

Arthur Leech

Local rose grower is one with poets

By Denise Romberg

Roses have long been symbolic plants, attracting careful and reverent attention from such as the poets. They have captured Arthur Leech's

careful and reverent attention too. Mr. Leech, 65, is supervisor and head grower at H.J. Mills Ltd., florists, of Richmond Hill. He has been growing roses for 47

Prior to starting with Mills in 1961, Leech was a rose grower at Bedford Park Floral Company, a firm which was located in Richmond Hill also.

At the main operation on Dunlop Street, a stroll through the greenhouses with Mr. Leech is quite delightful.

It is a stroll through a wonderland of fragrance and beauty, guided by a patient

> Spotlight on people

and knowledgeable scientist. "This is the Cara Mia, a red rose," He says as he points to a row filled with over 700 of these plants.

Leech tends 34 varieties of roses cona five-foot banana tree. sisting both of the Hybrid or standard sized, and sweetheart type. There are over 250,000

plants in all. Every week averages 15,000 blooms colored red, pink, orange, cream and white.

Pinching schedule From time to time he draws a tattered piece of paper from his pocket. This is the schedule for pinching, or cutting back the

On his daily rounds he checks to see the pinching is completed on time.

While concerned that the plants are watered, fed and insect free, Leech checks the temperatures of the greenhouse.

"During the winter, the temperatures can fall from lack of steam in the greenhouse," he explains. "One evening the temperatures fell four degrees and we had bushes that bloomed late.'

Just before you leave the greenhouse, to enter the selection and packaging areas, Leech displays his own pet project. In a square box, the size of a dining table, stands

This is actually the second banana tree he has grown, and it has just sprouted its first bunch of bananas.

"You can see, here," he points, "the beginning of the next tree. When this new one gets a little bigger, I'll have to cut the old one down, because the box isn't big enough to hold both of them."

Timing critical Being a rose grower can be quite

demanding, particularly at peak periods like Christmas and Easter. Leech must ensure the hundreds of

thousands of roses that will come into bloom at these times, are in fact ready to be cut. He allows himself 45 days from the time of pinching, until cutting begins.

Leech devotes his spare time to his membership in the International Order of Foresters, Richmond Hill 1314.

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He had brought his longstanding problem to the meeting in Bond Lake Arena Monday night between Richmond Hill Council and the ratepayers of Ward 5.

"Year after year, the water comes higher and higher," he said, "and a ditch is made across the road to carry the water away, but nobody ever cleans out the drain. If the ditch were clean the water could flow off."

Councillor William Corcoran reported that this was one of the most serious

drainage problems in the area. "Last year the town had planned to straighten out the outlet from the lake to Yonge Street. At present the lake drains through one culvert which is underneath a man's house. This year we are again including this work in our plans."

Promise? "Is that a promise?" asked a member of the audience but received no

Mayor David Schiller pointed out that the Metro Conservation Authority has the major jurisdiction over the program and has had its funds cut drastically by the provincial government. He also said that a report from the conservation authority is expected in the near future. Another ratepayer stated that the greatest problem

lies in the first 200 feet of the

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Waste must be disposed at a site licensed under the Environmental Protection Act. The tender is mainly for a twelve (12) month

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MONDAY, APRIL 28, 1975

Specifications, tender forms and envelopes may be obtained in person or by mail from the District Office in the West Building, 1201 Wilson Avenue, Downsview, Ontario, M3M 1J8 or Telephone Mr. J.E. Blair, District Supply Supervisor, 248-3383.

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