

Effect of the Stage of Opening at Harvest

A test was designed to provide information on the effect of stage of opening at harvest on keeping life. Does an open flower left on the plant suffer a reduction in keeping potential over a period of time? During the summer months 50 flowers were marked the day after a normal opening so that all flowers were known to be one day old. Additionally, 10 buds in an advanced stage of opening were selected and harvested with the intent that these advanced buds were one day from a normal opening stage when harvested. Ten of the marked flowers also were harvested on this initial day with an additional 10 of the marked flowers being harvested each additional day for three days. Similar tests were conducted during the winter months.

Flowers left on the plant for an additional two and three days suffered a 1.8 and 2.1 day reduction in keeping life (Fig. 1). Stage of opening at harvest is probably a major factor in variability of potential keeping life. Results of the test conducted in the summer clearly showed a reduction in the keeping life when flowers were left open on the plant. A harvest schedule of every other day is imperative in the warm months; a daily harvest schedule would be better. Subsequent tests conducted in winter showed no reduction in keeping life suggesting cutting practices are not as critical in the winter.

Variability occurred between advanced bud treatments in tests not reported here. Cutting prior to opening can be detrimental to keeping life if the proper handling is not practiced. HQC alone is not an effective opening solution.