

## Direct Benching of Rooted Carnation Cuttings

Those who attended the College Day session for growers at Colorado A & M saw some outstanding carnations that were benched directly from sand on May 18, June 15 and July 15. After seeing the performance of these plants we are certain that this practice is going to help make a part of your job easier.

Space that would be used for growing young plants is saved for flower production. Considerably less labor is involved in producing the young plants. Probably less than one-fourth the labor is required for the actual benching operation. In benching directly from the propagating medium, the plants have less opportunity for a check in growth, less chance for disease infection, break more freely and grow faster. On the other side of the ledger, some production might be sacrificed but this is doubtful. We are certain that the production can be timed more accurately.

A few early results of this direct benching practice will serve to illustrate its advantages. Crowley's Pink Sim and White Sim carnations benched as rooted cuttings in sterilized soil May 18, and pinched high June 15, are cutting their first crop (five flowers) in September and October. They have an average of 15-16 potential flowering breaks per plant already cleared for the second crop which should flower from March through May 15. The spacing used is three plants to the square foot. These cuttings were benched after Mother's Day and they should be out after next Mother's Day or they already will be cut down for a third crop.

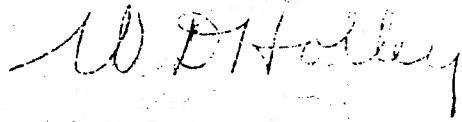
Cuttings of the variety Miller's Yellow benched May 18 and pinched June 15 now have an average of eight breaks per plant, most of which are beginning to stretch for flowering. We plan to cut each flower at its origin, thereby letting more light into those breaks remaining. If we cut only the eight flowers per plant, we will have 24 flowers per square foot and in something less than a year's time.

The greatest place for direct benching of cuttings probably will be in mid-season planting, i.e., from May 15 to July 1. About one month is required before the

plants are sufficiently established for pinching. Possibly some varieties should have six weeks time. Cuttings benched July 1, would not be pinched until August 1, so the first crop would come in December and January, but the second crop would be mostly in May and June, with most of it too late for Mother's Day. For latest plantings, pinched transplants would fit a winter and spring production schedule better.

There are several cropping systems into which direct-benched rooted cuttings may fit. An early fall planting with Easter to Mother's Day first crop, August second crop and midwinter third crop is a distinct possibility. In any system we should try to avoid late May, June and July flowering as much as possible. At that time the days are long and the light intensity is high so there are usually more flowers than are needed. Much should come from direct benching practices that will save labor and make carnation growing more exact.

Your editor,



COLORADO STATE FLOWER GROWERS ASSOCIATION  
OFFICE OF EDITOR  
W. D. HOLLEY  
COLORADO A & M COLLEGE  
Fort Collins, Colorado

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