

Besemer 86

STABY

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If you have any questions regarding the Foundation, please contact Ted Kubota Jr. (408) 633-4795. ##

CHECKLIST FOR POSTHARVEST HANDLING  
(based on a talk by Dr. Michael S. Reid)

Have you recently reviewed your situation on handling flowers and potted plants? Here's some important factors to evaluate:-

1. GROWTH - are you doing everything possible (water, fertilizer, temperature, etc.) to grow the best and strongest product for transport?
2. MATURITY - are you harvesting (or preparing for market) your product at that "perfect" stage, not "too green" and not "too ripe"?
3. DISEASE AND PESTS - are you doing all that you can to control diseases, insects, mites, snails, weeds, nematodes, etc. during the production stage? Putting injured or diseased product into sleeves and containers for transport is like asking for failure!
4. PACKAGING - are your materials and containers adequate for the job or did you buy cheap stuff to save a buck? Packaging should protect the product, fit the transport situation, allow proper ventilation and maintain product temperature.
5. TEMPERATURE - were they cooked, frozen, wilted or rotten when your products arrived at your buyer's door? The best quality products can be ruined if proper temperature is not maintained--all the way from harvest to consumer.
6. LOADING of boxes in temperature - controlled trucks - if not loaded properly, product does not receive cool air or is crushed in transit. Vibration, weak wet boxes, freezing or overheating are common problems on trucks--problems that can be avoided.
7. ETHYLENE is a gas produced naturally by many floral products. It is a good chemical for ripening fruit and setting flowers on bromeliads but a very damaging chemical on other products, especially on carnations, snapdragons, and many kinds of blooming potted plants. A spray of "STS" (silver thiosulfate) after harvest or before packaging plus proper temperature management will eliminate ethylene injury.
8. FINALLY, if you have evaluated these factors once, do it again. If you doubt any of these, call your farm advisor! ##