

ABOUT OUR COVER

MISSOURI HORTICULTURE

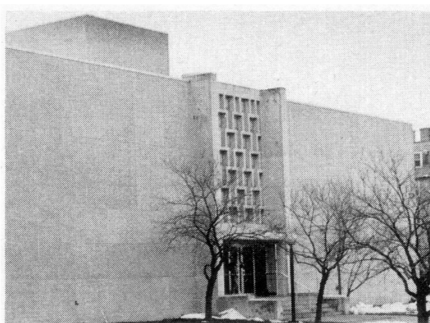
One hundred years of horticulture at the University of Missouri

Horticulture, at the University of Missouri, had as its foundation the deep interest of the settlers of the Territory in tree fruits, grapes, strawberries, vegetables and flowers. Reports of a survey and the census show that in Missouri in 1912-13 there were 35,200 acres of apples and 3,200 acres of peaches with a production of 17,015,000 and 3,312,000 bushels, respectively. There were commercial acreages of grapes, cherries and others as well. By the time that the Territory became a state in 1821, practically every family was directly involved in the growing of horticultural crops, especially fruit crops. This widespread interest resulted in the founding of the Missouri Fruit Growers Association in 1859 (2 years later renamed, as it is known today, Missouri State Horticultural Society). Norman J. Colman, a Nurseryman, Lawyer, Alderman, Owner, and Editor of the Valley Farmer (later renamed, "Colman's Rural World"), was the acknowledged leader in this movement and was elected as the Association's first President (later Colman was to be named by President Grover Cleveland as the United States Commissioner of Agriculture and in 1889 as the first Secretary of Agriculture.) As Commissioner he joined with Missouri Congressman Col. William H. Hatch in securing the final approval of the Hatch Experiment Station Bill.

Under Colman's leadership, the "Hort Society" assumed a leading role in the establishment and location of a State Agricultural College. These activities culminated in 1870 with the establishment of the Missouri Agricultural and Mechanical College in Columbia as a part of Missouri University.

The College immediately instituted horticultural teaching, research and extension activities which in 1878 were organized into the Department of Horticulture. George Husmann, "Conductor of Colman's Horticultural Research Farm, Horticultural Editor of Colman's Rural World" and Secretary of the Missouri State Horticultural Society was the first Professor and Chairman of the Department. It was the first department to be organized in the College and has since grown with the College in stature and importance to the agriculture of Missouri and to the world, often setting the pace in research, teaching and extension in the College.

Other chairmen in succession were: S. M. Tracy, 1881-84; L. R. Taft, 1884-88; J. W. Clark, 1888-92; Charles



Home of the Department of Horticulture, University of Missouri.

H. Keffer, 1892-94; J. C. Whitten, 1894-1918; V. R. Gardner, 1918-22; T. J. Talbert, 1922-50; R. A. Schroeder, 1950-77; and D. A. Hegwood, 1977-present.

Consistent with the objectives of its founders, the Department continues to emphasize the interaction of Teaching, Research and Extension, each influencing and benefitting the other.

Teaching has emphasized basic principles as they were known at the time using "hands on" experiences as an effective teaching technique. Always innovative in developing the learning process of its students, departmental propagation classes early in its history boiled propagation wood so that students could "slip-the-bark." Today, the audio-visual "blending" of slides, motion pictures and mood music into a taped lecture, and the development of micro-environmental design concepts are but two examples of innovative teaching techniques.

While the teaching of Horticulture began in 1870, the first Horticultural Class in the Department (1878) "... consisted of nineteen young ladies and five young gentlemen . . ." There is a more even distribution by sex in today's approximately 425 Horticultural majors.

The 1878 University Catalog described activities in the Department as follows: "*As the ladies of Missouri have done so much to create a taste for the culture of fruits and flowers and ornamental grounds, it is but just that the Commonwealth should provide a school where their daughters, as well as sons, may perfect themselves in these delightful pursuits . . . The ladies are, therefore, invited to partake of the benefits of this Horticultural course, where everything will be so managed as to awaken and cultivate the most refined and exalted tastes, and lead women back to the pursuits she so much enjoyed in Eden.*"

One measure of the excellence of the Department's teaching is the success of its graduates. A Centennial Celebration accounting identifies over 200 of our graduates who currently are successfully involved in Commercial Horticulture in the State of Missouri.

Many of the more than 300 graduates have contributed much to Horticultural Science. A listing would include such well-known Horticulturists as A. J. Heinicke, V. R. Boswell, C. C. Wiggins, Norman Childers, Hudson Hartmann, Loyd Powell, Sylvan Wittwer, to name a few. During its Century, the Graduates with advanced degrees have accepted University staff teaching, research and extension positions in 41 different states.

Discovering and understanding the fundamental principles that are needed to solve practical horticultural problems has and continues to be a primary concern of the scientists on the Horticulture faculty at Missouri. Such notable scientists, to name a few who have served on the faculty include, George Husmann, S. M. Tracy, J. C. Whitten, W. H. Chandler, W. L. Howard, (authored Missouri College of Agriculture Research Bulletin No. 1); V. R. Gardner, F. C. Bradford, H. D. Hooker, H. G. Swartwout, T. J. Talbert, and A. E. Murneek. Their research included studies of crop culture, physiology of growth development and fruiting, winter injury, winter protection, plant pest control, and plant breeding. Their early plant physiology research on rest period, the physiology of fruiting, fruit set, and fruitfulness rank among the classics.

Present thrusts include plant breeding, physiology, nutrition, trace substances, cultural practices, and crop management. Today the Department's tomato breeding and trace substance research are making significant contributions to international agriculture. Crop science research includes fruits, vegetables and ornamentals.

The effectiveness of the Horticulture Research Program at Missouri is exemplified by the vigorous vitality of the diverse commercial horticultural enterprises in the state. From its beginning the Department has devoted itself to the extension of horticultural knowledge to the citizenry of the state. The establishment of the Cooperative Extension Program in 1917 assisted greatly in these efforts.

Early extension workers included Frederick Faurot, Earl Page, Ashleigh Boles, J. W. C. Anderson, to name a few. The departmental extension effort has always provided the inspiration for the applied research phase of the departmental program. There are currently four state specialists, one field test specialist and five area specialists conducting the Extension Horticulture Program in the State.

Interestingly, being the first Department in the College may have destined it to play a signal role in the formation of other departments. In 1946 the department was pruned of six staff members to initiate the estab-

(Continued on p. 95)