

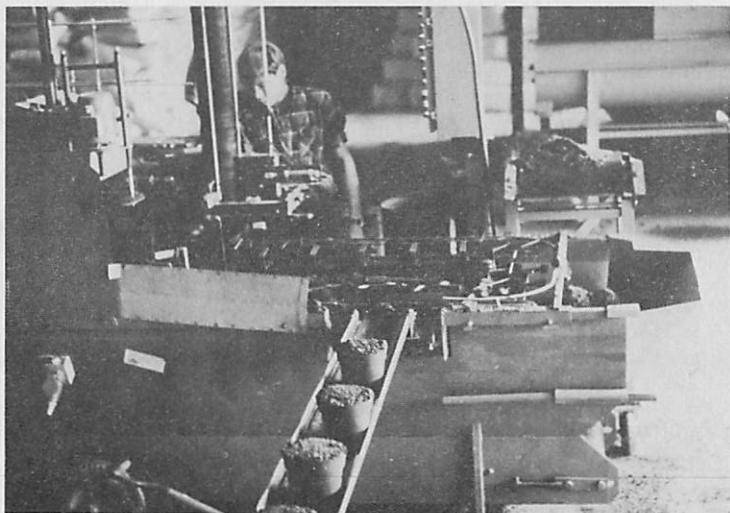
## CONVEYORS CAN BE A GREAT LABOR SAVING DEVICE IN THE GREENHOUSE

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As energy expenses have somewhat stabilized the past couple of years, labor is the largest cost in the greenhouse. Approximately 30-40% of production costs are charged to labor. Therefore, it would seem only rational that to cut this cost would produce the greatest savings. Use of labor saving devices will make your operation more efficient and productive.

Crop culture includes the steps of filling pots, panning the crop, growing it, then finally shipping it out. All this handling costs time and money. Pot moving conveyor belts could substantially reduce costs although this type of equipment is expensive.

Basically, two types of conveyor belts are utilized by greenhouse ranges. The first type is the stationary belt that is not portable. This belt moves pots from the pot filling machine to the potting area and later directly into the greenhouse (figure 1). These belts usually are installed on one side of a range and deliver the pots to the growing



*Figure 1--Conveyors can be a great labor-saving device in the greenhouse.*

bench. The second type of conveyor belt is the mobile belt which is portable, and can be folded and transported to wherever it is needed. These belts are placed where the stationary belt ended, moving pots down aisles to fill up benches (figure 2). This equipment can also be used to transport the finished product to the headhouse for order collection or shipping.

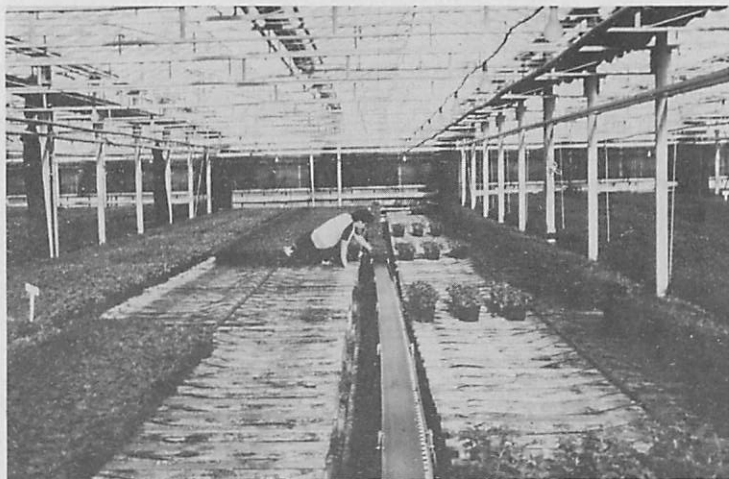


Figure 2--Conveyors can be a great labor-saving device in the greenhouse.

Generally, the mobile belts are made of PVC which are 6 or 10" wide. The mobile belts are made in 10 and 20 foot sections. A 6" wide 10 foot long unit costs \$730, while a 20 foot section costs \$1,100 and a series of ten 10 foot sections (100 feet) around \$7,300 (1). Permanent belts, 100 feet long, cost approximately \$4,600 (2).

Although the initial investment is high, the conveyor belts can transport pots, flats, boxes or most anything else needed in the greenhouse operation. They should be considered as an important component for reducing labor.

#### LITERATURE CITED

1. Ball, Vic. 1982. Blueprint for Major Labor Saving. *Grower Talks.* Sept. pp. 26-30.
2. Ball, Vic. 1982. Pot-Moving Belts. *Grower Talks.* Sept. pp. 31-32.