

FLOWER GROWING IN ENGLAND TODAY
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The noise and bustle of the last century has enveloped more than four out of five of the men and women of our country into dirty cities and crowded towns. It is for these people who very seldom see the green of the open country that the flower industry has grown. The standard of living being low in this country it is small wonder that flowers are such coveted possessions. To give a very rough estimate as to the total production of roses and carnations grown under glass in the two countries, it would seem that 6 times as many roses are grown per head in the States, but we grow a small quantity more carnations. These figures reflect upon our cooler climate and, of course, the cost of production. Statisticians also have it that just before the war we produced \$14 million more of flowers than grain.

In the shops themselves the flower prices remain relatively high throughout the year, that is much too high for any but the higher paid groups. Now that the lower income levels receive roughly three times the wage of a decade ago, it is paradoxical that the pound sterling has only one third of its previous purchasing power. Even with the lowering of the value of the pound during the war, there is still the wide margin between the cost of labour in our two countries. We have to pay only 35 cents an hour, or about a third you do.

Chaos in the glasshouses of England has resulted from 10 years of war and so-called government planning. Shortage of fuel and food reduced flower growing to the barest minimum, and even now we are forced to grow nearly half fruit (mainly tomatoes) unless we use unrationed fuels like oil, which is so expensive as to be uneconomical. It is significant that in spite of every obstacle the growers appear to be almost up to pre-war production of flowers; in fact 310 acres of a total of 4,250 acres total glasshouse area. As these facts suggest, fruit and vegetables under glass are still profitable; 3,700 acres are grown of tomatoes and cucumbers, so this leaves very little area for other things.

I tried to get you prices of flowers for the Christmas and Easter periods. I would say (and I may not be over-accurate) that wholesale carnations fetch 40 cents to \$4.20 per dozen and roses 65 cents to \$5.80 per dozen. These same flowers retail for approximately double their wholesale value.

Please do not forget that we don't grow all top quality roses or carnations. When we get these very high prices, we only have a few flowers. There is not enough sun to pinch roses for Christmas, for instance.

It would be difficult for me to try to convince anyone that we suffered badly for monetary reasons during or after the war. The effect of shortage on a producer can be nothing but the opposite. The last year profits have been much lower and they will go lower yet. Even so, we will be O.K. Our biggest enemy, one that you don't have to worry yourselves about, is a potential foreign supply of flowers.