NEW BULLETIN ON "PICK-YOUR-OWN" MARKETING

Twelve Northeastern states, the F.E.S. and Farm Foundation have cooperatively published Management of Pick-Your-Own Marketing Operations, a 66-page handbook which sells for $2.50. Useful suggestions are given on managing the operations, market identification and analysis, costs and profitability, production and field layout, facilities and equipment, packing, people and tasks, pricing, check-in and check-out systems, advertising, and reducing risks of accidents. The advantages of the pick-your-own operation for the producer and consumer are outlined. Advantages for the grower include a reduced need for seasonal labor, no grading, packing, and storage costs, reduced container costs, cash received at time of sale, no commissions to pay to middlemen, no labor housing problem, increased yield because produce picked ripe, less cullage, and less risk of price fluctuation. Disadvantages include: liability for accidents, long hours on weekends, poor weather may reduce sales and cause loss of product, and some customers are disagreeable.

For the consumer it provides a way of getting good quality, fresh produce that has not gone through a lengthy market channel. In addition, enough for home canning can be picked, one can sometimes choose quality, it usually costs less and the experience of picking your own in itself may be satisfying. The bulletin may be purchased from the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware 19711.

A large "Pick-Your-Own" promotion program for apples was developed in Virginia, in 1975 geared to the themes of "spend a day in the country" or even "spend a weekend in the country." Special pamphlets to show each growing area of the state, and participating growers and packers were distributed statewide and were readily available at many public places, stores and businesses. Tours also were provided to packing houses and cider and apple-butter making operations. Last year consumers travelled as far as 150 miles to "pick your own" orchards.

HERB GARDEN PLANNED FOR NATIONAL ARBORETUM

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Herb Society of America have completed arrangements for creating a National Herb Garden on the grounds of the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

The Society will finance the project, which is estimated to cost about $250,000, including design, construction, and development. This venture was made possible by recent passage of legislation permitting USDA to accept gifts on behalf of the Arboretum, making them fully tax-deductible.

The new facility will contain a formal "knot" garden with plants arranged in intricate patterns resembling various kinds of knots. Also planned are specialty herb gardens — for medicinals, flavorings, essential oils, bees, dyes, and teas, as well as herbs used by Indians and early colonial settlers. Special roses — the old fashioned non-hybrid types — will also be featured in special arrangements.

The Herb Society was organized in 1935 and numbers about 1,100 members throughout the U.S. and Canada. Members had wanted for many years to build an Herb Garden at the National Arboretum. With the passage of the enabling legislation, they are now moving ahead to implement their hopes. The Herb Society is now in the process of raising the initial $50,000 to complete early stages of the design and construction. The Arboretum will maintain the Garden after it is constructed, and will provide a horticulturist trained in the culture of herbs.

The new facility will be located opposite the terrace of the Arboretum's Administration Building within a large, lovely meadow. The actual herb plantings will occupy probably less than one acre, including walkways and terraces, and a background of various shrubs and trees. The Garden's size and layout will permit it to accommodate fairly large groups for visits and study. The Arboretum will extend its educational programs to include herb culture and uses.

Detailed plans for the Herb Garden are being prepared, including a specific sequence of construction stages and timetable for completion of each stage. The first stages of the Garden are expected to be ready for viewing in midsummer of 1977, the year the Arboretum celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding.

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY: FINDING ONESelf THROUGH PLANTS

Perhaps we who have made life with plants our profession have come to take for granted what caring for plants does for us. But for those discouraged, depressed people in psychiatric hospitals, schools for mentally retarded, prisons and other institutions who discover horticultural therapy, it is a revelation. For example, at the Manhattan Psychiatric Center where a program of horticultural therapy was begun only a year ago, its beneficial effect in terms of growth in self confidence and responsibility is already evident to participants. A formal garden which includes a greenhouse was established there long ago, but it had fallen into neglect and was a candidate for the bulldozer. Now children play there and it is becoming beautiful again. It is part of the land used by the Odyssey House Horticultural Sciences Project, which seeks to show that some people who have been involved with drugs and have lost interest in the business of living — and being parents — can reawaken those instincts by nurturing growing things.

Most of the young people in the project have come to it through Odyssey House, a private, New York-based, psychiatrically oriented program to treat drug abuse, with 4 therapeutic communities in New York City and units in 12 other states. It is supported by foundation, corporate and individual gifts, and by state and federal funds.

The Odyssey approach requires absolute freedom from drugs on the part of participants. Its parents' program is one of the few that treat addicted parents and their children as a unit. They live on the island, in a separate building of the Manhattan Psychiatric Center complex, near the 3 acres of state land that the center made available for the horticultural project. The experiment started last March.

As Tama, who is in charge of cuttings and plantings in the greenhouse, put it: "For the first time I'm learning, which I didn't think I could do before. I feel like I've grown. I had a very low esteem of myself. But now I'm blooming, just like the way my plants bloom."

The National Council for Therapy and Rehabilitation through Horticulture was organized in 1973 and now has over 400 members in 40 states, Canada, and England. The Council is actively coordinating professional and educational therapy and rehabilitation programs and provides services such as a newsletter, a resource library, a manpower exchange bank, a job placement service, and a program consultation service.

For more information about the council write to: Ms. Diane Relf, Executive Secretary, National Council for Therapy and Rehabilitation through Horticulture, Mt. Vernon, VA 22121.
Horticultural Xerography?

Yes, flowers, leaves, seed pods, etc. do give usable xerox images, at least on some machines when they are properly adjusted. James W. Cox, University of Montana, called it botanical xerography. Here are his trial-and-error insights. First is that all copying machines are not equally satisfactory for copying plant materials. Details of leaf floral parts require halftone reproduction which gives the illusion of a three dimensional object. The Xerox 4000, Xerox 3100, the IBM Copier Two are the best.

Furthermore, additional copies of the original print are not nearly as good as copies of the biological material itself. If one wants multiple copies it is better to make them immediately while the plant is on the machine.

These machines can produce excellent acetate overhead transparencies. But wait! The new Xerox 6500 will do it all in color!

Private Consulting Firms Fill Void in Pesticide Research

With university research shifting to pest management and biological control and away from testing new chemical compounds for usefulness as pesticides, a serious void in agricultural research has developed. In the past several years some private agricultural consulting firms have moved into this area of research. They provide data from efficacy tests of ovicides, insecticides, herbicides, biological materials, adjuvants and fungicides for certain crops. According to the Agri-fieldman, March 1976, thirty-three companies are developing agricultural pesticides within the U.S. Looming before them is the Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act (FEPCA) deadline of October, 1977, for registration and classification. Because of FEPCA, myriad test reports are flowing over key EPA desks in Washington. To the companies involved, gathering test data has become an urgent corporate “horse race” to obtain and organize sufficient detailed information to satisfy EPA’s scrutiny. The paperwork itself threatens to take all!

The private-consultant-research firm which tests a successful new compound gains an edge on its competition when the new material is registered because it’s already familiar with what it will do. Some firms work only with chemicals for which there is an experimental label. There is risk-sharing. Chemical firms may pay for any crop damage which occurs and testing companies assume the risk of failure to get the data for whatever reason. Tests are generally conducted exactly according to the chemical companies' specifications, which is not always the case with tests done by university researchers. Private research probably will never replace public-supported Ag research but its movement into pesticide testing appears to be successful so far.

Processed Paper Pads for Greenhouse Cooling Tested

Evaporative pads used in greenhouse cooling systems are typically made of aspen fibers, but recent tests show some advantages for a new type of paper pad. After a year of use, air flow through the aspen pads was very uneven. Air flow through the processed paper pad was much more even. Thin spots and gaps which developed in the aspen pads decreased their cooling efficiency. This is because the air tends to channel through these zones of lower resistance, and less water is evaporated. For details, write Thomas G. Byrne, Specialist, Floriculture Facility, Deciduous Fruit Field Station, San Jose, California.

Lethal Yellows: Floridians Fight Back

The coconut (Cocos nucifera L.) is widely planted as an ornamental in subtropical, southern Florida. The existence of this symbol of the tropics has recently been jeopardized by "Lethal Yellowing," an infectious disease thought to be caused by a mycoplasma-like organism. The common 'Jamaican Tall' cultivar is most susceptible. Lethal yellowing spread into the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area during the early months of 1972. Thousands of palms have already died and the disease now endangers over half a million of these trees throughout the southern half of the state. Diseased palms die within 3–6 months after appearance of the first symptoms leaving nothing but the tall tree trunk or "telephone pole."

Research is being actively conducted by the University of Florida at Fort Lauderdale for a permanent solution to the problem. Two preventive measures have currently been made available to the public. Susceptible trees can be saved, and the life of infected trees prolonged, by injection of an antibiotic into the trunks under 80–100 pounds pressure. Low-cost kits (about $2–3.00) are available to homeowners. Booster shots are necessary every 4–6 months.

The second recommendation is the planting of resistant cultivars. The ‘Malayan Dwarf’, a coconut palm with high resistance to the disease, is being recommended as a replacement palm for ‘Jamaican Tall’. Compared to Florida’s common coconut palm, the Malayans’ trunks show less of the characteristic arch, and have little swelling at the base. They are not truly dwarf but because nuts set on 4–5 year old trees they appear “dwarf-like” when young. Ultimate height reaches 40–60 feet at maturity. Three forms of 'Malayan Dwarf' palms are available. The green, yellow, and golden forms are recognized by the corresponding color of the petiole and fruit. The green 'Malayan Dwarf' with dark green fronds is a highly desirable ornamental. Initial growth is rapid and resistance to lethal yellowing is high.

Future research into the transmission of lethal yellowing may allow the selection of better ornamental coconuts through the screening of young seedlings. Hopefully, the eventual replacement of these graceful palms will restore this tropical trademark to the coastal areas of Florida.

Henry Donselman

Do Plants Always Grow Toward Light?

Not necessarily! "skototropism," (growing toward a dark area) is exhibited by some tree climbing vines such as the tropical Monstera gigantea. Once the vine reaches the tree, which may be as much as 28 inches from its point of emergence, and begins climbing, it abandons its skototropic behavior and becomes phototropic. Science, Nov. 21, 1975.

First Course in Horticulture for Therapists

Mary Tingley (now Compton) (BS 1933, MS 1937, Univ. of New Hampshire; PhD 1941, Cornell Univ.) claims to have taught the first horticulture course in an occupational therapy program in 1942. Milwaukee-Downer College (now part of Lawrence Univ. at Appleton) was the first college to give a degree in occupational therapy. The course was requested by Henrietta McNary, Head of Occupational Therapy.