



COLORADO FLOWER GROWERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.

IN COOPERATION WITH COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Cut Flower Production in Europe and the Mediterranean

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The period between September 1969 and April 1970 was spent in travel through various Northern European countries with most of the time spent in Sardinia and Israel. A 14-day side trip was taken to the Canary Islands and South Africa. This is one of a series concerning impressions of the trip. Bulletin 241 contained impressions of Israel.

General

Flower production in Europe and southern regions around the Mediterranean is influenced by two factors: 1) the major cut flower markets are in the highly developed, industrialized nations, and 2) these nations are largely north of 50° latitude, with very low light during the winter. As flowers can be produced outdoors, with minimum capital investment in the coastal regions, it is economical to ship flowers to the north during the winter. However, import restrictions and higher light during the summer effectively limit southern production to about 6 months. Flower production in the south is increasing, and I gained the impression that cut flower growing in the north, particularly carnations, is gradually decreasing. Despite fairly elaborate environmental control in the north, the low radiation during the winter requires low temperatures, predisposing standard carnations to splitting and malformation, or weak stems if the temperature is raised. On the other hand, outdoor production also results in a quality that we in Colorado would consider unacceptable.

There appears to be a move in the industry, particularly larger operations, to shift major production further south to Sicily, Southern Italy, Israel, and possibly Kenya. In the traditional carnation areas, south coast of France and Northern Italy, cultural

procedures for the majority do not appear to have changed significantly in the last 20 years, with minimum structures, little or no heat, and high labor input. On a 6 month season, the investment available to produce high quality flowers is limited. The technological status of the industry seems to decrease as one goes south.