SUMMER MEETING –

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SNAPDRAGONS

Dr. John G. Seeley in his talk on "Snapdragon Culture" stated that the Snapdragon is well on the way to becoming a year-round crop. It makes an excellent rotation crop. The pinched crop versus the single stem were discussed. The pinched crop uses less seedlings and is less uniform in flowering. The single stem is sometimes favored for a winter crop, saving three to five weeks over the pinched crop. However, the time saved in planting the pinched crop, balances the advantages of the single stem crop. In summer, many growers take out their side ventilators, use Astercloth to keep out bees, etc. in order to maintain lower temperatures. Black cloth may be used to slow down the crop. A single pinch is desirable for summer stock.

CARNATIONS

Dr. Gustave A. Mehlquist, University of Connecticut, declared that it should no longer be the concern of the grower whether he produces 28 or 30 flowers per square foot, but rather that he is able to cut when he can obtain the best return for them. Because of the progress made in the storage of Carnation cuttings, they may be obtained whenever the grower wants them. On the other hand, the timing of the Carnation crop has not reached the perfection that Mum culture has. It is the opinion of Dr. Mehlquist that cuttings taken from the middle part of the plant are best. Because of the extreme mutability of Carnations, care should be exerted in the selection of plants. Rooted cuttings should be planted directly indoors to save labor. It is important that plants be pinched at the same stage of development. Altho Carnations grow well in many types of soil, they are essentially high potassium users.

POINSETTIA DISEASES

In an illustrated talk on "Poinsettia Diseases and their Control", Dr. John R. Keller, assistant professor of Plant Pathology, University of Maryland, declared that the root rot problem has been known by tobacco growers for more than half a century. Thielaviopsis in Poinsettias may be noted both in cuttings and at maturity. The disease is induced by high water levels and low temperatures. Stock plants are the chief source of infection. Some growers have tried to control root rot by high temperatures, but the plants succumbed shortly after being delivered to the customer's home. Ferbam dip and drench for both cuttings and plants is a control. Copper sulphate crystals under the benches, 4 lbs. to 100 sq. ft. also tend to control the disease. Acid soil gives best results.

POT PLANTS

U. L. Patterson, Sr. president of Patterson's flowers, Inc., Shelby, N. C. described methods used at his range covering 200,000 sq. feet. His company specializes in growing 6 in. pot Mums, producing more than a quarter of a million each year. In his region a good physical plant should provide a good liquid feed system. Mr. Patterson declared that "there is no industry so completely void of advertising as ours." His more than 30 years in the industry have brought him to the conclusion that sales promotion, in addition to culture, is essential, The wholesaler should have an important role: the retailer must be educated to display 25 rather than 3 plants and the grower must be able to provide the same quality, at the same price, every day in the year.

LATEST INFORMATION on the KEEPING OF CUT FLOWERS

Dr. John W. Mastalerz, Waltham Field Station, University of Massachusetts, provided supplementary material to that he offered several times in the past on "Low Temperature Conditioning of Cut Flowers and Cuttings" and "Latest Information on Keeping Cut Flowers." The fact has been proved that water loss is even more important than temperature. In storage, the size of the container is important; it should be moisture-proof and well insulated, tightly sealed but not gas-tight. Fiberboard drum containers are best, but shipping boxes lined with polyethylene can be used. The latter is essential for Carnation cuttings because it allows the passage of gases.

It was recommended that flowers for storage be cut in the afternoon after they have been subjected to full light intensity because of its strong influence on keeping qualities. Temperature outweighs all other factors in keeping qualities. Humidity may be preserved by the addition of paper towels and wet newspapers to storage containers. As soon as they are removed from storage, flowers should go into hot water at 100 deg. temperature.

Dr. Mastalerz has found thru experiment, that commercial flower preservers double the life of cut flowers.

SALESMANSHIP

Mr. Bernie Conway, Omaha, Nebraska reported that a recent survey had shown that there is one retail store of all kinds for every 38 customers in the United States. Mr. Conway said that 60 percent of customers are turned away from stores because of indifference of salesman; 14 per cent turn from a store because of unadjusted grievances; 9 per cent are influenced by price and 5 per cent buy because of friends. If more flowers are to be sold to more people, the florist must instill in the public a conviction of the reasonableness of flower prices.

SOIL STERILIZATION

Dr. John G. Seeley, Pennsylvania State College, stated emphatically that soil sterilization does pay. He said "The loss of just one crop will often pay for many steamings, so it is good insurance." New soil as well as old should be steamed; to destroy weed seeds alone will often pay for the job. If the weeds start to grow, he continued, the steaming job was not a good one.

Peat, maure and fertilizer should be added before steaming. Dr. Seeley recommended that metal thermometers be used and the soil temperatures be raised and held at 180 degrees for 30 minutes. Four hours should be allotted for the job. If the job takes longer, a smaller area should be done at a time or th supply of steam increased.

Planting may be done as soon as the soil cools and is of the proper moisture content for planting.

Bulletin 39, Pennsylvania Flower Growers is devoted to an article on "Steam Sterilization of Greenhouse Soils."