

Title Harvest and post harvest treatment of gerbera cut flowers ensures optimum vase-life under hot conditions for farmers with limited resources

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Abstract

The cut-flower industry is extremely competitive and needs good understanding of the trade, skill, knowledge as well as experience in growing of flowers in order for any grower to survive. Product quality is everything in this industry and attention to detail is absolutely necessary. Post harvest-handling methods that were developed over 20 years ago for cut flowers are still current practice in the fresh flower industry. Current problems with cut flower longevity and quality are not only associated with differences in the geographical locations of production, new improved varieties, long-distance transport from farm to market, improper transport and storage temperatures and undesirable handling practices, but also by limited resources. This presentation will report on the following methods whereby optimum vase-life can be maintained even when the product is cultivated in a hot climate by growers with limited resources. Experiments were conducted to determine the following:(a) optimum maturity at harvesting, (b) optimum hanging time in the greenhouse, (c) optimum post harvest solution hydration time, (d) optimum solution temperature, (e) optimum biostatic agent in post harvest solution and (f) optimum pH of post harvest solution. If all the results and recommendations arising out of the above experiments are implemented, growers in hot climates and with limited resources such as non-cooled packhouse, dry packaging, non-cooled transport are able to produce Gerbera cut flowers having a vase-life of at least 14 days. Results of the experiments resulting in recommendations for growers with limited resources will be presented.