

Carnations in Australia

by
F. R. Meere

The pre-war growing of flowers was limited to a few isolated growers. The demand was limited and the prices not satisfying. The influx of the American troops during the war years gave the industry its initial impetus. Australians, with this American influence, began to use flowers much more freely. The industry quickly gathered momentum after the war and today is solidly established.

Most of the commercial flowers are grown on small farms within 40 miles of Sydney and Melbourne. The main factor

causing this is the proximity and transportation to the markets, which are situated right in the centre of these two cities.

All large commercial growers produce their crops in the open. Very few glass houses are in use. The growing practices have resulted from the normal good farming practices coupled with the "trial and error system"--each grower for the most part becoming self-taught. Our Agricultural Departments have not yet been geared for the scientific study and development of the flower industry.

Practically all marketing is conducted at the City Markets at either Sydney or Melbourne. These markets open at 7 a.m. and terminate about 10 a.m. Growers either rent a stall and sell their own or sell through an agent at 15 percent commission. With no commercial storage in operation prices obtained show a wide variation--from very cheap to very expensive depending on supply and demand.

The most common carnation seen in the florists shops is the Frank Aldritt--pink with flower 2½", stem 15" to 18". It is a prolific cropper. Normally it is not

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staked. No doubt the Sim variety will be common in a few years, but so far I am one of the very few who have it--a considerable advantage. I have it in Pink, White and Red. The above is a brief history of the Flower Industry in Australia up to the present time.

Ed. note: F. R. Meere, 55 Dolans Road, Cronulla, N.S.W., Australia, is a commercial grower of carnations. The above is a part of a letter recently received from him.

*Your editor,
W.D. Holley*

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