

## Where are the people?

Our colleges and universities have a problem: they are not turning out enough graduates in horticultural-related subjects to keep the green industry satiated.

And they admit it.

"Perhaps we college and university teachers, researchers and extension faculty haven't continued to do a good job of recruiting or of promoting the profession," Paul Smeal of VPI-SU writes us.

Adds Mike Fulton of Agricultural Technical Institute, Wooster, Ohio: "The biggest demand we get from industry is for people to go to landscapes, diagnose a problem and take steps to correct it. Most of the students who learn our horticultural program aren't that ready."

Fulton notes that most horticulture students are more interested in golf course management and not landscaping, per se. Those who indicate a definite interest in landscaping "are directed toward landscape design and not maintenance."

Smeal points out that income potentials are not as attractive in the green industry as in other industries like engineering, business and computer technology. "Last year we graduated 42 students and 10 reported starting salaries in the \$12,000 range. Starting salaries for horticulture graduates should be \$18,000 to \$20,000, especially for those who have work experience."

As Smeal says, perhaps our educators are partially to blame for the lack of qualified horticulture students to graduate in the last few years. But so is the green industry. Owners and managers of landscape-related interests must realize that they must help recruit students at the high school level.

Organizations like California Association of Nurserymen have taken the first step. The C.A.N. publishes a free booklet called "Careers in a Growing Industry." The Idea Bank of Tempe, Ariz., offers a 20-minute videotape for \$79 entitled "Careers in the Landscape-Horticulture Industry."

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America has done as much as any organization. It has published a pamphlet, "Growing Careers for Youth: the Landscaping Industry;" it sponsors an annual collegiate Field Day; and its Curriculum Committee has just written 2- and 4-year guides for schools with landscape contracting programs.

"Our members are desperate for quality people, especially in growth areas like Washington, D.C.," says ALCA's Debra Dennis.

The desperation could well continue into the 1990s, unless the green industry wakes up to this need.



*Jerry Roche*

by Jerry Roche, editor

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