

FLOWER BUD BLASTING IN AZALEAS

Recently, considerable flower bud blasting in azaleas being forced in the spring months was observed in the Half Moon Bay area. The probable cause of the problem was traced to a hot spell in October of the preceeding year.

Records from the Half Moon Bay weather station disclosed that the temperatures in August and September were moderate but a five day hot spell occurred in late October. The plants could have suffered severe water stress to the point of damaging the vascular system. According to Dr. Harry C. Kohl, Chairman, Department of Environmental Horticulture, if the vascular bundles collapsed in the immature stem area just under the developing flower bud, this constriction could express itself in the early spring by bud blasting and failure to develop properly.

It is important for growers to remember that we are generally good for a hot spell in this area in the fall. Whenever the situation arises, it would be a good idea to reduce water stress by such techniques as shading, frequent syringing of foliage, and any other methods of reducing water loss by raising the humidity.

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