

Fresh Flower Sales (continued)

Impulse purchases will slowly but surely increase over all store sales. Even though prices of impulse items will generally be lower than traditional floral arrangements, profitability will be higher. Good purchases, however, adapted to expected sales, will be necessary.

Mr. Van der Pol has a flower store in the picturesque Dutch town of Tiel. He has steadily built impulse sales to a point where they now represent some 40% of his total flower sales. "Holland is ahead of other countries in this respect," notes Van der Pol. "Prices of flowers are somewhat lower in Holland than those prices abroad, and the Dutch consumer is used to buying flowers. A bunch of flowers purchased every week has become a Dutch custom."

Presentation for Impulse Sales

"To see is to buy" is the basis of impulse buying. Therefore, it is essential that flowers are presented to the buyer in the most advantageous manner possible. "The show window must always look its best," says Van der Pol. "A florist must be creative, and offer the largest possible assortment. Changing the window twice a week will attract more customers and increase overall sales."

Even more important, perhaps, is a florist's creativity in the front or entrance to the store. "One has to show outside, what you are busy doing on the inside," remarks Van der Pol, "and an attractive outdoor presentation always compels the public to stop and look." Again, it is very important to present a broad assortment and a large quantity of flowers. Differences in height makes the selection seem even more attractive.

"An outdoor flower display must be a real show, and should reflect something of oneself," continues Van der

Pol. "Although there is a number of racks and stands available, I prefer making my own display material. By using separate units and repainting every now and then, one can greatly change the appearance of a particular presentation."

Assortment & Quality

While flower presentation is important for impulse sales, good quality and a wide assortment are also essential. Lower quality means disappointment to the buyer, and he will not be back again. In addition, research shows that customers are prepared to pay more for a higher quality product. A wide assortment of flowers has a positive effect on the customer's buying decision. The larger the assortment, the more choice the customer has, and the more certain that he will buy.

Flower Sales Tips

- Prepare an outdoor flower presentation in addition to the display inside the store.
- Only sell the highest quality flowers.
- Present a broad assortment.
- Display as great a quantity of flowers outside as possible.
- Price all flowers clearly, both inside and outside the store.
- Mentioning and displaying flower names provides an extra buying stimulus.
- Position flowers as attractively as possible—use different heights in outside displays.
- Only display less expensive flowers outside.
- Present products that are already packed and ready-to-sell.
- Use the available promotional materials.

GROWING GERBERAS

Carl A. Salsedo

Connecticut Extension Horticultural Agent

Gerberas are profitable, long lasting and colorful flowers. A recent surge in popularity has resulted from several factors.

1. The increasing availability and advertisement of gerberas as cut flowers from the Netherlands.

2. The promotional activities of major seed companies introducing new flowering strains for use as potted and bedding plants.

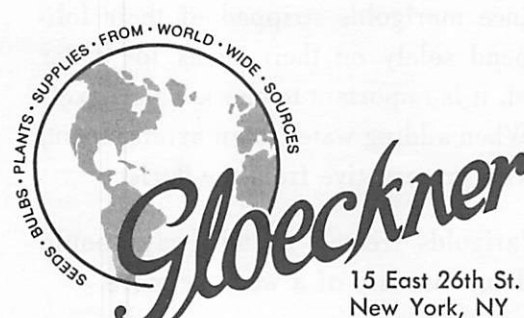
3. The adoption of new selections from Florida breeders and their rapid clonal multiplication by tissue culture

techniques.

The gerbera of Transvaal Daisy (*Gerbera jamesonii*) is a tropical perennial. The flowers are very showy in varying tints of yellow, orange, red, pink and white. Many hybrid gerberas have been developed, grown and evaluated in Florida. Cultivars have been selected for cut flower production or for pot plants.

Culture

Contrary to common belief, gerberas are not a difficult
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Gerberas (continued)

crop to grow. The plants are propagated by seeds or divisions. Division assures trueness to type and is the method generally used by most growers. Plant divisions can be potted in 4" to 5" pots or benched using a soil medium that provides good aeration and excellent drainage. Ground beds are more satisfactory than raised benches unless a depth of 10-12 inches is provided. The plants should be set 12 to 15 inches apart with the crowns well above the surface of the soil.

Based on a soil test, superphosphate, dolomitic limestone and some background nutrition should be incorporated. A soil pH within the range of 6.0 to 6.5 is desirable. Since gerberas are sensitive to water stress, maintain uniform moisture. Hybrid gerberas are heavy feeders and growth and flower production is greater when plants are well fertilized.

Gerberas grow best at a night temperature of 65°F but grow well and slower at lower temperatures. During the winter they are sometimes grown as cold as 50°. During the summer, a light intensity of 4 to 5,000 footcandles is recommended. Clumps may be divided in June and benched directly or grown in pots and benched or planted in larger containers in the fall. Production may continue for more than a year. When the clumps become crowded, division is necessary.

Propagation from seed is not simple. Seed is expensive and does not always germinate well. If a germinating facility with controlled temperature and light is not available, it may be advantageous to buy seedlings. Seedlings require warm temperatures, above 62°. They may begin to flower three months after benching. Flowers may not be of uniform quality from seed and inferior plants should be discarded when dividing.

Clonal propagation (tissue culture) produces uniform, high quality plants. Plants in ¼'s may flower beginning in two or three months.

Buds are generally visible in the crown 30 days before harvest.

Gerberas do not flower uniformly throughout the year. Production is greater when nights are cool and short and decreases during the summer when nights are long and warm.

Ring culture is especially appropriate for gerberas. A ring is made of plastic-lined hardware cloth about 4-5" tall and ⅞" across. It is placed on the soil in a bench and filled with soil. The gerbera is planted into this ring with the crown placed high. It is watered in but never again watered from the top. This keeps the crown rela-

EASTER SALES

Well, Easter has come and gone but the effects are here to stay. Easter in the central New York region was good overall. The market was very slow at the start but Friday and Saturday sales were very brisk, and most growers, retailers, and markets sold out. From the beginning, lilies seemed to be in short supply, because many growers either didn't make them, or had a low bud count. That meant putting two or more plants together to make a saleable plant. Another crop that seemed to be in short supply was hydrangeas. Part of the reason was that many growers didn't get bud initiation, mostly due to the early Easter. Azaleas, tulips, cinnerarias, and calceolarias sold well and most were sold out. Mums and hyacinths were a glut on the market, with some growers having to discount them at the end of the week.

The Canadian imports were very prevalent in the market. They had some problems with lilies and hydrangeas though mums, tulips, and hyacinths were very abundant.

Retailers as a whole did pretty well, and many of them credit that to bad weather early in the week that discouraged many roadside stands from opening. There also seemed to be a wide variation in prices in most chain stores, with some stores selling at below last year's prices, although it seems impossible a grower can grow for less this year than last. That's how it looked in Central New York!

P.S.: "A word of warning to all growers and wholesalers. The state sales tax department is in the process of auditing many businesses, greenhouses and wholesalers included. Therefore it would be wise to have all your resale certificates up to date if you don't want to pay the tax."

NYSFI Board Member George Zerillo, Zerillo's Greenhouses

tively dry and elevates the leaves from the surrounding soil.

Gerberas are grown as bedding plants in southern areas. In the north, they are grown principally as cut flowers. Production may not exceed 20 flowers per square foot per year. But since they command a premium price, they may be profitable.

Insect and Disease Control

Stem rot—Pythium, Phytophthora (controlled by Lesan or Truban or Banrot), Phizoctonia (controlled by Benlate or Banrot) and Verticillium all attack gerbera.

Leafminer—control with Diasinon, 25 EC, Permethrin, or Temik.

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Gerberas (continued)

Aphids—control with Malathion, Dithio, Enstar or Temik.

Spider Mites—control with Aramite 15 WP, Kelthane 35 WP, Pentac 50 WP, Tedion-dithio smoke or Temik.

Mildew, botrytis and alternaria leaf spot may require the use of fungicides. Good sanitation should reduce all of the above problems.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ann:

The 1983 Long Island Flower Show was a credit to the industry.

Your willingness to participate in the awards by sponsoring the New York State Flower Industries Trophy awarded to Nassau Tech Center at Old Westbury was both generous and very much appreciated.

The Show Director and I wish to thank you for supporting the Flower Show.

Sincerely,
William C. Bowden
Commissioner of Jurors

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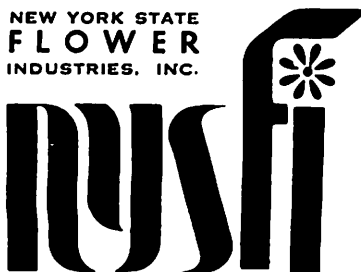
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