

The nozzles are self-cleaning and will not clog. Large orifices and low pressures virtually eliminate orifice wear and prevent deterioration of the quality of atomisation, while greatly extending nozzle life. Because of the low water pressures required, considerable savings can be made by using polyethylene piping instead of PVC.

This system allows the desired relative humidity to be accurately maintained. We have ceased using evaporative coolers as a method of preventing transpiration loss in the cutting propagation areas. A higher strike rate of cuttings is being achieved, despite the higher temperatures and sunlight levels being experienced.

Reduced propagation time has resulted in healthier cuttings, making them easier to transplant into the potting medium. Trials we have carried out also indicated that this method was ideal for young plants which had just been deflasked from tissue culture.

The greater efficiency of this fogging system has allowed us to replace 30 conventional misting jets with 3 Sonicore nozzles, which only required two gallons of water each per hour, if they operated constantly under high temperatures. A laboratory-type humidity control was incorporated into the system and this has required little or no adjustment to the fogging system, other than the regular maintenance of the air compressor.

PROBLEMS IN FLORIDA'S CUT FLOWER PRODUCTION

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My nursery is located on the southeastern coast of Florida, about 80 miles north of Miami near where the Gulf Stream comes closest to the Florida coast. This provides ideal conditions for the production of our crops.

Our crops include miniature carnations, gerberas, and Asiatic lilies, grown under saw-toothed fibreglass structures, plus snapdragons, delphiniums, and other crops under Saran shade cloth, as well as in the open.

Flowers are shipped to about 350 wholesalers as far west as San Antonio in Texas, and Denver, Colorado, but most are sold along the east coast of the U.S.

Shipments of flowers, mostly by refrigerated truck, begin in October and continue to the end of June each year. All flowers are

shipped upright in deionised water with floral preservative. All flowers are pre-treated prior to shipping and this is considered of great importance to give the consumer good value.

Florida plays a very important role in the U.S. horticultural scene, leading in foliage production, ahead of California. California is ahead, however, in cut flower production.

Many changes have taken place in Florida's cut flower production since the increase in imports from South America. These come mainly from Colombia and Peru and now account for over 50% of all carnations, miniature carnations, and pompoms sold in the U.S. Over 30% of all roses are also imported and a large increase is expected in the next few years.

Not only are these four being imported, but gerberas, alstroemeria, nerine, lily, gypsophila, and statice are also coming into the country.

This has resulted in many growers going out of production. In my area 12 years ago there were 50 producers of pompoms and chrysanthemums, but now there are only 10 left.

The U.S. growers are greatly worried about this problem, as not only do they have South America to worry about, but the Dutch mounted a serious campaign to capture a section of the U.S. market about five years ago, and are doing substantial business. The Dutch campaign, however, with a very fine advertising campaign to the U.S. retail florist opened the market for many long forgotten flower cultivars.

The U.S. grower, faced with the problems of increased restrictions on chemicals, labour problems, and a general increase in production costs, views these imports with much concern.

Some years ago a campaign was started to prevent imports from entering the country: however, being a small industry the government did not see fit to help. Currently, however, the U.S. rose growers have been successful in achieving a higher levy being placed on imported roses.

Growers of pompoms, carnations, gerberas, and gypsophila, have filed an anti-dumping suit with the Federal Trade Commission, which could result in much higher import duties.

To give you an example of the cost of some imported flowers in Miami, carnations have been sold for extended periods of time at 3 to 4 cents for first quality flowers, miniature carnations for 35 cents a bunch, gerberas for 10 cents a bunch, etc. These prices are below the production costs in the various producing countries.

We, in our business, have tried to take advantage of products not so easily shipped, and products that could be produced in Florida at a time when they would not be available from other areas in good quantity or quality.