

EDITOR'S NOTES

STABY

Spring has sprung. And the return of spring means the return of consumer interest in flowers, bedding plants and gardening. Spring is a great time to kick off your floral and gardening plans for the entire year. How well you start this year's growing season can have a profound impact on sales for the rest of the year.

• Just how popular is gardening? According to Gardens For All, the National Association for Gardening, there are 34 million households that participate in gardening each year. Gardening is the most popular leisure time activity, more popular than tennis, jogging/running and even golf. This marks the second anniversary of the association's National Gardening Week from April 21 to April 27. The association is urging its members to write their congressmen to support a National Gardening Week Bill now pending in Washington. Stores could sponsor their own "Gardening Week" to help promote their gardening and floral shop products.

• The most popular flower bouquet is one bunch of flowers that are the same color and variety, according to the Flower Council of Holland. These bouquets have several advantages for retailers—and customers. They require a minimum of time and labor and can be offered at tempting prices. Also, with the array of flowers available, retailers can give their customers a variety of bouquets to choose from. Variety can encourage extra sales.

• Bedding plants are a growing source of profits for some retailers, and the market is not static. But the complexity of ordering and stocking bedding plants has made many retailers reluctant to offer them. Tom Wall of Greiling Farms, Inc., Denmark, Wis., described his company's operation in the April edition of the *Ohio Florists' Association Bulletin*. Greiling Farms supplies retailers, including some supermarkets, with a 20 feet by 50 feet outdoor greenhouse structure, complete with billboard-size banner on the side and stocked with flats of flowers, hanging plants and vegetables. The stores run promotions for approximately six weeks. Then the structure is removed. Greiling Farms keeps records from year to year to facilitate ordering and will even redistribute product from one location to another if the product does not sell well in one particular store. In short, Greiling Farms leaves the selling of the product to the retailers and handles all the rest.

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