

Those Wonderful Weeds

Herb Forbach, Jr.
Forbach's Flower Shop
Buffalo, New York

THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE VALUE OF CULTURED GERANIUM STOCK PLANTS FOR A SMALL RETAIL FLORIST.

PROCEDURE—Cultured rooted cuttings were ordered for mid September delivery. Although they looked anemic and slightly yellow, each cutting was planted in a 6" new pot in sterilized soil upon arrival September 20th. Each pot was connected to an automatic watering system, placed on new black mulching plastic and given 2 thorough waterings immediately.

Most of the original leaves completely yellowed and were picked off in the following 2 weeks, leaving the newest, topmost small leaves on a 5" stem. During this time they were never allowed to completely dry out but were 'run on the dry side'. The end of the third week fertilization started with 6 oz.-20-20-20 per 2 gallon thru a hozon. Thereafter the plants were fed 8 oz.-20-20-20 every fourth week and potassium nitrate, 12 oz. per 2 gallon every second week.

The 248 stock plants took up 180 sq. ft. from September 20th to December 1st when they were staked on 30" bamboo; then spaced on a 280 sq. ft. (5' x8') bench and carried at 65°F. Superfluous foliage was striped approximately every 10-14 days and side shoots pinched when 5" long. Main terminals on every plant were not pinched. First terminals off side shoots were taken January 7th, propagated in 50% peat, 50% perlite in 2 1/4" jiffy strips 70° bottom heat, 65° air temperature. Fourteen to sixteen days after taking the cuttings, rooting was vigorous and the 2 1/4" jiffies were potted in 4" pots in a mixture of 1/4 peat, 1/4 perlite, 1/2 soil with superphosphate added. The staked stock plants were now 30"-32" tall and were given one third

more room to 370 sq. ft. Temperature lowered slightly to 60-62° (night), 70-75° (day). Small propagations were taken in late January and early February off side terminals and potted in 4's when rooted.

February 15th, stock plants carried at 58-60° nights to give them more substance. Three hundred rooted in 2 1/4's were sold at this time at 15c each to avoid too rapid and early build up of large plants. February 28th, large quantity of terminals and leaf buds off side shoots were taken. These were potted, when rooted in 4's and 3 1/2's. Earlier propagations were also topped at this time.



Figure 2. Geranium var. Charlotte plants—propagated February 28 as 3 inch tip cuttings. Rooted in 2 1/4 inch Jiffy pots and potted in 3 1/2 inch pots March 28.

In early March, the stock was 36-42" tall. All terminals were removed from main and lateral stems. This produced approximately 750 cuttings and gave the stalks a chance to develop started leaf buds at every node down the stem. It should be mentioned here, that along with lower foliage stripping, all flower buds were removed every 10-14 days to prevent petals falling and causing botrytis. Stock was sprayed monthly with a malathion, captan, karathane combination along with Dibrom 8 vaporization every 10-14 days.

March 20-21, the stock plants were trimmed down to 10" stubs. Each main stalk produced approximately 9 cuttings. These were rooted in sterilized soil in 3" jiffy strips, for 3 for \$1.00 sales May 25th. One third of this lot proved too large for 3" sales so they were firmed up in 3 1/2" pots May 8th and mostly wholesaled at \$5.00 per dozen.



Figure 1. Geranium var. Charlotte plants—propagated January 8—as 3 inch cuttings.

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Figure 3. Geranium var. Charlotte plants—propagated March 9 as 3 inch tip cuttings. Rooted in 2 1/4 inch Jiffy pots.

April 2nd, all stock plants were cut down to 3"-4". Coarse stem sections with 1-2 small leaf buds were stuck in 2 1/4" jiffy strips. These were potted in 3" pots the end of April and many made the 3 for \$1.00 grade the end of May, the rest were sold for 25c each or grown on for June sales.

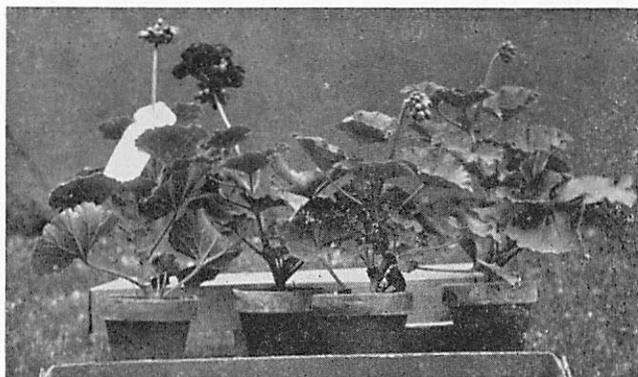


Figure 4. Geranium var. Charlotte plants—propagated March 20 as 3 inch tip cuttings.

SUMMARY—Approximately 21 cuttings produced per stock plant. One quarter produced stocky 4's (good 5"), one half produced 3 1/2" (good 4") and the remaining one quarter produced 3". Loss was approximately 2% from stock plants to finishing pot.

Total saleable plants approximately 5200 plus 248 saleable 6" stock plants in bloom for Decoration Day.

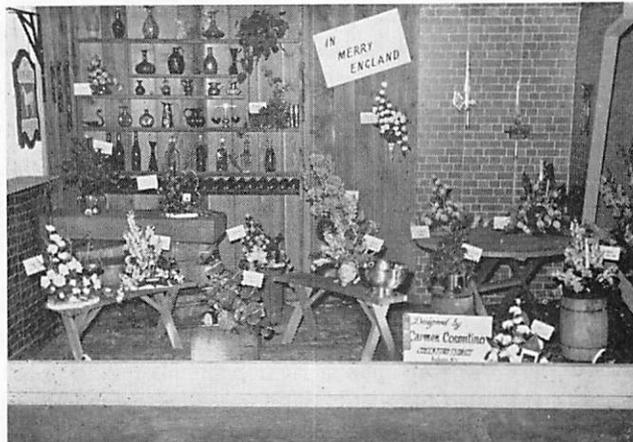


Figure 5. The author and Herb Sr. 'look the crop over.'

CONCLUSION—At least .15c per 2 1/4" rooted geraniums from cultured stock delivered March 1st and April 1st, it is debatable whether growing stock plants for 5200 finished pots is economically feasible.

1964 State Exposition

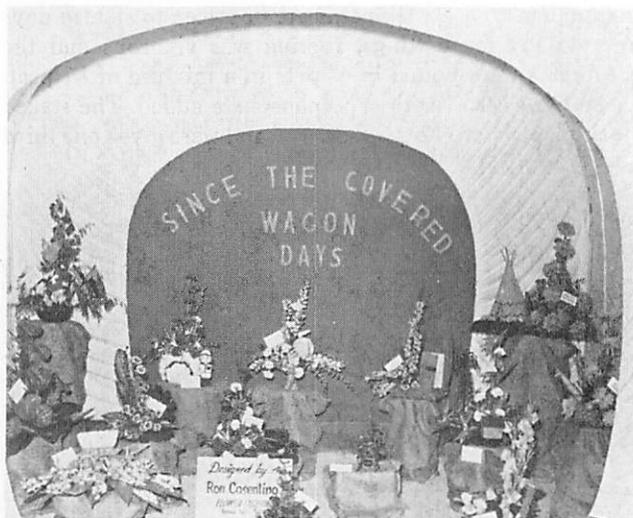
Joe Mulhauser, Chairman of your State Exposition Committee, reported an excellent Show by all the participating florists.



The First Place Award was given to Carmen Cosentino, Cosentino Florist, Auburn, N. Y.



Second Place was awarded to James Coleman, Coleman Florist, Inc., Syracuse, N. Y.



Ron Cosentino, Flower Fashions, Seneca Falls, N. Y., was awarded Third Place.

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President's Message

Again, I welcome this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the members of this organization for their faith in me in asking that I once again give the Flower Growers what little and limited abilities I may have.

As your president, I do wish to thank all of you and especially the board of directors and the staff at Cornell for the fine cooperation and effort you have given. It has made a real task for me, a pleasure and comfort.

In the coming year we may look ahead to even better achievement. There is much left to be done and only through an organization such as the Flower Growers can many of these goals become realistic.

Again, may I personally wish you all the best in '65 and may our efforts be fruitful. Thanks again for the friendly times in the past and we will look forward to seeing you in the coming year.

Phil Allen

Membership for Stimming

William Stimming, best known to all of us as "Bill" was presented with an honorable membership for life in New York State Flower Grower's Inc. at our Saratoga "Mum School."

Bill is widely known in the trade locally, state and nation wide. He has given much time to his field of endeavors. Best known to us as an organizer and first president of the Flower Growers, he has steadfastly given much of his time and effort to the Flower Growers and many other worthwhile activities.

Bill was born and is presently living in Newark Valley, N. Y. where he probably is best known for his forced bulb production over the years. Recently selling his operation Bill plans to slow down a bit, but always a doer—we shall see much of him.

Congratulations to you Bill from all of us—and many, many thanks for all you have done.

P. A.



Bill Stimming accepting Honorable Membership and congratulations from Philip Allen, President of the New York State Flower Growers.

Short Takes

Jim Boodley

Seed starting medium

Growers who have had trouble trying to find a seed starting medium or mixture that works may wish to try the one below. Developed through research at Cornell this "peat-lite" mix really works. The mix is made up of equal parts by volume of moist sphagnum peat moss and vermiculite. The fine size #4 vermiculite is preferred to the #2 if it is available. Clean sphagnum peat moss right from the bale should be used.

For trial purposes, and there is still plenty of time to see how it works before the bedding plant season starts, mix one bushel of sphagnum peat moss and one bushel of #4 vermiculite. If the peat moss is very dry add one to two gallons of warm water.

Research has shown that some fertilizer must be added to get seedlings off to a fast start. To the two bushels of media add dolomitic limestone, 10 tablespoonsful; 20 percent powdered superphosphate, 8 tablespoonsful; and ammonium nitrate, 4 tablespoonsful. These are LEVEL TABLESPOONSFUL. Mix them in thoroughly and uniformly. Seed then may be sown directly in the media. When seedlings are ready for transplanting, allow the media to dry thoroughly, but not to the point where wilting occurs. Seedlings will transplant easily from the dry media with few roots being lost.

The above seeding mix has shown outstanding promise for all bedding plant types grown from seed.

Cut Flower Survey

Growers of carnations, chrysanthemums, roses, and gladioli in New York will soon be contacted in the annual survey of cut flower production, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced. Growers of these four flowers will receive questionnaires in January and are asked to complete and return them promptly to the Crop Reporting Service, USDA, in Albany. Individual reports are confidential and will be used only in developing State totals.

The cut flower survey will include growers in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina for the first time in addition to five States already in the program—New York, Illinois, Florida, Colorado, and California. These 11 States will account for nearly 77 percent of the total United States production of the four cut flowers.

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