causes heavy losses to tomato growers throughout the Middle East, and the danger exists of its spreading to southern Europe as well.

For additional information, please get in touch with: Department of Press and Publications, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel. Tel. 02-882811.

UN TO ADOPT BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY KNOW-HOW FOR AFRICA

BEERSHEVA: The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is examining ways of applying the expertise of The Ben-Gurion University of the Negev's scientists in the search for solutions to the acute problems of drought- and famine-stricken Africa.

Two of the Program's senior officials, John A. Oliver, special representative of the administration, and Tim Rothermel, Director of the Division for Global and Inter-regional Projects, visited the Boyko Institute for Agriculture and Applied Biology of the University. They toured the Institute's experimental farming areas in the Negev and were particularly interested in the Institute's pioneering the use of brackish water for the cultivation of such crops as tomatoes, asparagus and wheat.

The two visitors also met with Professor Aryeh Issar of Ben-Gurion University's Blaustein Institute for Desert Research to discuss methods of prospecting underground desert water resources and efficient water harvesting for agricultural purposes as well as to examine the possibility of holding courses in these subjects at the University for African farming experts.

The above report based on an article which appeared in *Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 18, Fall 1986, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheva, Israel; by permission.

GEOTHERMAL WATERS WARM GREENHOUSES

MOSHAV PARAN, ISRAEL: In an experiment at a cooperative farm, Moshav Paran, in Israel's Arava Desert, farmers have been cutting energy costs dramatically by using warm underground waters in winter to heat their greenhouses. They have been growing melons on a five-hectare piece of land by heating their greenhouses with warm gound water extracted on the spot for irrigation and pumped through tubes to the greenhouses.

Because of Moshav Paran's success, scientists hope to expand the use of geothermic waters in the future. They will try to locate the presence of such warming waters in other parts of the country where it is feasible to grow crops and will work to improve the efficiency of the use of such heat.

For further information, please get in touch with Dr. Yeshaiyahu Segel, Volcani Agricultural Research Organisation, P.O.B. 6, Beit Dagan 20250, Israel. Tel. 03-980515.

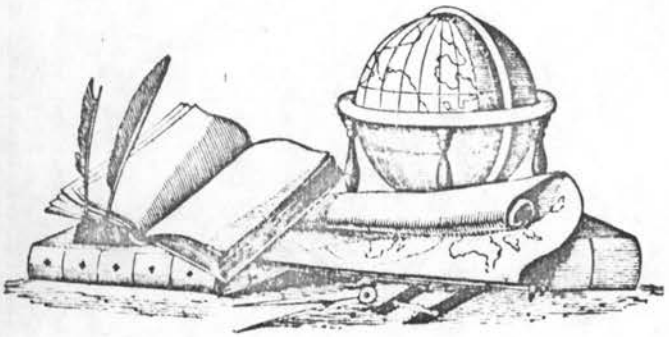
ENRICHED ARTIFICIAL SOIL

REHOVOT: A novel agricultural growth medium was developed at the Weizmann Institute by Mr. Avi Sade, manager of the Institute's experimental fields and hothouses, the Institute reports.

The growth medium is enriched vermiculite, which significantly accelerates plant development with little or no need for supplemental fertiliser. After being less than one year on the market, 90% of Israel's carnation nursery operators are already using the new product. In addition to agricultural and houseplant nurseries, farmers may also eventually benefit from this development; experiments have shown that planting in artificial media containing as little as one-third enriched vermiculite will result in a 45% increase in cucumber crops and a 30% increase in tomato crops.

Enriched vermiculite, originally developed by Mr. Sade at the Institute's Plant Genetics Department, is patented by the Yeda Research and Development Company which is manufacturing and marketing it on a large scale in Israel. ●

OUR CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE



RAPHAEL AGMON was born in Russia (1913) and has lived in Israel since before the proclamation of the State, i.e. since 1921. Following his studies at the Teachers Seminar in Israel and the Mikveh Israel Agricultural Scnool (1929/33), he helped found Kibbutz Tel Amal in 1934. From 1936 to 1939 he studied at the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Nancy in France from which he graduated as an