

Orchids

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Q. I have noted a browning of the petals of orchids which may begin either in the greenhouse before cutting or as much as two days later in the ice box. It seems to be most prevalent in damp cloudy weather and does not appear related to smog. What might the cause be?

A. Since the trouble occurs in damp, cloudy weather and in the ice box, it could very easily be botrytis and can be kept in check by improving ventilation.

Q. What is the cause of dry sepal?

A. It seems to occur practically everywhere orchids are grown. It seems most severe under stagnant atmospheric conditions in areas near petroleum cracking plants and near jet aircraft factories where large quantities of gaseous vapors are thrown out.

The use of large air filters containing brominated activated charcoal for ethylene removal have not resulted in control in the New Jersey area. We still

do not know the answer as to the cause of dry sepal.

Q. How can I control oxalis weed in osmunda?

A. Steam sterilization at 180°F for 30 minutes. This will kill the weed seeds and will not cause breakdown of the osmunda.

Q. If I use lights to control flowering of orchids, will this affect the productivity of the plant over a period of years?

A. No.

Q. I don't have any trouble raising orchids but I have a bit of a problem in selling them. Is there any answer?

A. Apparently there is no immediate answer but suggest that other uses for orchids be found such as bon voyage gifts, hospital gifts, etc. Orchids should be taken out of the luxury category.