

CUT ROSE PRODUCTION SCHEDULE FOR THE  
1968-69 SEASON

Since the name of the game is "Making a Profit" for California commercial rose growers, two important actions on his part can insure a reasonable degree of success in this endeavor.

First, an understanding of the year-around market demand for his product is essential. This information can be had by regular communication with sales outlet(s) and commission men as well as through honest exchange of information among producers.

Second, a production schedule should be developed by the grower to satisfy the needs of his particular sales outlet. Many California wholesale shippers service relatively limited areas of the country on a regular basis rather than dealing nationwide. Often this leads to peculiar marketing needs, the realization of which must be passed on to producers so that these needs can be met most profitably for all concerned.

The following cropping procedure is one which has been developed over the past 18 years. It should fit the majority of California rose growers needs with some slight modifications necessitated by climatic variations, but it is by no means "the only way."

Establishing workable production cycles is a never ending job. Actually, preparation for winter crops should begin in July. With this in mind a calendar of events for the 1968-69 year would be as follows:

July '68: (1) During the last half of the month, flowers cut from plants planted the previous spring should be cut so as to leave 1 or 2 good 5-leaflet leaves from the current growth on the plant. This practice is called cutting "up" or above the "hook." The "hook" is the joint where the current shoot arises from the older cane below.

(2) Older plants also may be cut in this manner. In addition some pinching of new shoots might be needed to increase the amount of foliage on the plants.

August '68: (3) Starting August 3 with slower developing varieties and ending August 7 with rapid developing ones, pinch any available shoots which will not produce a bloom with a stem 16" or more in length. This should be done on both old and young plants. From these pinches a minor crop develops in mid-September which when cut will provide pinchable shoots again for the Christmas crop pinch in October. If any appreciable number of pinches are made, inform your sales outlet at once so that promotions can be established for the extra flowers produced in September.

(4) August 26. Check sales outlook for the Labor Day weekend and the following week with your sales outlet. Due to the occurrence of the last summer holiday and the beginning of the school year flower sales are poor at this time. If the outlook is poor, pinch shoots which contain buds that would bloom during the low demand period. Here again, select short stemmed flowers for pinching.

September '68: (5) September 15-25. Harvest crop begun as suggested in #3 above. Double pinching for a Christmas crop must be started at this time; however, this is not a profitable operation and should be done only under special circumstances.

Cut above the "hook" (#1 above) on unpinched shoots of all plants from this period on through the fall.

October '68: (6) October 3-7. Pinch for a Thanksgiving Day crop. An increase of only 15-20% above a normal cut is suggested for Thanksgiving production.

(7) October 18-20. Pinch Red Garnet types for early Christmas harvest. If harvested December 12-15 and properly stored these flowers are perfectly satisfactory for holiday sales and a Valentine's Day come-back is highly probable.

(8) October 21-25. Institute the regular Christmas pinch starting with the slower and progressing to the more rapidly developing varieties. Remember, this is a national election year. Don't be surprised if flower sales are poor during the first week of November. This situation could influence the amount of

pinching done for Christmas. With the exception of the varieties Happiness and Tropicana, pinch all shoots on plants in houses scheduled for replanting after Christmas.

November '68: (9) Starting November 18 a small amount of daily pinching of short-stemmed flowering shoots should be done. Avoid pinching any shoots already pinched for Thanksgiving Day (see #6). Removal of short-stemmed blooms from the market by this means reduces the competition with the better grades and tends to hold a better price line.

Daily pinching can be continued to December 2 provided only large buds (4-5 days prior to bloom) are removed during the last week of the pinching period. Don't pinch out the Christmas crop!!!

(10) November 21-25. Harvest the Thanksgiving Day crop. During this time, November 22-23, check the development of the Christmas crop. A bud of rice grain size should be seen at the terminal. Adjust forcing or holding temperatures as needed and suggested in the September 1967 issue of Flower and Nursery Notes.

December '68: (11) The post-Thanksgiving Day week is always a poor sales period for cut flowers. This should be considered in determining the amount of daily pinching done as suggested in #9 above.

(12) December 12-15. Harvest Red Garnet type and store for Christmas only those flowers properly cut. Slightly open flowers should be offered for sale at once.

(13) December 18-19. The peak production of the Christmas crop should occur on these days.

(14) December 20-22. Pinching for Valentine's Day should be done at this time. The post-Christmas week and especially the period January 1-10 are usually poor sales periods for cut flowers. Selection of bud sizes which would develop into blooms during these periods should be the prime targets for Valentine's Day pinching. Pinching should be confined to the potentially shorter stemmed flowering shoots.

January '69: (15) Avoid pinching of flowering shoots this month. The market is usually excellent after January 10. Cut all shoots for full stem length by cutting below the hook as contrasted to the suggestion made in #1.

(16) Considering the replanting schedule, if a single-pinch crop is desired for Easter, the replanting must be completed by January 12.

(17) If a double-pinch crop (two pinches made consecutively on the shoots developing from the dormant plant) is desired for Mothers' Day replanting should be completed by January 15.

(18) January 15-16. A bud of rice grain size should be seen at the top of the shoots for Valentine's Day flowers.

February '69: (19) February 7-12. Harvest Valentine's Day crop.

(20) February 12-15. Pinching should be done for the Easter crop. These dates are the same for new (#16 above) and old plantings alike.

(21) February 18. First of the two pinches mentioned in #17 above should be made for the Mothers' Day crop.

March '69: (22) March 9. Checkpoint date for the presence of a rice grain size bud on the shoots of the Easter crop.

(23) March 20-22. Pinching period for the Mothers' Day crop. The second pinch of the schedule established for Mothers' Day in #17 and #21 above should be made at this time.

(24) March 30-31. Peak production days for the Easter crop.

(25) If the Easter crop is cut slightly earlier than indicated in #24 above, it is possible that some flowers produced from the regrowth of these cuts will be harvested for late Mothers' Day shipments. Weather conditions play a great part in determining what portion of the Easter return crop will flower in time for the Mothers' Day market. Rapidly developing

varieties such as Jack Frost can be made to produce flowers for both holidays.

April '69: (26) April 14. Checkpoint date for the presence of a rice grain size bud in the terminals of the Mothers' Day crop.

May '69: (27) May 4-5. Peak production dates for the Mothers' Day crop. Warn your sales outlets of potentially heavy production over the holiday weekend and through the following week.

(28) May 12-18. There should be a continuation of heavy rose production this week due to the bulk of the Easter come-back crop flowering at this time. The early week sales should be good but after May 15 the heavy production and reduced demand could cause a temporarily depressed market.

(29) May 12. Green pruning of older plants should be begun. The canes which have not had a pinched shoot for Mothers' Day on them should be selected for immediate pruning. Canes bearing ample leaf area should have the green pruning operation deferred until after the next crop of flowers in June. It is imperative that the combined Easter and Mothers' Day come-back crops be reduced, otherwise extreme chaos can be expected in the rose market after June 12, 1969.

June '69: (30) The rose market is notoriously poor during the last half of June. Should there be some reason why the combined crops of Easter and Mothers' Day are allowed to return at this time, be sure your sales outlet is notified three weeks or more in advance. There is always a chance some deals can be made, but under these conditions the grower should not expect miracles from his sales outlet. Take heed and prevent the chaos from developing by proper action in May!!!

On the following page a schematic picture of the rose cropping schedule is shown. As indicated previously, the dates are approximate and subject to change due to local climates and/or unseasonal weather conditions.

R. F. Hasek, Extension Floriculturist