

How Gradual Pruning Is Done

Gradual pruning may be started on a bench of carnations at any time during the spring. The starting time should be determined by when the bench is wanted back in crop.

Begin pruning

Late March
Late April
Mid May

Return to production

September
Late October
Early December

The bud stage of the Mother's Day crop should be clear in the mind of the one who is pruning for none of the growths in this stage should be sacrificed. The first time over the bench we have cut from one-fourth to one half of each plant down to a graduated level. This level should vary with the amount of foliage lost during the first year's growth. To cut plants back to within three inches above the line of dead foliage is a safe rule to follow. Plants in outside rows may be cut below the first wire, whereas center plants may be cut as high as the second support. This first pruning takes about half of the time

required for the complete job. It is especially important to prune the plants in the middle of the bench to let in light and to start new breaks.

After two or three weeks new breaks will be visible just below all cuts that were made the first time over. At this time another part of each plant should be cut down. Pruning in four steps at 2-week intervals or three steps at 3-week intervals will give satisfactory results.

Continue to water and feed plants in the usual way. Do not dry the soil. Cut only a part of each plant down each time even though the entire plant could be cut down without sacrificing flowers.

This method will work. The quality of flowers from plants handled in this way compares favorably to that from young plants. Plants may be taken out of bloom in the summer and returned to production in fall or early winter. The labor involved? -- not nearly as much as that required in replanting.

*Your editor,
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