

The horticultural student training program of Cleveland Public School System, featured this month in WTT, is an eye-opener. It is the only major attempt we know of where local industry members in the vegetation care field have helped sell a comprehensive training program for their future help.

Some 350 high school students are now being exposed to the vast scope of non-crop horticulture, and the opportunities it offers for careers. Further, they are getting practical vocational training, and they are getting the chance to earn money on part-time jobs within the industry. The Cleveland program goes beyond the 3-year high school vegetation care curriculum and offers a 2-year technical school for post-high schoolers. This is a step beyond what can be expected of many metropolitan school systems.

But the vocational high school training is within the scope of more than half the high school districts of the nation. Even though only a small

percent of high school students who take these courses go on to college or enter the horticultural industry's labor market, the effort will be of countless value to the vegetation care industry.

Among these values is the fact that more young adults will have an appreciation of efforts to add and maintain green areas in our cities. They will understand the value of the non-crop horticultural industry. And they will have some technical knowledge in caring for their own future home lawns. This, in itself, is a plus for the industry.

For many young people, high school training will help them find a vocation. Some will be choosing careers in an area in which they had little interest or background prior to their vocational high school training in the field.

Funding for many schools will be a problem. But federal and state monies for such training are available. Only impetus for such a program is needed. Vegetation care industry businessmen can get this job done. It can do much to aid the future help problem which the industry will surely face.



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