

## THE EIGHT WEEK GERANIUM: A GUIDE TO SOME PROBLEMS

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With the constant reminder of increasing energy costs, growers of greenhouse crops should be trying to cut corners wherever possible. This may be especially true with such crops as geraniums. Why not try to produce a geranium crop in eight weeks? According to this procedure a salable plant can be produced in eight weeks before sales date. Here's how the schedule goes:

-Pot healthy, rooted cuttings or 2 1/4's directly to four-inch pots eight weeks before your desired sales date, March 30 for Memorial Day.

-Use a peat-lite mix with a constant feeding program of 200 ppm N.

-Grow at 68°F (20°C) minimum night temperature.

-Keep mix moist.

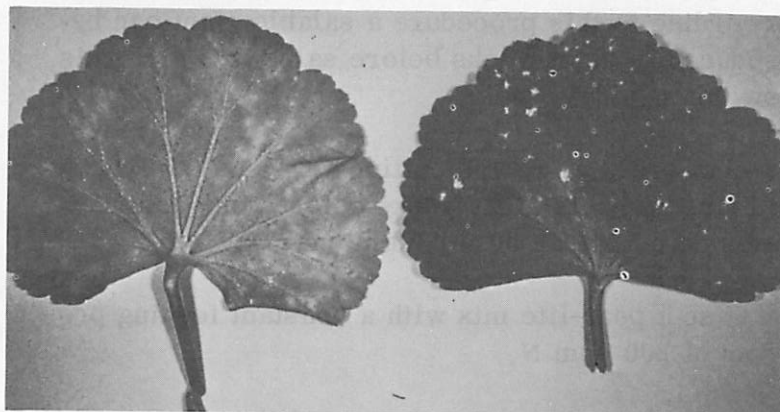
-Do not pinch plants. Normal branching should occur.

-Grow in full sunlight spaced 6 x 6 inches on center. Excessive spacing reduces productions per square foot, too close spacing causes lanky growth and poor quality plants.

-Follow the above outline carefully to produce the best quality plants.

## TROUBLESOME PROBLEMS

Oedema (Figure 1) is one of the most troublesome problems affecting a geranium crop. Oedema is a physiological problem which appears as tiny, water-soaked blisters on the underside of leaves. The blisters may burst, turn brown and become corky. In severe cases the leaf may yellow or drop. It usually occurs during dark, cloudy weather. Avoid over-watering or watering late in the day since this increases oedema. Good ventilation and air circulation also aid control.



Diseases may be less troublesome in a quick crop.

Botrytis--Benomyl or daconil (Termil). Keep foliage dry.

Pythium--Banrot, truban or dexon drench at second watering after planting with a second application 3-4 weeks later.

Bacterial Blight--Destroy any plants that collapse, show wilt or bacterial leaf spot.

Insects and Mites--including aphids, mealy bugs, plume moths, red spider mites, and whiteflies--can become problems on geraniums. Below is a list of the pests and some suggested controls:

Aphids--Dithio, parathion, malathion, nicotine, endosulfan, TEPP, vaponax\* or Enstar.

Caterpillars and Loopers--Bacillus thuringiensis, dylox, sevin or parathion.

Mealybugs--Malathion, diazinon, vaponax\*, parathion, dithio: 2-3 applications 7 to 10 days apart.

Plume Moth--Vaponax\*, 2 applications 7 to 10 days apart.

Red Spider Mites--Dithio, pentac, malathion, parathion, TEPP, vaponax\*, kelthane or Vendex.

Whiteflies--Resmethrin, parathion, dithio, vaponax\*, TEPP: 6 applications 4 days apart.

\*Not registered as yet in Connecticut.