

# What is a Cultured-Indexed (Disease Free) Geranium Cutting?

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During the past growing season, numerous inquiries have been made by geranium growers as to what is a culture-indexed cutting. Because plant pathology has played the major role in the development of this technique and in fact Dr. A. W. Dimock was the first to suggest its use in floriculture crops, we should review what the term culture-indexed implies.

Culture indexing (A) is a plant pathological technique when properly applied allows for the detection and elimination of plant pathogens. When coupled with the "Mother Block system" of plant increase, (B) the technique assures a plant which is for all intensive purposes disease-free.

The mother block system is a one direction increase system which assures cuttings (C) which are derived from an initially culture-indexed plant.

Presently there are only a few geranium propagators who follow this rigid program. When purchasing cul-

ture-indexed geranium cuttings, the genuine can be quickly determined from the imposter by inquiring if the cuttings were directly derived from culture-indexed stock that has been increased through the mother block system. Don't be fooled by imposters that are several generations removed from this system of plant increase (D). Many of these propagators, however, maintain rigid sanitation procedures which insure maintainance of clean cuttings of high quality. These however are several generations removed from the mother block system (E), and are not culture-indexed.

Although the cost is higher, the benefits reaped by the use of culture-indexed geranium cuttings are many (faster growth, faster flowering, no loss, quicker rooting, etc.). Proper precautions still must be taken to prevent recontamination of these disease-free cuttings. Remember the term culture-indexed implies the cutting is *disease free* not *disease resistant*.

