

## HYDROPONICS AND HONEY BEES . . .

(Continued from Previous Page)

are derived from the sale of plants and produce are put back into the facility. Two new fiberglass roofs were installed on the greenhouses recently, new seeds and nutrients must be purchased periodically, and supplies must be provided for Mike's most recent "pet project" - the apiaries, where his honey bees are housed.

The beekeeping project began in May of 1979, when Mike found that he yielded only nine melons out of a melon patch of 85 vines, because there were no bees to pollenate the vines. He also found that there are 96 necessity food plants, any of which might be grown here on Kwajalein, which are dependent on bee pollenization in order to produce fruits or vegetables. So, in order to increase his yields and diversify the kinds of fruits and vegetables he could grow, two years ago, Mike brought in a hive of about 20,000 honey bees. He now has six hives, with approximately 50,000 bees per hive. In addition to harvesting over 650 pounds of honey over the past two years, Mike has had a definite increase in the yield of his crops since bringing the bees in. He now has four hills of melon plants (with three to four plants per hill) which produce about thirteen melons per hill - a significant improvement over what he was getting prior to bringing the honey bees to Kwajalein.

In addition to his honey bee project, Mike has also been involved in several other community efforts, as well. For example, he is very enthusiastic about the breadfruit tree project, which was begun by Yvonne Sholar and the Yokwe Yuk Women's Club, and is now carried on by Louise Throop, with Mike's help. Also, each year, \$20 to \$50 worth of plants are donated by the Hydroponic Garden for sale at the annual Holiday Fair. Mike gives occasional lectures to elementary school students about beekeeping and hydroponics, and he also hopes to teach a class in Beekeeping this fall.

Late in 1975, the Hydroponic Garden began selling plants which are not available from Global Building and Grounds. Among these are cannalilies, caladium, asparagus fern, marigolds, dwarf citrus

trees, pumpkin cherry shrubs and papaya trees. Although not all these plants are available at all times, a periodic visit to the Hydroponic Garden is well worth the trip - and an extremely educational experience as well, for youngsters and adults alike. Mike also points out that anyone within the Kwajalein community who enjoys working with plants is welcome to help with the gardens whenever they wish to do so. Some extra help is always welcome! So next time you have a free Saturday or Sunday afternoon, make it a point to go out to the Hydroponic Garden and talk to Mike, maybe buy some plants for your garden or discuss any problems you're having with your own plants - Mike has a wealth of information about growing plants on Kwajalein. And while you're there, don't forget to pick up a jar of genuine "home-grown" Kwajalein honey!



HYDROPONIC CUCUMBER plants are shown here in their early growth stages. As the plants mature, they climb vertically on strings suspended between the rafters of the greenhouse and the ground. Controlled temperature and proper nutrients increase the yield of each plant.