

Barbara Shalucha

Barbara Shalucha joined the Botany Department of Indiana University in 1947. Although she had been a research fellow and instructor in botany at Connecticut College in New London, her education and other work experience had been in horticulture. She had received the Bachelor of Philosophy and Master of Science in horticulture from the University of Vermont. Her Ph.D., also in horticulture, was awarded by The Ohio State University in 1947. She had also held horticultural appointments at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station.

Through this background, Barbara brought a knowledge of and devotion to applied botany which was unique in a department that prided itself on basic research. Her initial responsibility was to continue programs the department offered for majors in other schools and disciplines, and her teaching has remained distinct from the major program in botany and biology. For twenty-nine years she taught nature study, primarily for prospective elementary teachers. This concern with the instruction of youngsters marks many of her other activities. In 1952, she began a series of science workshops in the short session prior to the regular summer session. These workshops brought practicing teachers to the campus to receive guidance from national leaders in elementary science education.

In alternate semesters Barbara taught horticulture, a non-major course intended for students in recreation, social services, or elementary teaching. Supplementing the horticulture course, she offered a practical course titled School Garden Management. The management course developed materials and plans for another of Barbara's innovations, the junior gardening program and Hilltop Garden. The junior gardening program was another reflection of Barbara's concern with the instruction of youngsters. A large portion of the Hilltop Garden, which was originally a fallow field adjacent to the experimental garden of the Botany Department, was devoted to small vegetable plots and managed by youngsters aged seven to fourteen. Under Barbara's guidance, these plots produced fantastic yields of vegetables. Over the years, thousands of local youth were involved in this constructive enterprise, among them many children of faculty members and, perhaps, even some current faculty members themselves.

The years during which Hilltop Garden developed were years of limited resources for the department. Each investment at the garden had to compete with demands for much-needed equipment, materials, and services. Of necessity, Barbara sought other sources of support, and, gradually, contributions became available from the Bloomington Department of Parks and Recreation, from individuals, and from the sales of products and services by the garden itself. Barbara's liaison with the Bloomington Garden Club, her organization of the Hilltop Garden Council, and her retained association with parents of junior gardeners all contributed to the developments at Hilltop. At Barbara's request, Lord and Burnham donated a small greenhouse, and a garden house was attached by the University. The demonstration garden surrounding the student plots has matured over the intervening years through donations, purchases, and the perspiration of many volunteers, graduate students, and employees. The garden now features maturing ornamental trees and shrubs, a spectacular perennial border, an herb garden, a wildflower garden and, with recent expansion, trial grounds for new varieties of daffodils and day-lilies. Space has also been reserved for a project still dear to Barbara, a civic garden and nature center which would rival those in many major communities and botanical gardens.

Barbara's innovations and her persistence have led to recognition outside the local community. She has spent both a sabbatical leave and a leave-of-absence at horticultural institutions in England, and she recently completed a garden tour of China. She has promoted the spread of youth gardens nationally, and in recognition of this pioneering work, she was made a member of the Advisory Board of the Young Garden Council in Washington, D.C. Hilltop Garden has earned presidential citations from the Garden Clubs of Indiana and the National Council of State Garden Clubs. Barbara herself also received the first Youth Gardening Award from National Civic Garden Centers during a symposium held at Indiana University in 1983. She was elected to the executive board of this organization and, in the same year, was appointed by Governor Robert D. Orr to the Food and Agriculture Advisory Council of the White River Park Development Commission.

Retirement is likely to blunt neither Barbara's fascination with growing ornamental plants nor the zeal with which she promotes gardening throughout the nation.

Charles W. Hagen, Jr.