

PG Award for Excellence

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Bryce Farnsworth (right) receives the 2003 Prairie Garden Award for Excellence from Gary Platford, Co-chair of The Prairie Garden Committee (left).

Bryce Farnsworth Receives 2003 Prairie Garden Award for Excellence

by Linda Pearn, Secretary of The Prairie Garden Committee

Bryce Farnsworth is the fourth recipient of The Prairie Garden Award for Excellence. This is an annual award given in recognition of significant contribution to the advancement and/or promotion of horticulture on the Northern Great Plains.

Bryce received a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture from the North Dakota State University (NDSU). He has worked in the potato breeding program at NDSU for more than 25 years. During this time, he has worked closely with a number of scientific researchers in releasing 10 potato cultivars, including Russet Norkotah and Goldrush. He has been co-author on a number of publications with these scientists.

His efforts in research and service have not only benefited the NDSU potato breeding program and the citizens of North Dakota, they have furthered the potato industry in the United States.

He was recently awarded an Honorary Life Membership in the Potato Association of America (PAA). This award is only bestowed upon outstanding individuals who have made significant and lasting contributions to the potato industry of North America, and is the highest honour bestowed by the PAA.

Bryce is involved in coordinating botanical seed extraction, seedling growth and harvest, field planting and harvest, seed shipments to collaborators, and virus-indexing. He also aids in developing crosses among parents, data collection and summarization for the North Dakota Breeding Report and the North Central Regional Potato Variety Trials and he maintains genealogical data for thousands of North Dakota breeding clones.

He freely shares his experience with potatoes with many growers, technicians, graduate students and young assistant professors.

Recently, through the efforts of Bryce and a co-worker, Barb Laschkewitsch, NDSU was gifted an iris collection featuring hundreds of varieties by the Arthur Jensen family of Fargo. Varieties in the collection are being identified and will be replanted on the main campus as part of a permanent garden display.

Bryce is also an avid gardener and breeds daylilies and amaryllis. He has been a member and past president of the North Dakota State Horticultural Society as well as a member of the American Hemerocallis Society. Recently, he was the driving force (along with co-worker, Barb Laschkewitsch) behind NDSU acquiring part of a historic collection of daylilies from Geraldine Couturier. The NDSU Plant Science Department's historic American Hemerocallis Society Display Garden is one of the three largest in the world, as well as the only historic AHS Display Garden located at a university.

He has been an active member of the NDSU Harvest Bowl Committee since 1973. The Harvest Bowl is an annual event that recognizes outstanding agricultural producers and provides two student athletic scholarships. His contribution to Harvest Bowl has been the design and arrangement of the table centrepieces (typically 60-80) at the annual banquet.

As well, Bryce is a long-time collector of regional ceramics from the North Dakota area, and is interested in antiques. He is a charter member of the North Dakota Pottery Collector's Society and is on the Advisory Board of Schroeder's Antique Price Guide.