

VI. Healthy Growth of Pot Plant Production by Dr. Elmar Jarvesoo

The outstanding feature of the pot plant production in the U. S. over the past decade has been a faster rate of growth than in cut flower production. The value of six major flowering pot plants went up two and a half times in the 1949-59 period, compared with only one third growth in five major cut flowers. (See the accompanying table: Shifts in Major Pot Plant Production over the Past Decade)

## Shifts in Major Pot Plant Production Over the Past Decade

Source: 1949 & 1959 Census of Horticultural Specialities

	1949			1959			Value increase over 1949
	Number of growers	Number sold, 1,000	Sales value \$1,000	Number of growers	Number sold, 1,000	Sales value \$1,000	
<u>Geraniums: Cuttings*</u>				310			
Finished plants	4,398	25,668.4	5,154.5	6,079	31,401.6	1,792.1	
					40,837.4	16,386.4	
Total geraniums			<u>5,154.5</u>			<u>18,178.5</u>	+ 253%
<u>Pot chrysanthemums</u>	--	--	--	2,033	9,700.3	11,732.4	mostly new crop
<u>Poinsettias</u> finished plants	2,356	3,707.3	4,715.2	2,494	6,819.2	8,966.4	+ 89%
<u>Azaleas</u> finished plants	1,928	3,410.7	4,315.2	1,736	6,341.6	8,253.7	+ 91%
<u>Potted lilies</u>	2,800	2,825.0	3,555.5	2,594	4,119.3	5,763.2	+ 62%
<u>Hydrangeas</u> finished plants	2,111	3,341.0	4,197.1	1,527	3,172.0	4,158.3	- 1%
Total: 6 major flowering pot plants			<u>21,937.5</u>			<u>55,260.4</u>	+ 152%
<u>Foliage plants</u> finished	2,507		9,842.3	1,922		26,480.0	+ 170%
<u>Bedding &amp; vegetable</u> plants	5,938		16,039.1	6,616		32,065.7	+ 100%

\* In 1949 the production of cuttings and finished plants was not shown separately.

While the number of most cut flower growers declined, the number of geranium, poinsettias and pot chrysanthemum growers actually went up. The average pot plant grower increased its production somewhat but less drastically than cut chrysanthemum and carnation growers.

The growth of pot chrysanthemum production has been most spectacular: from small beginnings (crop not listed separately) in 1949 to nearly 12 million dollar industry in 1959.

Geranium production shows hardly less dramatic growth, having added about 13 million dollars to the annual crop value over the ten year period. With 16.4 million dollars worth of finished plants produced annually, geraniums are the leading flowering pot plant.

Poinsettias and azaleas have nearly doubled their production and crop value to 9 and 8.3 million dollars respectively and have retained their relative position. Lily production shows a healthy 62 percent growth to 5.8 million dollar annual crop, but hydrangea production has remained at the old level.

Foliage plant production has nearly tripled and bedding and vegetable plant production doubled in the last decade.

Note the size of business in these last two items: In 1949 as well as 1959 the combined value of foliage and bedding plants is ahead of the combined value of the six major flowering pot plants.

The production of listed potted plants shows a much faster rate of growth than that of population or disposable income. This means that people are spending more on these items now than ten years before. In other words -- potted plant growers are receiving a larger share of the consumer's dollar now than ten years before.

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