

## Gardenias

We have a house of gardenias in raised shallow V bottom concrete benches. Some of these have been surface watered, some we maintained constant water level and some have been watered by the injection method. Using a hundred as a basis of production from the surface watered benches, we have 119 from the automatically injected and 127 from the constant water level benches.

Best of all though is the increase in larger grades from the benches of the new type watering. Taking the month of January and comparing it with January 1940 which was our best previous January we have the following:

	<u>Surface watered</u>		<u>Automatically Watered</u>	
	Jan. '40	Jan. '46	1st 15 days	Feb. '46
Specials	10%	14%	25%	
#1 (average 4")	39%	79%	59%	
#2	28%	6%	16%	
#3	22%	5%	0%	
#4	1%	5%	0%	

Our monthly soil tests show there is a big saving on the amount of fertilizer used in automatic watering. The plants put in your type of bench last June have not as yet required any fertilizer. While those planted in old style benches have required monthly applications of fertilizer starting the second month after planting.

It is a lot easier to maintain the nitrate level in the automatic benches as it does not leach out. And with the better nitrate level we are getting better stem length.

We are completely sold on automatic watering, for its labor saving, watering is more accurate and we are saving on water (90 per cent saving). The soil structure is relatively unchanged. It prevents packing down and poorer growth as a result. With the labor of today there is always the chance of spreading disease with surface watering and automatic watering has eliminated that chance.

So we feel that the above results warrant a change over as soon as possible. By this summer we will have fifteen 250 Ft. benches, fifty eight 100 Ft. benches and two 50 Ft. benches (for propagating), all automatic. And the rest, we hope next year can be changed over.

*C. C. Butler*