

William Ernest Blauvelt

July 2, 1903 — February 2, 1953

William Ernest Blauvelt, Professor of Entomology, and member of the Cornell Staff for twenty five years, passed away at his home on the west shore of Cayuga Lake on February 2, 1953. Though troubled by periods of ill health during recent years, his sudden passing was unexpected. He was born at Mt. Vernon, New York on July 2, 1903.

After graduation from the high school at Haverstraw, New York, he entered The College of Agriculture at Cornell and by 1926 had completed work for the Bachelor of Science degree. There followed two years as an assistant county agricultural agent in Orange and Niagara Counties. Returning to Cornell in 1928 as a graduate student, he spent four years working toward the Ph.D. degree and during a part of this time served as extension instructor in entomology. His doctorate was conferred in 1935; he remained on the staff of the Department of Entomology, and successively became assistant professor in 1935, associate professor in 1945, and professor in 1947. Professor Blauvelt was a pioneer and became a recognized leader in the long neglected field of insect control on ornamental crops. For many years he was assigned to extension work in this field and his services soon became invaluable to the important nursery and florist industries not only in New York but in all the United States and Canada. During these years as an extension specialist he devoted much of his personal time to research on methods of control, and investigations on the effectiveness of the many new materials that entered the field following the advent of DDT. In 1945 his assignment in the College of Agriculture was modified so that he might use a greater part of his time in research.

Professor Blauvelt's career as an investigator may justly be appraised as brilliant. His work invariably was planned and carried out according to the highest traditions of scientific research. With him there was never the quick rush to the press after a few preliminary tests. New methods or materials that appeared promising after laboratory trials always were given large scale tests in commercial greenhouses before recommendations were issued. He developed the use of selenium as a systemic material for the control of spider mites on roses, azobenzene for the same purpose, and metaldehyde for slug control. He was a leading investigator in the use of the newer phosphate systemics on florists' crops. He trained several students who followed him into the field of insect control on florists' crops. He was in constant touch with industrial research in the field of insecticide development and therefore had access to new materials as soon as they were available. Frequently industry came to him for advice on the development of new insecticides. But his work was by no means directed entirely toward the interests of the florists' and insecticide

industries. The home gardener, or the housewife with insect problems on a few potted plants were as welcome in his office, and received the same careful consideration as the large industries.

Although a specialist in florist crop insects he was deeply interested in the whole broad field of entomology. His information was so complete, and his memory so extraordinary that one often suspected he had read and remembered the entire literature of his science. His friendly and cooperative nature made this great store of information readily available not only to his immediate coworkers but to the many who kept in touch with him through correspondence.

During the war years, Professor Blauvelt gave less attention to the problems of flower growers and devoted the major portion of his time to extension work on the protection of Victory Gardens from noxious insects. This, he felt, was a more realistic use of his talents during the period of national emergency when the production of every possible ounce of food was a necessity.

Professor Blauvelt's noteworthy accomplishments brought recognition and honors from several sources. The Society of American Florists Award was his in 1949 as a result of his studies on the use of Parathion aerosols against greenhouse pests. For several years he was entomological consultant for the American Rose Society. He held honorary memberships in the National Chrysanthemum Society, the American Carnation Society, The New York State Flower Growers, and other amateur and professional florists' organizations. He was a member of Alpha Zeta, Sigma Xi, Epsilon Sigma Phi, the Entomological Society of America, and the American Association of Economic Entomologists.

Professor Blauvelt was held in highest esteem by his students, his coworkers in entomology, and his many friends in the industries he served so well. To all of them his passing was deeply regrettable.

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