

FORCING OF EASTER LILIES

Unlike last years crop the Ace and Nellie White lilies from Oregon and California are showing little or no signs of dormancy (lack of emergence). Thus, the crop should force with little difficulty. Since Easter falls on April 11, 1971, it is very important to carefully regulate the greenhouse phase of your lily crop. It is essential that the leaf counting technique be employed.

The leaf counting technique has as its basis the fact that the low temperature treatment establishes a fixed number of leaves per plant. This basic number can be determined by each forcer in his own greenhouse. By regulating the rate at which the leaves unfold, the forcer can schedule his crop to show visible buds at a specific date before Easter thereby insuring a timed crop. This target date for the 1971 Easter is March 1st. This

FORCING OF EASTER LILIES (con't)

is 35 days prior to the date of flowering. Forcers should use this date to establish their leaf unfolding rate.

The basic procedure to be used is as follows:

- Step 1 In the week of January 25, determine the number of leaves in your crop.
- Step 2 Select and mark a few representative plants and determine the number of leaves which have already unfolded.
- Step 3 Subtract the number unfolded from the total number of leaves (1 - 2).
- Step 4 Determine the number of days remaining to March 1st.
- Step 5 Divide the number of leaves remaining to be unfolded (3) by the number of days to March 1st (4). This will give the basic unfolding rate needed.
- Step 6 At weekly intervals determine the actual rate of unfolding and repeat steps 2 to 5.

If there is need for assistance contact your local extension agent.