

THE PLUME MOTH ON GERANIUMS by Professor W. D. Whitcomb

Geranium cuttings from the Pacific Coast may be damaged by the small green larvae of a plume moth. This small moth is recognized by the gray or brown wings which are slit into feather-like sections. The larvae feed on buds, flowers and young growing tips causing them to be ragged and distorted.

In New Jersey spraying with the usual insecticides such as Sevin and malathion have not been effective. However, satisfactory protection has been obtained by spraying with Zectran and by spraying or bombing (aerosol) with Vapona (DDVP). Zectran is also known to control slugs and snails well.

It is suggested that all shipments of geranium cuttings from the West Coast be sprayed or bombed soon after potting - and the treatment repeated in 3 to 5 days to prevent this pest from becoming established.

USE VAPONA AT 50° (Edco News Letter, Vol. 14, No. 2, Sept. 1963)

"As previously reported Vapona-Vapor bombs can be effectively used at temperatures lower than any other phosphate, and lower than any greenhouse bomb except the DDT formulation. This was based on work at Rutgers University and the USDA Station at Beltsville, Md.

Dr. F. F. Smith of the Beltsville Station now tells us of detailed studies which show that the kill of both mites and insects with Vapona-Vapor is not significantly different whether the greenhouse temperature is 50°, 60°, or 70°F. This is a tremendous advantage in that effective results can be obtained with Vapona-Vapor without raising the temperature above the normal growing range of most crops with the consequent softening of growth and upsetting of schedules.

This effectiveness of Vapona at temperatures at least as low as 50° is the result of the higher volatility of Vapona as compared to the other insecticides and miticides which are available in bombs at this time. It will undoubtedly mean that more Vapona-Vapor will be used in the greenhouse, and that Vapona spray will be more widely used in the nursery and other outdoor plantings, particularly in cool weather."