

Alvin Casey Beal

Professor of Floriculture

November 30, 1872 — May 6, 1929

The sudden death on May 6, 1919, of Dr. Alvin Casey Beal came as a great shock to the University community and is deeply deplored by his colleagues of the University Faculty. Born in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, November 30, 1872, Dr. Beal was graduated from the University of Illinois in 1897 with the degree of B. S. A. During the next two years he was foreman in the Horticultural Department of the Illinois Experiment Station in which capacity he gained experience in the practical side of the profession which he later followed. During the academic year of 1899-'00 he engaged in graduate work at Cornell University toward his M. S. degree, completing his studies later and receiving the degree in 1903. From 1900 to 1908 he was instructor in Floriculture in the University of Illinois. In 1909 he came to Cornell for further study and received the degree of Ph.D. in 1911. He became Assistant at this University in 1910, Assistant Professor of Floriculture in 1911, and Professor of Floriculture in 1913.

Professor Beal was greatly interested in the historical aspects of his science. He conducted a course for advanced students on the history and literature of floriculture and ornamental horticulture, devoted time to studies in this field during a recent leave of absence spent in Europe, and was at the time of his death planning to make the results of these studies available in book form.

He was primarily a research worker and devoted years to a monographic study of the types and varieties of the sweet pea and of the botany, history and evolution of the gladiolus. He had also made similar studies of the rose and the iris and had accumulated a great amount of data on these plants. He was a recognized authority on these groups.

Dr. Beal loved flowers and spent much of his time in the gardens watching them develop, noting their habits and variations, and with the prescience of a true investigator seizing upon those qualities that go to the making of a superior variety. In his death, Floriculture has lost a zealous investigator, and members of the Faculty a loyal and faithful colleague.

Source: Facility Records, p. 1589 Adopted by the Trustees and Faculty of Cornell University June, Nineteen Hundred And Twenty-Nine