

3. GERANIUMS: Suggestions for a Programmed Disease Control for Production of Cuttings of Plants

It is hoped that we shall have another school for the geranium growers this fall. In the meantime we would like to make some suggestions for your consideration for the production, particularly of rooted cuttings.

1. Select benches for propagation and stock plants away from other areas of geranium production.
2. Examine the bench to see that adequate drainage is provided.
3. Sterilize the benches and the soil before planting in the stock plants.
4. Add perlite, sand, or peat moss as needed to give good soil structure.
5. Plant in pathogen free stock plants and handle only with hands thoroughly washed. Penn. State recommends a rinse for the hands of LF-10 used at the rate of 3 ozs. to 5 gallons of water.
6. Keep the blossoms pinched off at all times. Flower petals dropping down on leaves provide good sources of Botrytis blight infections.
7. Spraying of stock plants every week or ten days helps to keep disease at a minimum. Suggest that you alternate on two chemicals:-Captan 50% WP, 1-1/2 lbs. to 100 gallons or Zineb 75% WP at 1-1/2 lbs. to 100 gallons.
8. Avoid any overhead watering at any season of the year. Space plants out well and vent properly to keep humidity down.
9. Fertilizing the Plants - Feed judiciously - enough to keep plants growing moderately but not enough to produce soft growth. Such cuttings usually get diseases developing in the propagation bench.
10. Hang the hose so that it never comes in contact with the ground.

SUGGESTIONS AND PRECAUTIONS ON TAKING CUTTINGS AND DEVELOPING THE PLANT

1. Wash hands thoroughly, rinse in LF-10 at rate of 3 ozs. to 5 gallons of water. Your hands should always be clean and it would be well to rinse hands in LF-10 in going from one variety to another.
2. After pinching or taking cuttings, spray the plants immediately with either Captan or Zineb as recommended above.
3. Any cuttings taken should be cut with a sterilized knife. How often? - Some say between each plant and others say between each variety.
4. Place cuttings in a flat lined with clean paper or polyethylene.
5. Stick cuttings either in sterilized media such as sand, perlite or root directly in clay pots having sterilized virgin soil. Such pots should be set on boards and not on moist soil.