

How was spring?

I am sure you have heard that question even more often than I did. Talking to a number of growers, I was told that the South had an early start with record sales and sales are still going strong. More northern areas (East and Midwest) had a good and early start as well but had a rainy and cold Mother's Day weekend and average weather since, still waiting for sales to pick up again. Out West the season started late due to cold and rainy weather in April and early May. It has picked up strong lately, and it

looks like there is no end in sight. From several retailers I have heard that traffic is up but the average sales per customer is down overall, but they are still having increased sales. It has been a crazy year weather wise and it shows that it is the weather that influences our industry the most.

There is lots to read in the May News Flash, so sit back, relax, and enjoy this issue.

Sincerely yours,
Stefan Reiner



Variety of the Month

SuperTrouper™ is the best pot carnation series available and with the new additions for 2011, including the improved Light Pink evol. (image), the color range and uniformity become second to none. They are perfect to start spring, for holidays, and fall.

Rooting Pot Carnation



Pot Carnation gained popularity at all levels, and sales have been increasing over the past years. With new colors and improved varieties, SuperTrouper™ has become the leading series in its category. SuperTrouper™ is uniform and offers a wide range of colors with thick branching, scented flowers, and a great performance.

Rooting pot carnations is not always easy because it takes place in the off-season for rooting in mostly empty rooting areas and their specific requirements are different from many other crops as well. However, once you get the hang of it, you will notice that it is actually quite easy. At arrival make sure to check the quality of the cuttings and report any problems right away. Place cuttings in a cooler with adequate temperature and humidity. Stick the cuttings as soon as possible, if possible the same day.

Use a peat-based, well-aerated substrate mixed with perlite. Moisten



the substrate slightly before sticking but avoid saturating it. Take only as many cuttings as you can stick in an hour from the cooler in order to avoid stress. Mist right away to avoid dehydration, but avoid over saturating the substrate.

Using a rooting hormone is recommended.

Bottom heat with 66 - 70 F (19 - 21 C) works well, but avoid cooking the cuttings as this will lead to a lot of callus but no roots.



Keep cuttings cool and hydrated with the help of mist. Frequent misting is important, but use short running times to avoid over-saturating the substrate. Keep run-off of mist water in the liner to a minimum. In average cuttings will need 21 days of mist. The first seven nights mist may be required. Cuttings should be standing up after the first night and always look fresh including in the morning. Never let cuttings dry out, as this will delay rooting or may lead to failure. The image to the left shows dehydrated cuttings, which will not root. The image to the right shows well-hydrated cuttings.



Start with shade until cuttings start to root, and increase light levels afterwards. Pot Carnations like it bright, well vented, and cool.

The images below from left to right show cuttings



at about 7 days, 10 - 14 days, and 21 days after sticking.

Pinching in the liner stage is very common and works very well. Let the branch grow and wait until first side shoots form. It is not uncommon to see a flower bud develop. Pinch by pulling the top part of the vegetative part off the plant by holding back the liner with one hand while pulling sideways

with the other. Do this before flower buds (in case they formed) open.

Common mistakes when rooting Pot Carnations include:

- Over misting the cuttings, saturating the substrate. This will lead to insufficient oxygen in the substrate slowing rooting and promoting diseases and pests such as Fusarium and Fungus Gnats. Cut the running time to its minimum and adjust frequencies to keep cuttings hydrated. Use fine mist, avoiding large droplets.
- Dehydrating cuttings. This is a common problem just topped by over-misting. Keep cuttings hydrated and adjust frequencies without oversaturating the substrate. Check for too much airflow and cover wire mesh tables with strawberry plastic (needle hole foil) for example (reducing airflow and stress).
- Keeping cuttings too dark and humid. Carnations like a more active and cool climate. Dark, humid, and hot conditions may lead to slow rooting and losses.

- Pinching instead of pulling off the top part of the plant. Traditional pinching usually doesn't work so well, especially when done too early. Quite often only leaves are pinched away without removing the growing tip. Cutting will grow on with a delay and not branch (easy to see a couple weeks later). Image to the right shows a good stage to pinch (actually pull the top off sideways as previously mentioned).



The long crop time of Pot Carnations can be reduced by rooting in larger cells like 84 and 72 cell trays. This way liners can be kept longer in the tray after pinching until they are nicely branched ready for transplant.

SuperTrouper™ Pot Carnations are a great crop and can be grown space and energy efficiently with low overall input costs. Check out the 2010/11 offering by contacting Ball for URC or the broker of your choice for RC. Ask for your tech guide for finishing Pot Carnations.

Poinsettia 2010 season update

With the first Poinsettia cutting shipments approaching, I thought it might be a good idea to introduce you to the type of cutting we will ship. It is the same spec sheet as we had last season, and the cutting size will not change. We will ship a mid-sized cutting of all varieties, but keep in mind, the caliber and foliage size varies from variety to variety. Feelings tends to have smaller foliage and a thinner caliber, where Day has a much thicker caliber and larger foliage. We will be using a new and improved box, starting with the first Poinsettia shipments. The box has the trays now side-by-side (instead of on top of each other) with one large ice-pack centered. The box itself is stronger and should hold up much better during shipping. This should improve cutting quality at arrival by reducing stress.



Selecta will ship a mid-size cuttings throughout the season (this is new, as in the past cuttings got smaller toward the end of the season for smaller mini-pot formats).

Mid-size 4x4x4 URC:

- 4 cm (1.58 inch) from cut to heart.
- 4 leaves plus a well-developed heart.
- 4 mm (0.16 inch) caliber.

All Poinsettia URC will ship from Uganda and are part of WWA (world-wide availability). One origin guarantees uniformity throughout the season. Selecta's huge stock base in Uganda is accessible for all = WWA.



Trixi™ in Germany



Most vegetative spring annuals are finished in small-sized pots in Europe, especially for the German market. Baskets are by far not as common as in North America. The same is true for Trixi. Where we use them mostly in baskets, growers in Germany (and other countries growing for the German market) are actually growing them in 12 cm (4.75-inch) pots using one TrixiLiner per pot.

Because of this way of growing, it is very important to have well-balanced mixes where all three varieties are growing strong enough and flowering about the same time, creating a nice looking Trixi pot. The images to the left show you two mixes grown by a grower in the Niederrhein area.

We have tested all of our mixes in pots using quarts, gallons, 6-inch, and 8-inch (2 liners). It works great in pots and makes a stunning plant, looking very different from what consumers are used to. Use it as instant mixes for planters and baskets at home or as an alternative to the "30-second-planter." The right PGR at the right time is important when growing Trixi in smaller pots. Drenches in combination with dry cultivation, cool morning drops, and good light work great.

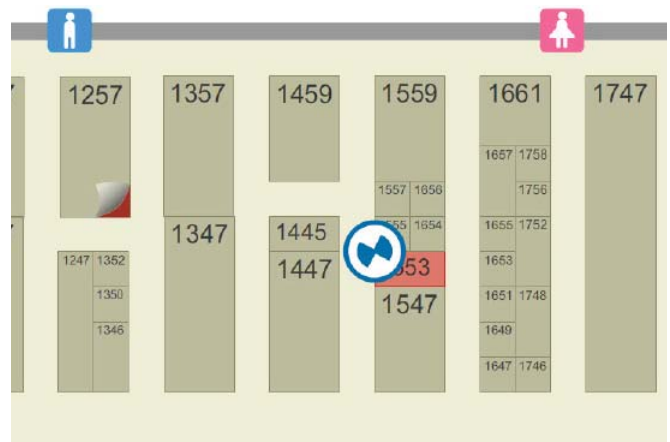
Selecta News

We have moved!

Please make sure to mark your calendar for the **2010 OFA Short Course** and note our new trade floor location. We are now at booth # 1553 together with the Ball Horticulture companies.

Similar to Spring Trials, we will have a joined presentation at the OFA Short Course. See some of our new varieties and talk to familiar faces.

And if you haven't had enough of me, make sure to participate "A New Look at Problem Crops" starting at 8:00 a.m., a two-part presentation lasting until 10:30 a.m.



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