

Perennial School Set June 27-28

WOOSTER, Ohio — The fifth annual Perennial School will be conducted on the Wooster campus of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center June 27-28.

The two-day event is co-sponsored by OARDC's Secrest Arboretum and Ohio State University Extension's Nursery, Landscape, and Turf Team.

The school is an intensive two-day course (17 hours), which will pertain to perennials including selection, horticultural practices, and pest management. Participants will explore Secrest Arboretum, attend presentations, and participate in hands-on learning through interactive exercises and diagnostics.

Registration for the event is limited to 70 participants and the deadline for all registrations is Friday, June 16. Cost for the two-day event is \$175 and includes a continental breakfast on Wednesday, lunch both days, dinner on Tuesday, the diagnostic clinic, outdoor labs, and a notebook of materials and presentations.

The school will begin at 8 a.m. on Tuesday with check in at

Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute's Applewood Village Conference Center.

At 8:25 a.m., guest speaker Alan M. Armitage, a horticulture professor from the University of Georgia, will be talking about "Up and Coming Perennials."

"He (Armitage) is an expert in perennial plants, perennial herbaceous plants and the cut flower industry," said arboretum curator Ken Cochran. "The cut flower industry is where a person grows acres of a plant and then sells them to florists. The grower also may conduct research on these types of plants."

After a break at 9:35 a.m., Armitage will speak about "Herbaceous Perennials for Cut Flowers."

This year's school will also feature something new — two field trips have been added into Tuesday's events. The trips include a tour of Quailcrest Farms in Wooster, and Wade and Gatton Display Garden and Nurseries in Bellville, Ohio.

"We decided to try something new this year," Cochran said.

"Both of these places have excellent display gardens for perennials."

Participants will board buses at 11 a.m. and head for Quailcrest Farms in Wooster. They will arrive at the farm at about 11:30 a.m. and form two groups. Group A will tour Quailcrest Farms and Group B will participate in a seminar titled "Diagnostics of Herbaceous Perennials." After lunch at 12:30, the two groups will switch places.

"The diagnostic clinics will allow participants to bring in specimens with various problems, and we will then help them identify what type of problem it is," Cochran said.

The group will leave the farm at about 3:30 p.m. and head to the Wade and Gatton Display Gardens and Nurseries.

Participants will again be split into two groups. Group A will tour the gardens and Group B will participate in another diagnostic clinic. The groups will switch places after dinner at 6:30 p.m. Events will conclude on Tuesday evening at about 8:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, participants

will be served a continental breakfast at 7:45 a.m. Ohio State's Michael Knee, professor of horticulture and crop science, will speak on "U.S./British Gardens" at 8:15 a.m.

At 10:15 a.m., participants will be taken to an OARDC home off of route 83 in which they will participate in a hands-on planting demonstration called "Landscape Planting with Perennials."

"We are going to incorporate woody landscape plants with perennials for foundation planting around the home," Cochran said. "Foundation planting is around the house as opposed to landscape planting, which simply plants everywhere."

"We will divide the people up into six groups, and they are going to go around the house and physically work on this for about an hour and a half. We will have the ground and beds prepared so they are going to ba-

sically just install the plants, and when they get done they will see the finished project as opposed to when they arrived and the around was bare."

After lunch, participants will learn "Propagation of Herbaceous Perennials," taught by Jim Brady of Sunbeam Gardens, Inc., in Avon, Ohio. At 1:45 p.m., Dave Shetlar will talk about perennial plant insects, and "Weed Management in Perennials" given by Randy Zondag of the OSU extension in Lake County, will be the last topic of the day at 3 p.m.

For more information about the event, call Sandy Winkley at Secrest Arboretum, (330) 263-3761; Jack Kerrigan, Cuyahoga County office of OSU Extension, (216) 397-6000; Charles Behnke, Lorain County office of OSU Extension, (440) 326-5851; or Denise Ellsworth in the Stark-/Summit office of OSU Extension, (330) 497-1611, ext. 21.

Robert Foster Receives Big E Agricultural Adventurers Award

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — The New England Fellowship of Agricultural Adventurers presented Robert Foster, Middlebury, Vt., with the 2000 Agricultural Adventurers Award here at the annual meeting of trustees of Eastern States Exposition May 18.

Foster, who operates the 1,900-acre Foster Brothers Farm with his wife, Nancy, his father, and other family members, is credited with producing a new product — electricity — from cow manure from the farm's 380 milking Holsteins. The year was 1982 and the concept was new at the time in the U.S., but had been used in several foreign countries.

The Fosters' environmental concerns led them to build an anaerobic digester, which acts as a large incubator for methane-producing bacteria. The fresh cow manure is warmed and "ferments" to produce methane gas, a clean burning, environmentally safe source of fuel used to generate electricity. The electricity became a source of energy for the farm and the excess was sold to a local power company.

In 1991 the Fosters began using the solid residue, which is odorless and free of contaminants and weeds, to develop a line of compost potting materials. The material, which contains no volatile nitrogen compounds, is composted to yield a peat-like substance. Unlike peat moss, the digested manure is a renewable resource. The products, marketed by Vermont Natural Ag Products, a subsidiary of Foster Brothers Farm, are found in nurseries and garden stores throughout the Northeast under the names of Moo Doo, Moo Grow, Moo Dirt, and others.

Foster is an active member of Agri-Mark and Yankee Milk dairy cooperatives, serving as a director from Region 10. He is a past vice chairman of Agri-Mark, holding that position from 1992-1997. He serves as vice chairman of the Vermont Beef Promotion Council and the Green Mountain Dairy Cooperative Federation. He is also a member of the University of Vermont's College of Life Sciences Advisory Board and the Vermont Dairy Promotion Council.

A graduate of the University of Vermont, Foster has a bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering and a master's degree in agricultural economics.

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