower appreciation which carried through the semester and culminated in a flower show held in the school gymnasium on June 1, 1959. One hundred and twenty-five students sent out hand-painted invitations and decorated the gym, in addition to making competitive arrangements. The UFWNY donated over 1000 roses, greens and equipment for the arrangements. Members of the UFWNY and NYSFG acted as judges at the show. Mr. Forbach presented prizes to the winning contestants. The many favorable comments from students, parents, teachers, school officials and florists proved that this flower appreciation course was a real success. From the standpoint of cooperation it certainly was a remarkable achievement.

Prior to the June Flower Show at the Bishop McMahon High School the convention of the NYS Art Teachers Association was held in Binghamton April 30 to May 2, 1959. Approximately 125 teachers were in attendance at the sessions dealing with flower arranging classes for students. On the first day Mr. John Walker, Executive Secretary of SAF, spoke to the group on youth education and the use and need of flowers for better living.

A panel consisting of Dr. John Seeley, Head of the Department of Floriculture at Cornell University, Mr. Ryerson, Director of Art for Elmira Schools, Mr. Popolizio, State Supervisor of Art Education, and Mr. Forbach, representing the NYSFG and UFWNY, presented the various aspects of the youth education program. Dr. Seeley assured the teachers of assistance from Cornell University with slides, films and lesson plans for High School Teachers.

Mr. Ryerson told of the success of the Elmira Project and presented his lesson plans for Elementary School teachers. The booklet "Growing with Flowers" was published by the NYSFG just previous to this meeting.

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Mr. Popolizio mentioned the State's interest in new teaching ideas. He stated that the Flower Appreciation program had been most successful and should be developed further.

Mr. Forbach explained details of the Cleveland Hill and Bishop McMahon High School projects. He pointed out that these two projects represented participation in Youth Education by a Public School and a Parochial School.

On May 1st and 2nd Professor Raymond Fox, Cornell University, held demonstrations and workshops for those teachers who wished to have practice in making flower arrangements. Flowers and greens were donated by the Elmira Floral Products Co., and small containers and holders were supplied by the NYSFG.

On August 9 through 11, 1959 a Retail Florist Sales Conference was held at Cornell University. On the program Mr. Ryerson and Mr. Forbach discussed the youth education projects in floriculture. At this time a new film "Flower Arrangement in the Home" was given the first public showing. It was produced by Professor Fox, and Mr. Richard Turner of the Department of Visual Aids at Cornell University. The film was produced to supplement the teaching of flower arrangement to both adults and school children. A copy was subsequently purchased by the NYSFG as an aid to their youth education program.

In Buffalo on October 13, 1959 another training school for teachers was given to elementary grade teachers who had shown interest in the program. Miss O'Brien and Mr. Forbach again made the necessary arrangements and Professor Fox conducted the demonstration and workshop. The expenses were again underwritten by UFWNY and NYSFG.

At the October 1959 meeting of the Board of Directors of the NYSFG a new plan for the publication of the lessons written by Mr. Ryerson and Dr. Fox and used in the preliminary trials in Elmira and Buffalo was formulated. The Kenneth Post Foundation which had been established shortly after Dr. Post's death in 1955 had accumulated funds to apply to a worthwhile cause in floriculture. The Trustees of the Post Foundation felt that it could do a real service to Youth Education in publishing these lessons and making them available to interested parties all over the United States.

In January of 1960, Mr. Forbach and Dr. Seeley attended a meeting of the Youth Education Committee of the SAF. They reported on the revised booklet by Mr. Ryerson, "Growing with Flowers—an experiment in Youth Education in Elementary Grades," and the new booklet, "A Teacher's Guide to Flower Arrangement" by Professor Fox, both booklets to be published by the Kenneth Post Foundation as an aid to Youth Education.

In March 1960 final copies of the "Teacher's Guide to Flower Arrangement" were received from the printer. The two booklets were immediately sent to key persons in the florist industry throughout the country. At the same time copies were sent to all teachers in New York State whose names were on the original SAF request slips, or who had signed up for booklets at the NYSTAT Binghamton Convention in May 1959.

In May 1960, Miss Lu Becker, Director of Art Education in the Auburn School System, arranged for a teachers' workshop for that city. She had previously attended the



Flower Arrangement workshop at Auburn, New York, May, 1960. Miss Lu Becker and Professor R. Fox are 2nd and 3rd from left.

Binghamton Convention and had asked the NYSFG for assistance. Mr. William Hiserodt of Auburn, a member of the Youth Education Committee of NYSFG, arranged for flowers and greens, and Mr. Forbach, Sr. gave the teachers a brief talk on the purpose and aims of the Youth Education in Flower Appreciation movement. The booklets "Growing with Flowers" and "A Teachers' Guide to Flower Arrangement" were distributed. Professor Fox gave a brief demonstration, followed by a showing of the film, "Flower Arrangement in the Home," and conducted a workshop session for the 107 teachers who attended. The cost of the meeting was again borne by the NYSFG. A recent follow up shows that several of the teachers have voluntarily included flower appreciation lessons in their art courses.



Mr. John Hagen of Hagen's Greenhouses at Hudson Falls gives a flower arrangement demonstration to the Homemaking class of Lake George Central School.

Particular mention should be made of an individual florist crusade for youth education in New York State. In 1956 John Hagen of Hudson Falls, New York gave his first demonstration in the local schools. Since then Mr. Hagen has given his demonstrations every year. He has included grade school, home economics and 4-H children in his project. In July 1960 Mr. Hagen was cited by the SAF at the annual meeting for his work in carrying out

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the suggested SAF youth education recommendations.

The United Florists of Western New York (UFWNY) must also be commended for the continuing support of their youth education projects. After the finish of the Buffalo Project which culminated in the publication of the grade school and high school lesson plans by the Kenneth Post Foundation, the UFWNY have continued to publicize and support youth education.

Two more training schools were held in 1960. At a meeting for Art and Home Economics teachers presented at a Teacher's Institute for the Diocese of Buffalo, a panel of three UFWNY Florists gave a demonstration and workshop. Another similar program was presented to the Art and Home Economics Teachers of the Niagara County area. UFWNY again supplied florist demonstrators and workshop materials for the teachers. The three florists who conducted these workshops, Richard Burton, Sheldon Koburn and Russell Erickson deserve special commendation for their part in furthering the youth education program.

Because of the interest created by the teacher training courses given in the Buffalo area, a panel of four florists presented a program, "The Florist Industry as a Career" over the Buffalo educational T.V. Channel WNED-TV. The panel represented each segment of the industry and was moderated by Miss Rita O'Brien, executive secretary of UFWNY.

At the present time the educational committees of NYSFG and UFWNY are working with the coordinator of the educational television channel on a series of thirteen T.V. lessons in flower arrangement. The program is scheduled to start in March 1961.

In 1957 the florists of the city of Rochester, New York initiated a program of flower appreciation in the Home-making Departments of the Rochester Schools. Mr. Hugo Teute, Jr. represented the Associated Florists of Greater Rochester (AFGR) in establishing this venture.

In 1960 the Irondequoit School System, a neighboring school system, also joined the program. At the suggestion of Mr. Donald Phelps, a Rochester florist and committee member of NYSFG, the AFGR purchased a copy of the film, "Flower Arrangement in the Home," for the Film Library of Rochester. The film is thus at the disposal of all school and club groups in the Rochester Area. Miss Harriet Dumack, recently appointed executive secretary of the AFGR, states that the program has been termed very successful in the Rochester Schools. Teachers, students and parents have all been pleased with the instruction and help they have received from the florists.

The four wholesale florists in Rochester have been very generous in providing flowers, greens and containers for the program.

Although no definite record of activity is available, it should also be noted that the Florists in Metropolitan New York have been active at various times in providing some flower appreciation training in New York City schools. This training has been carried on over a period of years in some cases. Undoubtedly other similar cases have occurred in other schools in the State. Usually these educational ventures are the result of one teacher or one florist's interest.

It is to be hoped that with more florists and teachers

becoming aware of the possibilities in establishing a youth program in flower appreciation, more such programs will be established. The SAF issued in August 1960 a new booklet called "It's Your Move, Mr. Florist." This booklet urges florists to support Youth Education in every way that they can by sponsoring workshops, working with teachers, students and parents, holding open houses and helping to organize local organizations of groups interested in flower appreciation. This booklet, along with the previous three SAF booklets, is available from Mr. John Walker, Executive Secretary of the SAF with headquarters in the Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington, D.C.

The movie, "Flower Arrangement in the Home" has had a wide distribution. At the present time four copies of the film are on constant loan from the film library of the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University. Several slide lectures on flower arrangement, landscaping, care of house plants and related floriculture subjects are also available for rental.

Twenty-seven copies of the flower arrangement film have been sold to universities and to various city and regional libraries including copies to Puerto Rico, the Province of Quebec and the Province of Ontario, Canada.

As a result of sending copies of the two booklets "Growing with Flowers" and "A Teacher's Guide to Flower Arrangement" to key floriculture people in the country and abroad, the Kenneth Post Foundation has in the past year received an increasing number of requests from teachers, garden club members, junior gardeners and girl scout leaders. Up to this time the Foundation has distributed 2100 copies on request to persons in 39 states, Canada, Holland, Australia, Israel, New Zealand and Sweden

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YOUR EDITOR,

Bob Laughans