

Fermace Injury to Rooted Cuttings

In the article entitled "Avoiding Disease Carry-Over on Carnation Cuttings," which appeared in Bulletin 4 of the New York State Flower Growers, Inc., it was suggested as step 9 in the disease-control program that the rooted cuttings be dipped, roots and all, in Fermate solution before they were potted or flatted up. We had used this treatment many times on the varieties available with no evidence of injury. Within the past few weeks however, two or three growers have reported severe root injury to many varieties when this treatment was employed. The reaction of different varieties varied greatly, ranging from a slight, temporary injury to death of the plants. Other growers have used the treatment on many varieties with no apparent injury. Just why injury has occurred only on some variety and under some conditions we do not know. Because of the risk involved, this practice of dipping the rooted cuttings should be discontinued until the problem is solved.

In contrast to the contradictory results obtained with the dipped rooted cuttings, treatment of the unrooted cuttings before sticking them into the sand (step 6), when used exactly as recommended has been consistently safe and effective. Growers who experienced root injury from dipped rooted cuttings are enthusiastic about the results obtained from dipping unrooted cuttings. The practice of dipping the unrooted cuttings before you put them into sand should therefore be continued.

Similar inconsistencies have developed with geranium-cutting treatments. Although tens of thousands of unrooted cuttings have been given the complete dip treatment with no apparent injury, some injury has been reported from dipping rooted cuttings. Here again we suggest that the complete dip of the rooted cuttings be used only in a trial way until we can determine the causes of the reported injury.

Professor A. W. Dimock
Department of Plant Pathology