**Correctional Facility**

By Scott Yocina

**As** a brief history, the Wyoming Correctional Facility is a medium-security prison

in western New York. **It** is one of the dozen "cookie cutter" prisons of identical design to be stamped out in the 1960s to accommodate a burgeoning prison population.

The facility opened in 1964 with a capacity of550 inmates. **It** is now home to approximately 1,800 prisoners. In 1971 the Wyoming Correctional Facility was also the scene of the bloodiest prison riot in U.S. history. A four-day revolt ended in 40 people dead as a result of prisoners' protests over better living conditions, showers, education and vocational training.

Today the facility offers a full range of academic and vocational programs aimed at changing futures. One of the most successful, and the one with the longest waiting list, is the horticultural program headed by Tom Carlucci. This program has become one of the most popular educational/vocational training activities of the prison and has become great therapy for the inmates.

The Horticultural department consists of three large greenhouses with one housing a 4 ft. by 8 ft. ebb and flow system. This system incorporates Diatomite as the growing medium and General Hydroponics Flora products as the main plant food with Hygrozyme as an additive.

The long-term goal of the ebb and flow system is to offset the cost of buying produce from outside the prison and become more self-sufficient. Everything they grow in the greenhouse, they consume. Most of the plants they grow are green leaf, herbs, peppers, tomatoes, etc.

The teaching program consists of 18 inmates in the morning and 18 inmates in the afternoon. The classroom is all hands-on with everyone taking turns in all aspects of maintenance of the gardens from propagating to harvesting. As Mr. Carlucci States, "Some *of* the guys are not here *for* very long, and hydroponics gives them the Chance to see growth from seed to finish very quickly, much faster than soil." He goes on to say, "I keep their attention when they can see growth every day. "

Funding from the state capitol in Albany has been very supportive. It only took a week for funding to show up after their initial request. After the first hydroponic gardens were set up and running at the prison, they were inspected by the state. In Tom's words they were so receptive to the results that he predicts all horticulture programs in the state will have hydroponics systems installed. Long-term plans are to expand into aeroflow systems in the near future.

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