

Harry Curtis Young, 1888-1970

H. C. Young, Jr., Leonard J. Alexander, and H. Frank Winter



Harry Curtis Young, one of the primary directors of research in Plant Pathology in Ohio for 35 years, died April 24, 1970, in Homestead, Florida, where he had lived since retirement.

Dr. Young was born in Paint Valley, Ohio, on November 14, 1888, one of 4 children of Henry and Alice Young. His education began in a one-room rural school near his home, but he completed his high school education at Ohio University Preparatory School in Athens in 1909. He continued study at Ohio University and received the Bachelor of Science degree in 1913. In the same year he married Lenora Esther Barnes of McArthur, Ohio.

They moved to Raleigh, N.C. where he became an Instructor at North Carolina State College, and where he completed his Master's degree in 1915. During 1915-1916, he held a Rufus and Lackland Fellowship and studied at Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. Late in 1916 he was appointed Instructor at Michigan State College, East Lansing, where he taught plant physiology. He was a graduate student and research associate of Dr. Benjamin M. Duggar.

In 1918 he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant, and spent over a year in the Medical Corps in New Haven, Conn. During this period he explored various means of detecting tuberculosis, including the Wasserman reaction and complement fixation tests. He was discharged a 1st Lieutenant in 1919 and returned to Michigan State College as a Research Associate. At this time he became associated with Dr. Ernst A. Bessey in both teaching and research in plant physiology. He also found time to assume coaching duties with the Michigan State tennis team.

In 1922 he returned to Washington University as a Crop Protection Institute Fellow where he was a student and research associate of Dr. Benjamin M. Duggar. He completed the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1923, and initiated studies upon the fungitoxic properties of sulfur that he continued for many years. On October 1, 1923, he became Chief of the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Wooster, Ohio. In 1947, when the department was combined with the Department of Botany and plant Pathology at The Ohio State University, he became Associate Chairman of the combined departments in charge of research in plant pathology, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Wooster, a position he held until his retirement in 1958.

Dr. Young joined The American Phytopathological Society in 1920 and was active in the affairs of the Society until he retired. When the North Central Division of the parent Society was formally organized in 1948, he was elected its first president.

Throughout his career he had an intense and varied

interest in research. He recognized the need for basic research, and also knew the need to solve the more practical problems. He was interested in the extension of research knowledge to the people who needed it, and often contributed of his time to extension activities. He and his associates continued studies of the fungitoxic properties of sulfur, which led to the isolation of pentathionic acid and the discovery of its role in fungitoxicity. His work with sulfur also involved the control of certain human skin disorders in studies with dermatologists at the Cleveland Clinic and elsewhere. Practical evaluation of the micronized or particulate sulfurs, the fixed coppers, and finally the antibiotic and organic fungicides for the control of fruit and vegetable diseases were made with his guidance. His concentrated efforts on spray schedules led to a better knowledge of the value of spray timing. To provide this information to growers more efficiently, Dr. Young helped to establish the Ohio Spray Service Program. He was also interested in methods of spray application, and worked closely with the design and performance of machinery utilizing the concept of concentrate spraying.

Recognizing the need for better understanding between pesticide manufacturers, dealers, farmers, and research workers, Dr. Young joined with others to form the Ohio Pesticide Institute in 1947. He served for 3 years as secretary and 3 years as coeditor of the O.P.I. News; and was a director of the organization until his retirement.

He initiated work on the control of the virus diseases of raspberry by inspection in the nursery, and organized the Ohio Small Fruit Improvement Association which then took over the responsibility for supervising these control measures. Dr. Young was among the first to perceive the importance of Dutch elm disease, and was instrumental in organizing the Dutch Elm Disease Laboratory for research on, and eradication of, this important disease. He was also involved with the early work on the phloem necrosis virus disease of elm.

During his career, Dr. Young was honored by almost every growers' organization in the state of Ohio, as well as several from other states. These honors culminated in the Centennial Award for Distinguished Service conferred upon him by the College of Agriculture of The Ohio State University in 1969.

In his earlier years, Dr. Young was active in sports. Later, these energies were directed toward work on his own farm, where he often put his research results to the severe test of practicality. At the time of his death, he was working with Barbados cherries and attempting to develop an industry in Southern Florida based upon the extraction of vitamin C from the fruit.

Dr. Young is survived by his wife, now in Greensboro, N.C.; 3 children, Harry, Jr., of Stillwater, Oklahoma, Robert H. of Wooster, and Marjorie (now Mrs. J. D. Southworth) of Greensboro; one sister, Ada; nine grandchildren, and one great grandchild.