

Title Securing the future of *Disa* orchids as a cut flower on the world market
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Abstract

Disa is a genus of orchid with a strong vibrant colour range and that air of elegance and longevity commonly associated with orchids. There is an exciting resurgence in *Disa* as a cut flower from their debut into the New Zealand export market some 10 years ago. A short season creates a wonderful opportunity to promote this quality, niche product to the most discerning market. Recorded hybridisation of *Disa uniflora* has been carried out in New Zealand for over 30 years giving rise to a range of quality blooms on vigorous stems. Line, primary hybrid and cross species breeding has improved flower size, shape, stem length and increased the colour range with white now a reality. New Zealand's *Disa* Orchid breeders are innovative keeping up with or ahead of world trends and receive favourable comment from many of the overseas visitors who have experienced *Disa* in its native South Africa and in North America. Recent advancement in capillary tray cultivation and continued trialling of nutrition requirements is proving successful, enhancing foliar growth, which equates to stronger tubers, taller stems and greater bud count. Further advanced experimentation is underway with a variety of renewable resource growing mediums and associated re-evaluating of the nutrition levels required to maintain quality production. Trials are ongoing; increasing the daylight hours after the autumn solstice to determine whether regenerating tubers need a dormant period. These trials could see the extension of the flowering season. There is now a sense of urgency to ensure quality management systems are in place for all *Disa* export growers in New Zealand so that market development can encompass an assurance at the retail end of the supply chain of guaranteed grower integrity and quality.