

# *Illinois State Florists' Association*



# BULLETIN

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## PELARGONIUM RUST A New Geranium Disease

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On August 25, 1967, some rust-infected geranium specimens obtained from a home-owner were sent in to us from West Chazy, N. Y. This proved to be a true fungus rust disease and was easily established on test plants held under quarantine conditions, using spores taken from the original specimens. An attempt to determine the source of the diseased plants brought only the information that they were purchased at a supermarket. Shortly after our discovery of the disease, its presence in the Monterey Bay area of California was officially reported by the California Department of Agriculture, and it was recently mentioned in the January 18 issue of *The Florists Review* (p. 75). Relatively unheard of until a few years ago, pelargonium rust has spread with astonishing rapidity throughout the European continent, New Zealand, Australia and the Hawaiian Islands, but had never been reported in the continental United States until last year.

Pelargonium rust is a typical rust, similar to snapdragon rust, producing brown, powdery, spore pustules on leaves, petioles and stems. Yellowish, chlorotic areas develop about the infections and infected leaves turn yellow, dry up, and drop prematurely. Not only are the brown, dusty spots objectionable, but loss of leaves makes the plants unsightly. A heavy infection could result in serious financial loss to the grower.

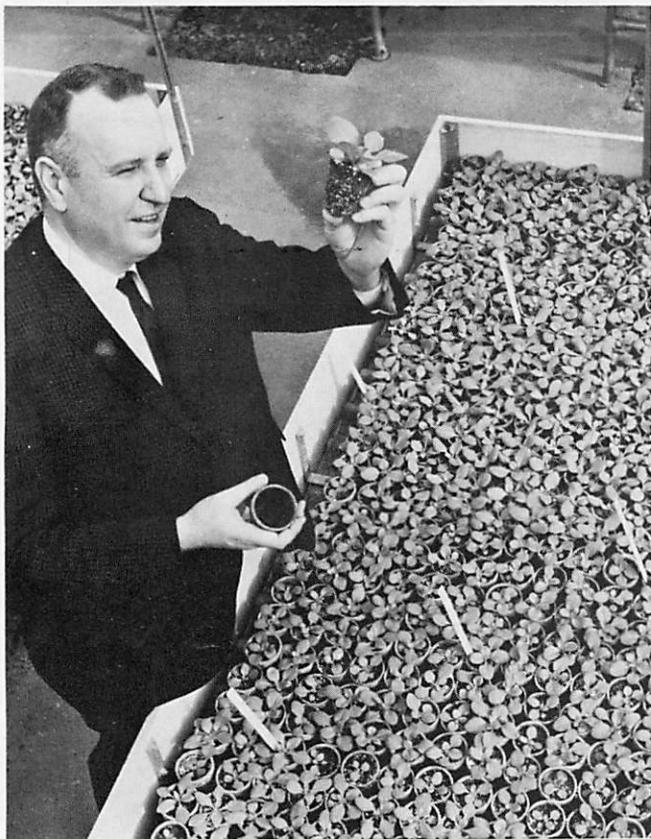
Very limited tests indicate that if there is a supply

of spore inoculum, infection of susceptible plants may occur very readily under conditions favoring moisture on the plant tissues. Spores of the fungus are effectively spread by splashed water but they may also be disseminated by air currents in the absence of any splashing. A small source of infection thus may endanger plants at considerable distances, not just those in the immediate vicinity.

Since this disease is potentially very serious the primary control emphasis should be on absolute exclusion. Incoming plants, particularly from areas where the disease is known to be present in the field, should be examined very carefully and rejected if the true rust disease is found. If a single plant in a shipment is definitely infected, the odds are very high that many other plants have incipient infections that have not yet produced symptoms.

If the disease is already established in a greenhouse before being discovered, the infected plants should be destroyed and the remaining plants thoroughly sprayed at weekly intervals with a good rust-control fungicide. Treatment should be continued until it is certain that no further rust infections are present. We have not been able to test fungicides specifically for pelargonium rust, but ferbam, zineb or maneb materials should be fully effective if applied thoroughly and with sufficient wetting agent to insure coverage of the hairy geranium leaves.

# ISFA FALL CONFERENCE and TRADE FAIR set for October 4-6



**MARVIN CARBONNEAU**

University of Illinois Extension Floriculturalists

**It's Official!!!** President Walton Maton has just announced the appointment of Marvin Carbonneau of the University of Illinois to serve as the Tour and Program chairman for the forthcoming Fall Growers conference.

Plans are now underway for a well rounded program with a series of outstanding speakers and bus tour of local greenhouses. Further details will be announced as Mr. Carbonneau completes his plans.

The Fall conference and Trade Fair is officially scheduled for October 4-6 at the Pheasant Run Lodge, located in St. Charles, Illinois. Suppliers and Tradesmen interested in exhibiting in the Trade Fair may direct their inquiries for space to the ISFA Secretary Art Gasior.

President Maton will announce further committee appointments for this conference as they are made. The success of a conference is dependent upon a good program and a series of planned activities. Marv Carbonneau has assured the ISFA members of a well rounded program "... something for everybody."

## THE GERANIUM

Geraniums are a very special flower crop. Back when good benchmark information was available, in 1959, almost two of every three Pennsylvania flower producers grew and sold geraniums. This amounted to an average 6000 geraniums per grower worth about \$2700 wholesale. The "price" of geraniums, then, was 44 cents, on the average.

The Commonwealth ranked second, nationally, behind New York. The geranium was worth some \$1.7 million, at wholesale, representing eight percent of total flower sales of all kinds. Also, geraniums were about equal to all sales of bedding plants! Or, roughly equal to combined poinsettia and azalea sales.

Most important, during the 1949-59 period the value of geraniums virtually tripled. No other flower type had shown a greater rate of increase in Pennsylvania! Undoubtedly it is pushing to even greater achievements since 1959, due to the sharply higher economic growth resulting in significantly higher incomes, and, hence higher demand.

### Recent Geranium Prices

Because prices are somewhat difficult to determine, and, because prices are vital in every geranium grower's profit picture, the following, most recent, surveying of price conditions is presented:

Prices of 4" Geraniums

Area-Occasion	Wholesale		Retail	
	Average	Range	Average	Range
Tri-County Florist Meeting, Allentown, April 3, 1967	47.7¢	45-50¢	80.7¢	75-87¢
Plymouth Meeting, Geranium Clinic, Nov. 8, 1967	49.3¢	40-60¢	78¢	.65-1.00
Wilkes-Barre-Scranton Greenhouse Clinic, Nov. 14, 1967	47.8¢	40-60¢	69.2¢	50-85¢

*Courtesy of The Pennsylvania State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating.*

## Short Takes

*Jim Boodley*

**Here's one from Geiger News** that is worth passing on. "We know of one good grower who sells his red geraniums in white 4" LP plastic pots, and his pink varieties in green pots of the same type. This separates the varieties even when the geraniums are not showing color, saves time, and prevents embarrassing mistakes. More of the LP pots are being used every year. If you have not used them we suggest that you try them as soon as you can.

"Some growers prefer the 4½" LP pot for geraniums, as it holds more soil, yet takes up no more room than a 4" pot".