

PRESERVATIVE AIDS FLOWER MARKETING

Studies conducted by Agriculture Research Service horticulturist Francis J. Marousky, Bradenton, Florida, show that the commercially available preservative, 8-hydroxyquinoline citrate (8-HQC), is beneficial in marketing cut flowers.

Once-Over Mums

Tests using 'Albatross' chrysanthemums indicate that a floral preservative, 8-HQC, permits once-over harvesting. Dr. Marousky harvested half the flowers about a week before the commercial stage. The stems were placed in 200 parts per million 8-HQC plus 2 percent sucrose and held in a bulb curing room at 72 F to 76 F. The remaining buds were allowed to open on plants in the field. Bud-cut flowers were similar in size and quality to flowers opened on the plant.

Harvesting mums as buds offers the grower flexibility in his marketing program through quality maintenance, ease of storage, and disease control.

Shipping Gladiolus "Good As New"

Present marketing practice dictates harvesting gladiolus spikes with unopened buds, grading the spikes, then wrapping them in kraft paper and transporting them at 40 F.

Seeking improvement on this method, Dr. Marousky packed white 'Friendship' gladiolus in vented and nonvented containers that were subjected to simulated shipping conditions for 3 days at 40 F and 50 F. Kraft paper or polyethylene plastic sheeting covered the spikes during shipment. Afterward, spikes were held at either 74 F in water or in 400 parts per million of the preservative 8-hydroxyquinoline citrate plus 3 percent sucrose (8-HQC+S).

Test results indicate that gladiolus spikes harvested in the bud stage and handled and shipped at low temperature, 40 F to 50 F, potentially can produce as many open florets as freshly harvested spikes. Additional enhancement of floret opening can be achieved after shipping if spikes are held in 8-HQC+S. Gladiolus placed in the floral preservative after shipping develop more open florets and live almost twice as long as gladiolus held in water.