

FALL MUMS

SUGGESTIONS FOR REDUCING PRODUCTION COSTS

By Mark Arena, Clemson University

Fall mum crop profit margins are continually shrinking and growers are continually looking for ways to reduce their production costs. One of the more costly tasks associated with producing a mum is pinching. Pinching has long been a common practice in order to produce a well-branched mum. However, over the years there have been many debates on whether or not this practice is necessary for producing a quality plant. Creating a "no-pinch" mum had been one of the objectives plant breeders pursued in order to reduce production costs. Today, there are several mum varieties marketed as "no-pinch". As this trend continues, growers need to take advantage of these varieties in an effort to maintain profit margins.

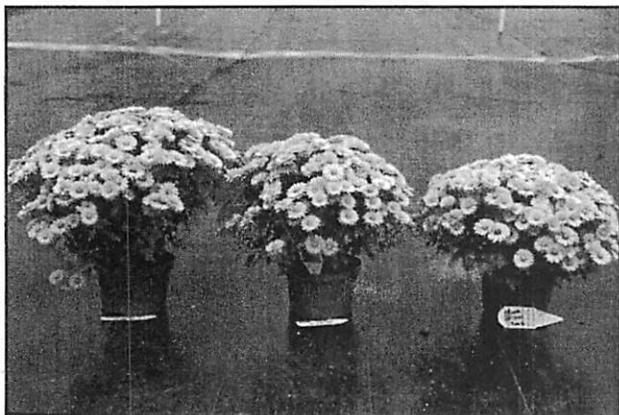
For the past two years at Baucom's Nursery in Summerville, S.C., several Yoder mums have been evaluated to determine if pinching is required. The following four varieties; Helen, Sandy, Linda, and, Debonair, have produced consistent results throughout this trial and may be varieties worth trying as no-pinch mums. They were grown from unrooted vegetative cuttings that were stuck on week twenty-four in eight inch pots, three plants per pot, no pinch, no Florel nor any other type of plant growth regulator, amended bark mix, spaced 18"oc, and later top dressed with triple fourteen. These four mums were then compared side-by-side to other mums treated with either no-pinch and one application of Florel (500PPM), or one-pinch followed by one application of Florel (500PPM) and one foliar spray of Bonzi (25PPM). These comparisons were made by six growers. Based on rating cards the

growers made the following conclusive observations: 1) All no-pinch mums were of salable quality, 2) No-pinch mums with one application of Florel were also of salable quality except for Helen, (Helen became open and leggy and produced a floppy appearance), and 3) Mums that were manually pinched followed by one application of Florel and one application of Bonzi were the smallest of the plants but were also of salable quality.

Based on these results, I would encourage growers to grow a small percentage of this year's Fall mum crop as no-pinch. Also, experiment with no-pinch and one application of Florel. Be aware that Florel produces varying effects among varieties. In our trials, Florel had the following effects: First, an increase in the number of flowers and a larger crown size were noticed on Helen, Sandy, and Debonair, but not on Linda. Second, an increase in height was apparent on Helen, Sandy, and Debonair, which were at least two inches taller than non-Florel plants, however, Linda did not have an increase in height. Last, flowering was delayed on all plants treated with Florel, however, the delay varied among each variety.

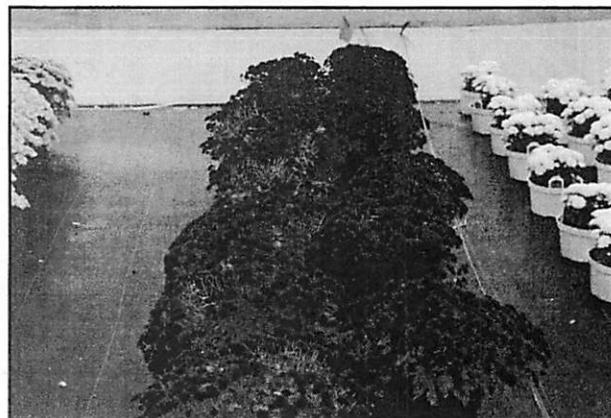
Yoder did not advertise any Mums in their recent catalogue as no-pinch but if you are interested in further exploring possible mums that may be no-pinch, focus on the ones recommended as *Fast Crop*. Trial about fifty plants and be sure to treat them the same as your regular production mums. On the other hand, VanZanten advertises several no-pinch varieties in their catalogue. Based on our trials, they are producing favorable results.

Sandy



LEFT: 1 appl Florel
CENTER: no pinch, no Florel
RIGHT: 1 pinch, 1 Florel, 2 Bonzi

Helen



LEFT: 1 appl Florel
RIGHT: no pinch, no Florel, no PGR

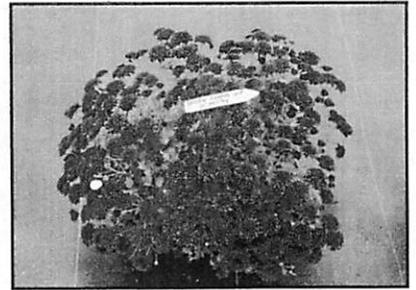
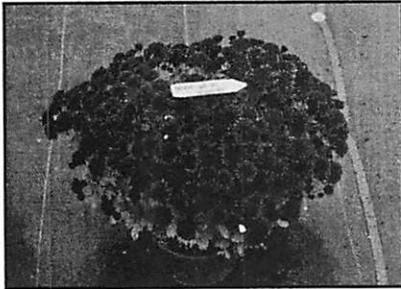
'No Pinch Mums Compared To Manual Pinch Florel Treated Mums'

no pinch - no Florel

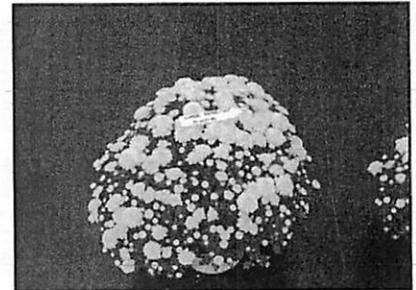
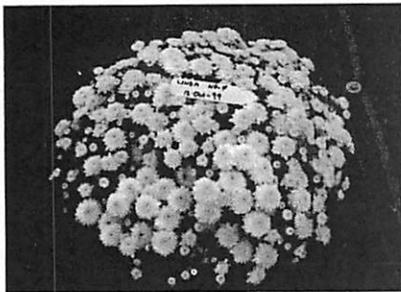
Left: 1 appl of Florel(500ppm)
Right: no pinch - no Florel

1 appl of Florel, no pinch

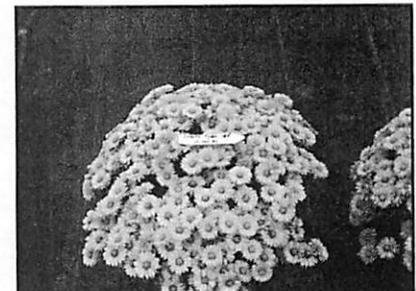
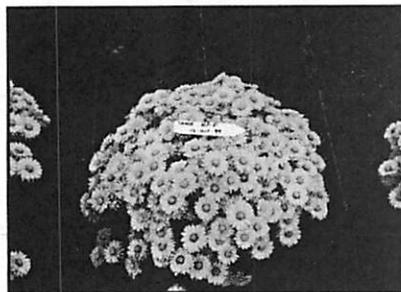
Helen



Linda



Sandy



Debonair

