

STEPHANOTIS

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This woody vine from Madagascar is more common than might be thought. Its white, waxy flowers are used in wedding work and bring a superior price when demand is high. And it is easy to grow.

The normal flowering period is from May to October. However, the addition of light and high temperature may lengthen the flowering period.

Stephanotis may be grown in a soil mixture high in organic material with a pH of 5.0-6.0. The nitrogen level should be relatively low with higher phosphorous and potash.

Flowering is related to temperature and light. A temperature of 65° or warmer is essential for bud formation. Additional light of 4-6 hours in the middle of the night will also help initiate flower buds.

The five parted, corolla type flowers are picked when they are fully open. The flowers are not stored in water--just refrigerated in a plastic bag after picking.

Mealy bugs and scale insects are the major problems. Many insecticides will control these. For mealy bugs see Connecticut Greenhouse Newsletter No. 86 for recommendations under "All Ornamentals" or "All Flowering Crops." For scales, consult labels for recommended materials or contact your Extension agent.

Low temperatures, low light and long nights are the reasons for lack of flowers in the fall and winter.

This cut flower offers the retail or wholesale grower with warm greenhouses another crop to produce in an out of the way space. It may be rewarding.

Have you observed flowers failing to open fully? The author suspects ethylene but cannot find information about it. Won't you help? Please send information to me.