

# Tips of the Trade

by ALLAN ARMITAGE



## Know When To Cut Specialty Cuts

**T**HE use of unusual cut flowers (specialty cut flowers) has increased at a rate far greater than the production of the major species of roses, carnations, and chrysanthemums.

While the production of major cut flowers slightly declined between 1987 and 1989, production of specialty cuts rose by about 28%.

Certainly, the cut flower business is not for everyone, no matter how interesting the numbers are, but more and more people are seriously looking at the market.

One of the advantages the domestic grower enjoys is the ability to put a fresher flower on the market than is obtainable from overseas. Regardless of postharvest procedures, shipping techniques, and rehydration treatments, local flowers are fresher than foreign produce.

Similarly, the kind of cut flowers selected to be grown at the local level should take advantage of their freshness appeal. It makes little sense to grow carnations or liatris locally when these flowers ship well and are grown in large volumes elsewhere.

To ensure that all aspects of freshness and quality are fulfilled, flowers should be cut at the proper stage of development. Reams of literature are available on proper cutting stages of roses, carnations, lilies, mums, and gladiolis, but only recently has research been made available concerning specialty cut flowers.

The following list of flowers and proper harvesting stages apply to greenhouse or field-grown flowers to be shipped to a wholesaler for dis-

tribution. Flowers for the flower market, roadside stand, cut-your-own, or immediate retail should be further developed unless otherwise noted. **GG**

### Stage Of Flower Development At Harvest

Botanical Name	Common Name	Stage
<i>Achillea filipendulina</i>	Fern-leaf yarrow	Fully open flowers
<i>Allium giganteum</i>	Giant onion	30% flowers open
<i>Anemone coronaria</i>	Poppy anemone	Buds beginning to open
<i>Aquilegia</i> hybrids	Columbine	50% flowers open
<i>Astilbe</i> hybrids	Astilbe	50% open flowers
<i>Callistephus chinensis</i>	Annual aster	Fully open flowers
<i>Campanula persicifolia</i>	Peach leaf bellflower	50% flowers open
<i>Caryopteris incana</i>	Blue spirea	30% open flowers
<i>Celosia argentea</i>	Celosia	50% flowers open
<i>Centaurea moschata</i>	Sweet sultan	Flowers beginning to open
<i>Consolida ambigua</i>	Larkspur	2-5 flowers open
<i>Crococsmia</i> spp.	Crococsmia	50% flowers open
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	50% flowers open
<i>Echinops ritro</i>	Globe thistle	50% flowers open
<i>Eryngium</i> spp.	Sea holly	Fully open flowers
<i>Eustoma grandiflorum</i>	Eustoma, lisianthus	5-6 open flowers
<i>Iris germanica</i>	Bearded iris	Colored buds
<i>Lilium</i> spp.	Lily	Colored buds
<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	Annual statice	70% open flowers
<i>Lysimachia clethroides</i>	Gooseneck loosestrife	40% open flowers
<i>Ornithogalum thyrsooides</i>	Chincherinchee	Colored buds
<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	Summer phlox	50% flowers open
<i>Pollanthes tuberosa</i>	Tuberose	80% flowers open
<i>Scabiosa caucasica</i>	Scabious	50% open flowers
<i>Zinnia elegans</i>	Zinnia	Fully open flowers

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