

# **Peat/perlite yields the most**

Rockwool or foam substrates, compared at Vleuten Experimental Station with a peat-based compost for cut flower

bouvardia production, did not perform particularly well. Bouvardia cuttings were rooted into rockwool cubes and then planted out into containers of polyphenolic foam or peat-based compost, or into larger blocks of rockwool. The plants were cut back after establishment and then transplanted again into rockwool slabs, crushed foam beds or a peat/perlite mix to be grown on in the glasshouse. All treatments had liquid feed.

Establishment in the foam substrate was uniform but initial growth was slower than in the other materials. Establishment was the quickest in the peat substrate but plant growth was less uniform. The first flush of blooms was cut two months after transplanting into the glasshouse, from early June to mid July, with a second flush in late August.

Yields from each of the two flushes were highest with the peat/perlite substrate which also produced the heaviest individual flower stems. Stems were shortest from the plants grown on rockwool.

Cutting back the plants at the end of August and applying night-break lighting until mid October produced a third flush in early November which lasted for six to seven weeks. With this flush the rockwool substrate came more into its own, producing the highest number of stems/unit area up to the end of November, although this advantage had been lost by the end of the flush. Again, the peat/perlite produced the best.