

# The Northwest Grower



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By Frank Batson

The views expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher of "Florist & Grower."



## Hang 'em high

**By Frank Batson** — Are you a grower of the big five of hanging baskets? If so, you might be interested in a consumer preference study done by an agricultural economics specialist at Michigan State University.

Three hundred persons who bought a variety of hanging baskets were asked: "Which type of hanging basket do you find to be MOST problem-free?" The envelope please! ... and the winner is ... **Ta-Da** ... impatiens, with a favorable response of 47 percent saying they had "no problems." Begonias were next at 45 percent, ivy geraniums and New Guinea impatiens tied at about 45 percent and fuchsias were in last place with only 26 percent of those surveyed saying they had had no problems with them.

Now to sort of turn this question around. When the same people were asked which type of basket they were the least satisfied with, it was fuchsias first, followed by ivy geraniums, impatiens, begonias and ending up with New Guinea impatiens which apparently gave the most satisfaction.

There were several other question on the survey but these two were at the heart of it. There is one other thing you might be

interested in as a grower concerned about his/her product after it reaches the home consumer. The leading cause of complaints about hanging baskets was the inability of the home owner to keep the basket adequately watered. New Guinea impatiens presented a watering problem for 42 percent of those responding, with impatiens at 34, fuchsia at 27, ivy geraniums at 18 and begonias at 14 percent respectively.

These figures might make a strong case for the addition of a gel-like water absorbent material incorporated into the soil mix. After all we do want to keep those home gardeners happy and satisfied with the products we sell them.

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