

## TEACHING ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

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I will say a few words concerning what is being taught at the high school level in general terms of Ornamental Horticulture and more specifically propagation. I would like to make a few comments about the overall programs statewide and then zero in on my particular program.

High school O.H. courses are focused upon two major objectives. One includes the very important task of helping students start to understand basic concepts, principles, practices, and mechanics of O.H. This should include an opportunity for introduction to not only the growing of plants, their processing and distribution, but also a thorough understanding of the business aspect. Some students use this initial preparation as a basis for job entry, while others base future occupational education upon it. The second objective is preparation focused upon direct entry into an occupation — either a specific job, or possibly more appropriately a cluster of jobs.

This is quite a different educational philosophy than what it was when we were in high school. We were constantly told that if your going to make it, you had better go to college. Now, rather than a college-oriented program and curriculum, the high schools vocational programs are skill learning and entry level job-oriented. Therefore, job preparation at the high school level must be more specific.

Far too often the supposition is that Ornamental Horticulture is ornamental horticulture, regardless of what job titles are involved. The needs are more specific than that, however, even though job titles are not mutually exclusive. On the other hand, it must be recognized that student goals and industry needs both change. This makes it imperative that programs should not be directed toward one job title. The logical compromise is development of curricula to meet present and future needs of a group of closely related existent jobs.

Ideally, this all sounds nice, but how does one go about putting it into practice. Last year a representative group of high school horticulture instructors and representatives of the O.H. industry, which included growers, florists, nurserymen, salesmen, fertilizer and chemical companies, turf specialists etc. sat down for several days and began the enormous task of writing a standardized program of instruction for teaching O.H.

We first asked the industry to list all the job titles at each level of instruction, high school, junior college, and 4 year col-

lege. Next we asked them to list those skills required to get those listed jobs at each level of instruction. Then we, as instructors, had to write the curriculum that would teach those skills which were required for those listed jobs at each level, with special emphasis, naturally, on the high school level.

Five major areas were covered, Nursery Practices, Floriculture, Forestry, Landscaping and Turf Management. This was a very successful effort to standardize what is being taught at the high school level. This approach was not designed to turn out horticultural robots but now, at least, those students who want to continue their education at a higher level would be exposed to certain basic fundamentals such as propagation, plant nutrition, plant identification, career opportunities etc. It wasn't long after the completion of this project that we were again asked to design a model horticulture facility for high school ornamental horticulture programs.

MODERATOR BROWN: Thank you, Dan. Moving on up the line in the field of education, our next speaker will be talking on the community college program in ornamental horticulture. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, where he obtained his B.S. degree in ornamental horticulture; he then came to California and worked as a landscape contractor. As a part time activity he took on a teaching assignment in the adult school at San Diego, teaching horticulture classes to the general public. This is the third year on the staff at Mesa Community College. He has just about a full time job there, but he still operates his landscape contracting business. It is a pleasure for me to present Claude Richards from Mesa College.<sup>1</sup>

MODERATOR BROWN: Thank you, Claude. Next along the line in horticultural education would be at the state colleges and universities. I will discuss our work at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo.

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<sup>1</sup> Claude Richards described his teaching activities at Mesa Community College.