COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA • SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Flower Growing & Marketing

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"MONITOR" Use On Roses

Under a "Special Local Need" permit for applying the insecticide "MONITOR" to greenhouse roses for control of Western Flower Thrips, the original rate suggested was incorrect (too high). The correct rate is 12 to 16 ounces in 100 gallons of water. Use no more than 600 gallons of spray solution per acre of greenhouse.

Copper naphthanate Gone

As of September 1, 1987 the wood preservative, copper naphthanate, used for years as a safe and effective treatment for greenhouse benches, posts and flats, will be withdrawn from the market.

DO NOT use other wood preservatives as substitutes! Some, such as pentachlorophenol, are extremely toxic to plants in greenhouses.

STS Helps Geraldton Waxflower

Based on information from research in Australia plus a simple local experiment, STS (silver thiosulfate) is very effective to prevent shedding of flowers and to increase shelf-life of Geraldton Waxflowers. Apparently, the Geraldton Waxflower is susceptible to ethylene gas problems, similar to carnations, snapdragons and several other floral crops.

The STS treatment can be applied two different ways: (1) pulsed with 4mM silver as the STS complex (4 oz. concentrate per gallon) at about 70°F for 10 to 15 minutes, or (2) using a weaker solution of 0.5 mM silver (one-half oz. concentrate per gallon) in a coldroom 35°F overnight.

Care must be observed to not "pulse" in the strong concentration beyond 15 minutes as the silver can be toxic.

In the past, I have also suggested dipping or spraying the flowers with "ORNALIN" fungicide solution if botrytis infections occur during spells of wet, cool weather. If Geraldton Waxflower growers would harvest at the right stage and treat consistantly with "STS", the customer should receive a much better product.

New Flower Crops Are Paying Off

Yes, we really can grow anything in California that the Dutch grow, including several items that they can't grow!

After 25 years of trying and failing, we finally have a few California growers producing excellent quality gerberas. Consumer deman should continue to build for good quality and cultivars that keep well.

Liatris is increasing in production area and demand seems to be strong. It can be grown year around. Hybrid colored lilies broke price this spring, but demand will likely continue to build. Tuberose , an old crop from Mexico, has really come on strong the last five years.

Alstroemeria has also weakened in price as supply seems to have caught up with present demand, but this crops deserves to be foremost at the consumer level. Alliums, Trachelium, Aconitum, Otacanthus, Solidago, Thalictrum, and many others have a small place in the market but will never even be "Number 2" crops.

And don't forget the improved cultivars for early season, gypsophila and alstroemeria; and all the newer interspecies crosses of spray carnations. Also don't forget the vast array of Protea species and hybrids, the Leucodendrons, Leucospermums, Banksias, Serrurias, Grevilleas, Hakeas, as well as a large number of allied Australian plants such as the Geraldton Waxflower (the new forms of white and other hybrids), Leptospermum, Diosma, Boronias, Stirlingia, and Thrytomene, and many other possibilities.

Who has tried more of the bulb crops? -- such as Brodiaea, Eremurus, Vallota, Nerine, Babiana, Ixia, or Montbretia. And there are others.

What about Sandersonia, Campanula, Gentiana, Lupinus, Gloriosa, tall Salvia, Dahlia, and a few others?

You see, these are some of the crops that growers can try for diversification and seasonal rotation. There are many opportunities!