



## Lancaster Co. Students Prepare Farm Show Exhibit

by Sally Bair  
Farm Feature Writer

In just another week it will be time to make your annual trek to Harrisburg for that unique experience, the Pennsylvania State Farm Show.

For you as a visitor, the only decisions you must make involve which day to attend to see the events you are most interested in, how to avoid the biggest crowds, and, of course, how to choose a day when the weather will be perfect.

But for the exhibitors at the Show, it means the culmination of literally months and months of careful planning and decision-making.

Lancaster County's Vocational-Technical Schools have the honor this year of preparing the exhibit for the state Department of Vocational Education. According to James Kerr, horticulture instructor at Willow Street and Brownstown Vo-Tech Schools, this is the first year that the exhibit will take a form other than strictly signs and plaques provided by the state. Kerr says, "This year's exhibit is designed to show an informal garden retreat."

While the suggestion for doing the exhibit was put forth last year, actual work began early in this school year, when students of the county's three Vo-Tech schools were asked to draw up suggested designs of how they would plan to utilize the 28 x 36 foot area.

The exhibit will be located on the second floor around the main arena, and students were provided with a blueprint of the area, so they knew how many pillars had to be accounted for, where the exit ramps were located and what other physical characteristics had to be considered.

The purpose of the exhibit, according to Kerr who is coordinating the efforts, is to demonstrate just what a graduate of the vocational technical program can produce. It employs the fundamentals of landscape design, landscape establishment and maintenance, choosing appropriate materials including selection and use of turf grass, patio bricks and sod.

A composite design was selected from those submitted and cost estimates were submitted to the state before the project actually began. The final exhibit encompasses all



Nancy Linengood, a Manheim Central junior, is watering plants to be used at the Farm Show.

that students can produce after studying at the vo-tech school in this field, Kerr says.

Approximately \$600 worth of plant material will be utilized, according to Kerr, with much of the material being donated or given at cost by local nurseries.

Actual construction of the exhibit will take place on Thursday and Friday, January 2 and 3, when five students from each of the five classes involved and their instructors will travel to the Farm Show Building. Kerr explained that the caravan will include a busload of students and several trucks to carry all of the materials. He said, "We will work from early in the morning until very late at night."

Transporting the plant materials is no small job, but Kerr said precautions will be taken to keep the flowering plants and trees from freezing in the winter weather.

The classes involved in the work and their instructors include: Mount Joy floriculture taught by Dan Helwig; Mount Joy Horticulture taught by Ray Little; Brownstown floriculture, Judy Levine; Brownstown and Willow Street horticulture, James Kerr; and Willow Street floriculture, Charles Patterson.

Each day of the Farm Show there will be students and teachers to explain the exhibit and to answer questions about the Vo-Tech programs.

Besides doing all the labor involved in creating the exhibit, students are having an educational experience in getting the plant materials in proper condition for the show.

It is the responsibility of the Mount Joy Vo-Tech floriculture department to get the chrysanthemums to flower by Farm Show time. According to instructor Helwig, the order for the plants was placed a little late, and there is some concern about whether the mums, which need about 11 weeks to flower, can be forced to bloom in time for the show.

There are about 100 plants in the greenhouse at Mount Joy being given tender loving care in hopes that they'll be ready for the floral display. However, if nature can't be hurried fast enough, Helwig says they'll resort to geraniums or will bring in bulbs from outside and force them. In any event, students will have the opportunity to watch the process and to participate in the decisions along the way.

Flowering dogwoods will add a striking contrast to the cold winter outdoors, and according to Kerr, they need six weeks to come to flower. The sod, being prepared by Sporting Valley Turf Farm, must be "laid out for a week in advance or it will be frozen" when it's time to lay it in the exhibit. All of the angles must be considered so that

the plant materials are at exactly the right stage to carry out the theme of the exhibit.

Other trees being used in the garden scene will be birches, which will be in leaf, honey locusts and hemlocks. Pachysandra will be used as a ground cover.

There will be a pool of water and a patio set in loose sand, complete with patio chairs. The setting certainly sounds like a quiet place to take a rest from the hustle of Farm Show, but, unfortunately for weary visitors, the entire exhibit will be roped off, so no one will get to sit in the cool shade and enjoy the peaceful solitude.

About 40 railroad ties will be used to build a terrace in the exhibit, and a basket weave fence will surround much of it. Fifteen canadian hemlocks will make an attractive border.

All in all, the exhibit will be a tribute to the students' ability to design and carry out a landscape project, and it will be an interesting and restful change from the usual educational exhibit at the Farm Show.

So when you're there enjoying the beauty of this garden retreat, stop for a moment and consider all the work which went on behind the scenes to produce this area of beauty.

Indeed, as you walk around the show, consider all the planning which is involved in making the Pennsylvania Farm Show the diverse, interesting education that it is—for farm and city folk alike. Literally thousands of man hours are spent preparing each exhibit in the hopes of catching your attention if only for a few minutes.

Have a good trip to Farm Show this year—and give special thought to the creators of all those exhibits!



Donna Williams, a senior at Hempfield High School, holds one of the 100 mums to be used in the Farm Show exhibit.

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