

## Timing of Carnation Propagation

How long does it take to grow a healthy young carnation plant to optimum size for benching? This question was asked at the College Day meeting in 1950. One hundred and five growers answered this all the way from six to 20 weeks. About half these growers said 16 weeks or longer would be required.

Of course this time varies with the variety, the size of the original cutting and to some extent with the time of the year. With William Sim and its sports (fast varieties) we have found large fat cuttings to require 10 to 11 weeks during the late winter and spring. This period is broken down as follows:

3-4 weeks to root the cuttings  
4 weeks in the nurse bed before pinching  
3 weeks after pinching to standard benching  
10-11 weeks from time cuttings stuck to benching

This means that we now stick the cuttings no earlier than 11 weeks before the permanent bench is steamed and ready to plant. Smaller cuttings will require 10 days to two weeks longer, and that time should be added to the period before pinching.

Actually, carnation plants will let you know when they should be pinched. If they are healthy and have rooted sufficiently, the side branches will be cleared from the axils of the leaves. Large rooted cuttings should clear these sidebreaks 3-4 weeks after they have been planted in a nurse bed or something is wrong. If the cuttings are checked for some reason, pinching them on a time schedule should not be done. The trouble should be corrected so growth is resumed and the side breaks clear before the plants are pinched.

Your editor,

*W. D. Holley*