IS YOUR DIAGNOSIS CORRECT?

Florist crops react violently to many environmental factors. Not just the one thing you did differently may be responsible for the results you obtained last year or sometime before.

Last fall we had a story in Bulletin # 27 explaining why chrysanthemums reacted so peculiarly. They produced long necks, poor flowers and some growers thought it was stunt. Other growers were using a new fertilizer for the first time and thought the trouble was due to this. Some said they were watering heavily which had caused these defects and there were those who said the stock was running out. Some attributed it to the bomb for insects and in your own case, you had an answer.

Last year the major trouble with chrysanthemums was day length and none of the changes you had made in your production program were involved. As you re-read the story you will see how the days during the first half of September were too long for normal flower bud development. We are dependent on nature throwing in several cloudy days at this time to permit buds to develop normally. We can control normal season flowering to avoid these troubles by lengthening the day (lighting) to September 1 then shortening it (Black Cloth) to September 20.

Blindness and few flowers per stem in chrysanthemums has also been attributed to everything imaginable. Perhaps all these things as fertilizer, watering, pinching, planting and others contribute to blindness but only as they may retard growth until the temperature drops.

Temperatures below 60 degrees during bud formation cause blindness and after buds form, low temperature prevents many of the lateral buds from developing.

Hydrangea bud set is dependent on temperatures below 65 degrees with the leaves on and in active growth. Whether you fertilize, water, pinch or perform some other operation differently than last year, these will cause or reduce blindness only as it influences growth previous to and during the low temperature period. If mildew or a freeze removes the leaves or seriously injures them before the buds form you have blindness. If your treatment gives thin, weak shoots you likewise have blindness. Temperature is the important thing.

Gardenias for Christmas are likewise dependent on temperatures below 65° at night for bud development starting about September 15. If we have temperatures higher than this until October 15 as last year, a crop for February 1 is normal.

Whether you dried, fertilized, kept plants wet or used H. E. T. P., probably

helped you none. These treatments may hasten or retard the development somewhat but we are yet quite dependent on this temperature drop.

Perhaps you have changed some practice in growing roses which you feel has been harmful to your production. If you had a severe dose of mildew this alone might have been responsible for the loss. Your watering, fertilizing or new insect control may be a contributing factor to the mildew growth but these changes are probably not the fundamental reason for your production.

Don't let your ego get the best of you. Perhaps the trouble or success is caused by what you think but you may be overlooking the major contributing factor.

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