

Marigolds In Bloom On Campus

U. S. Sen. Everett M. Dirksen's favorite flower—the marigold—is in full bloom at the Texas A&M Floral Test Garden.

The Senator, if he viewed the garden, would have a field day—there are 40 different varieties.

Also in full bloom are 40 varieties of zinnias, reported Robert H. Rucker, professor of soil and crop sciences and landscape architect in charge of the overall flower program.

Actually there are about 800 different varieties of flowers now blooming in the Z-shaped garden east of Kyle Field.

"We have had wonderful response to the garden," Rucker noted. "Growing flowers under these field conditions exposes the flowers to the public. They can

look our garden over and decide what they want to grow at home."

The A&M Board of Directors funded the Floral Test Garden at their August, 1968, meeting. Work was started immediately and 160 truckloads of high-quality soil from the Brazos Bottom Plantation were dumped and spread.

Rucker said the one-half acre site is designed to exhibit and test 1,000 varieties of flowers each year.

Fifteen leading seed producers sent seeds to A&M for the garden, he continued, and these seeds were greenhouse grown.

The first section of 100 different varieties of tulips hit its peak in March and April, and has died

and been replaced by 70 varieties of chrysanthemums. The chrysanthemums will be in bloom by football season.

At the present time there are no barriers around the garden. Rucker said a sign which reads "Take only pictures, leave only footprints" must be doing the job, as there has been no vandalism reported.

He explained there will be some research at the garden, including trial testing of plants and plant foods.

It also will be used in some teaching areas.

"The flowers that produce best for us will be used in flower beds located throughout the campus," Rucker said. "We have a wealth

of trees and many beautiful buildings, soon we will have some color to brighten the campus."

The main purpose of the garden is to "create a pleasant academic environment for students.

"Exposing students to beauty will certainly make them more rounded individuals," Rucker asserted. "There will be lasting values that will follow all through life."

Bill Vitopil, superintendent of A&M grounds, is responsible for the development of the garden and B. C. Hurt, campus landscape supervisor, heads garden maintenance.

Rucker pointed out there is usually somebody visiting the garden from early morning until sundown each day.

Mikeska To Head A&M's 'This Atomic World' Tour

Billy Charles Mikeska, West Texas native who has taught in Texas schools 14 years, will manage the "This Atomic World" lecture tour program for Texas A&M in 1969-70.

The traveling demonstration lecture is cooperatively conducted by A&M with Oak Ridge Associated Universities and the Atomic Energy Commission. The program explains in student terms atomic energy and its uses. A&M has presented it in Texas schools since 1966.

Mikeska, 36, will appear in about 150 schools during 1969-70.

The former Van Horn High science teacher will train at Oak Ridge this summer for the tour, which begins Sept. 8 at Texarkana.

Mikeska has taught in Van Horn, Fort Stockton and Eden schools since 1954, when he received the bachelor degree in range animal husbandry at Sul Ross University. He instructed chemistry, physics and biology at Van Horn six years prior to taking the "Atomic World" lecture position with A&M last February.

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