

Title Optimization of pre-transport handling methods for bromeliad liners
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Citation ISHS Acta Horticulturae 755:507-514. 2007.
Keywords Aechmea; Guzmania; leaf quality; relative water content

Abstract

Over the years the demand for ornamental bromeliads has grown and is expected to grow even more in the near future. The bromeliad production chain is already highly specialized, starting with companies that have specialized themselves in propagation and marketing of the resulting liners (small young plants adapted to the greenhouse). To cover the increasing market these companies have to merchandize bromeliads over short as well as long distances. Quality problems arising during transport can cause severe economical losses. Besides mechanical damage, physiological damage becomes a problem of growing concern. Little is yet known about transport conditions or handling methods which can allow safer transport resulting in less damaged plants. In this report the authors investigated the possibilities and effects of drying young plants prior to transport on post transport re-growth as dried plants are less vulnerable to both mechanical and physiological damage. For the *Aechmea* and *Guzmania* cultivar investigated, it can be stated that drying of young liners till 70% Relative Water Content (RWC) prior to transport causes no post transport growth reduction. Moreover RWC values can be linked to simple weight measurements to implement this guideline in commercial practice. Furthermore a time saving treatment of cutting the roots at the end of the shoot instead of washing them to remove soil before transport, delivered satisfying results concerning both drying characteristics and re-growth after transport.