

INCREASE MARKETABILITY OF EUPHORBIA FULGENS WITH A-REST

Kathleen A. Zawadski
Graduate Student
and
Jay S. Koths
Extension Floriculturist

Euphorbia fulgens is a beautiful shrub growing naturally to six feet or more. The name fulgens refers to the splendor and brilliancy of the five-lobed, orange-scarlet involucre which is petal-like and surrounds the inconspicuous true flowers (Paxton, 1938). *Euphorbia fulgens* is a winter bloomer and truly a striking houseplant when in flower. It is an ideal candidate for sale as a pot plant during the Christmas season. For cultural information see The Connecticut Greenhouse Newsletter April 1979, #91.

An experiment was conducted in an attempt to produce a more marketable, compact plant from cuttings of the normally large *Euphorbia fulgens*. Cuttings were taken May 24 and rooted



Figure 1. *Euphorbia fulgens* treated with 0.6 and 0.3 mg ancymidol (A-Rest) per 5" pot.

under mist in equal parts vermiculite and perlite. After transplanting, when plants had well-developed root systems, ancymidol (A-Rest) was applied at rates of 0, 0.12, 0.3, and 0.6 mg/5 inch pot respectively. One pinch was made per plant at the time of A-Rest application.

A-Rest was effective at all concentrations applied. The optimum application rate was 0.3 mg. At this concentration, compact and highly attractive plants were produced (Figure 1). They appeared much more floriferous than control plants. With increasing concentrations of A-Rest there was a trend for flowering to begin closer to the base of the stems and for a reduction in the number of nodes per stem. There was no effect on rate of flower maturity. The first cyathium opened November 19 and plants were in full flower well past January 1.



Figure 2. *Euphorbia fulgens* treated with 0.6 mg ancymidol per 5" pot.

To produce plants for Christmas sale, cuttings should be taken in June for plants to be grown in individual pots. Another approach might be a July propagation with two or three cuttings per six inch pot. Since the experiment was conducted using clay pots, and these are capable of absorbing ancymidol, a rate of .25 mg. ancymidol might be sufficient for use with plastic pots. A double application (each with 1/2 the amount of A-Rest) would be extremely effective.

Euphorbia fulgens is very sensitive to cold or sudden changes in temperature. With this in mind, plants should be well packaged before leaving the greenhouse in the winter months. Once the plants have come into flower, they should be acclimatized before sale to avoid leaf yellowing and flower drop which may occur a couple of weeks after the customer gets the plant home. This can be accomplished simply by shading the plants from full sun and reducing the amount of fertilizer applied in order to slow growth. Temperature might be kept around 65°F to approximate that in an average home.

All in all, there should be no reason why ancymidol treated *Euphorbia fulgens* could not become an important addition to the holiday season plant market. The plants are attractive, appealing, and unavoidably eye-catching when in flower.

ERRATA

4.5 grams per gallon is equivalent to one pound per hundred gallons.

An error crept into Mr. Salsedo's article Mixing Small Quantities of Pesticides in the Greenhouse which appeared in this newsletter on page 10 of #98, March 1980. The text mistakenly said 0.45 grams.

PLASTIC SHEETS



Plastic sheets with bubbles reduce heat loss. Unfortunately, they are difficult to secure inside the roof and do reduce light transmission, especially if they collect dirt. They are convenient and efficient for east, south and west walls.