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Calculating Pansy Production Costs

Brian E. Whipker
Department of Horticultural Science

Profitable production of pansies is dependent upon the knowledge and control of production costs. Growers who understand production costs will be better prepared to make decisions on the optimal number of plants to produce and to help establish prices. The costs presented here should be useful to current growers who wish to compare their own production expenses and for potential growers in determining whether to begin growing fall pansies. The data was collected from a North Carolina firm that specializes in producing high quality pansy plants for the landscape and retail garden center market. Costs are calculated for the 2003 growing year and compare the production of deep 1801 and deep 606 cell pack flats.

Costs: Variable versus Fixed. Costs can be categorized as either variable or fixed. Variable Costs, also called direct costs, are costs that are incurred

directly when growing a plant. Variable costs items include the pots, plants, root substrate, chemicals, and hourly labor used to grow the crop. These items' costs are easily allocated to a specific crop because the materials used to produce the crop and production practices followed are known. The variable costs for an 1801 flat were \$2.04 (Table 1) and \$3.22 for a 606 flat (Table 2).

The primary reason for the \$1.18 higher costs with the 606 flat was because twice as many plugs were used.

The cost of the pansy plugs were the single highest variable costs item, representing 45% of the variable costs of the 1801 flat and 57% of a 606 flat. The flat, insert, label, and substrate are the next highest expense at \$0.83 or 41% of the variable costs for an 1801 and \$0.97 or 30% for a 606 flat. Transplant labor was more expensive with



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