

cradle and tied. Use of the cradle probably facilitates tying, but whether it is quicker than bunching by hand and using rubber bands is doubtful.

Methods of tying differ between growers. Some prefer to use raffia, some a soft twine, and others rubber bands. Objections to rubber bands are that if they are too tight, the stems are bruised and very often break, and if they are slack, the bunch frequently falls apart. However, with a little practice choosing the correct-sized bands becomes easy. Undoubtedly their use makes bunching easier and quicker than tying, and the bunch is neater.

Flowers should not be jumbled together in bunches haphazardly, but should be arranged so that the florets are not crushed. With one stem held upright in the left hand, additional blooms are placed in such a manner that they face outward. When this circle is completed the remainder are worked into the bunch either above or below until the required number is bunched. The rubber bands are then applied and the stems trimmed neatly.

After bunching Iceland poppies it is customary either to singe the ends of the stems or to dip them into boiling water, which improves their keeping quality.

Though no standards are fixed, auctioneers like to have uniformity in the number of blooms in a bunch. The following table is a fairly-general guide:

	Number in bunch		Number in bunch
Anemone	.. 12	Ranunculuses	12
Carnations	.. 6	Roses	.. 12
Calla lilies	.. 6	Stocks	.. 12
Freessias	.. 12	Narcissus	
Gladioli	.. 3 or 6	Soleil d'Or	12
Hyacinth	.. 3 or 6	Trumpet	
Iris	.. *6 or 12	daffodils	*6 or 12
Lilium	.. 3 or 6	Violets	.. 25
Poppies	.. 12		

* According to price.

When some lines are early and will bring exceptionally-high prices, it is customary to reduce the number of blooms in a bunch; as the season progresses and prices drop, the usual number is reverted to.

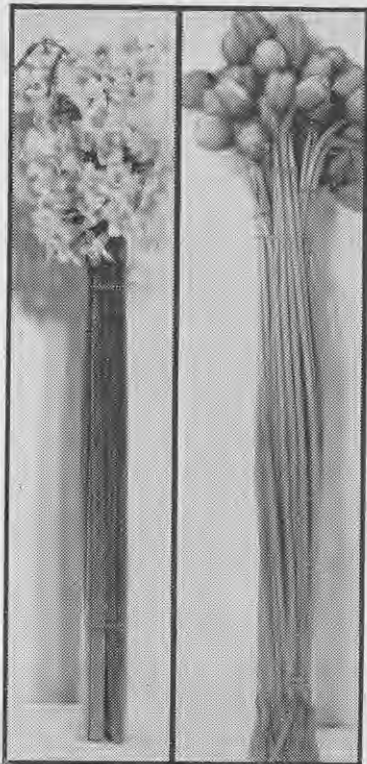
Foliage is arranged with cut flowers only in the case of violets, bunches of which sometimes are surrounded by the leaves, thus making posies. After being bunched the flowers are placed in deep receptacles of cool water and usually left to stand overnight; this is important, as it restores freshness to the blooms and when taken to the markets in the early morning they present a natural, fresh appearance.

Packing

To a grower who is close to a good market packing presents no difficulties, as the flowers can be packed firmly but not tightly in a container and placed in the market without danger to the blooms. For trumpet daffodils, gladiolus, iris, lilioms, calla lilies, and other tall plants, inexpensive travelling boxes are easily constructed; they are returnable to the grower. Some growers who take a pride in their products have made neat, varnished containers which, when filled with choice blooms, look very attractive and contribute toward a satisfactory price being obtained.

Strong, light containers are used for cut flowers to be sent to a distant market, alternate bunches being laid in them in opposite directions. Care must be taken that no moisture is on the flowers or they will sweat and deteriorate rapidly. Cardboard boxes having close-fitting lids are unsuitable, as aeration is prevented, thus allowing the accumulation of carbon dioxide and causing the blooms to have a short life. The same effect is produced by wrapping cut flowers in waxed paper and placing them in airtight boxes.

Too often good blooms arrive in the flower market in a dirty case lined with newspaper. Everywhere today commodities are displayed in attractive containers, yet many growers cannot realize that the small additional expense of providing good cases lined with clean paper is warranted. It may be argued that the case is used only to convey the flowers to the market, where they are removed from the case and held up for sale, but the little extra cost and labour involved are well repaid by the establishment of a



[Green and Hahn Ltd. photos. Neat, long-stemmed bunches of narcissus Soleil d'Or and Iceland poppies.

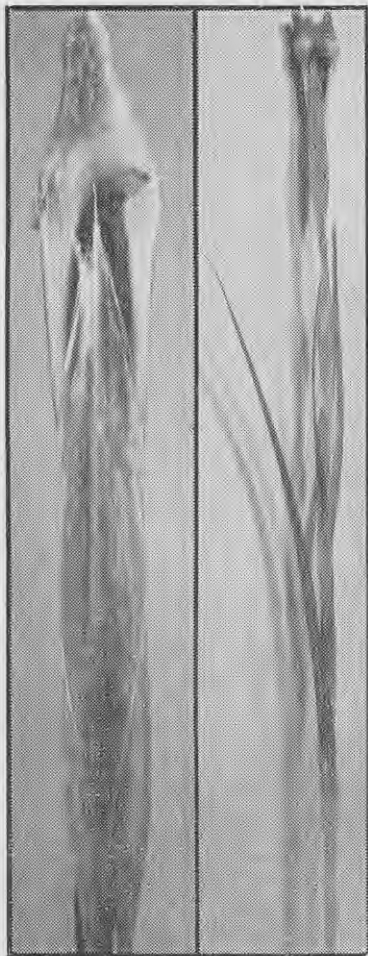
good name, resulting in increased returns.

Marketing

Most auctioneers are pleased to be helpful and an intending grower is well advised to seek the advice and help of a flower salesman, for no one understands the selling end of the business as he does. He can be told what the grower intends to produce and asked whether these lines are in demand. When the grower contemplates sending in a consignment he should tell the auctioneer what quantities are available and how many may be expected each week. An endeavour should be made to carry out commitments and thus build up confidence between grower and auctioneer.

A visit to the markets to see in what condition his produce arrives, see it marketed, and compare it with other lines repays the grower. If he feels that his produce did not bring the price expected, he can talk it over with the auctioneer, which is far better than dodging from one market to another trying to "catch the price."

Some growers send their choice lines to one market and their inferior plants to another, but whether this method brings any material gain is doubtful, as in one place they establish a name for quality and in the other a name for a poor product. Establishing a name for quality lines and honest dealing spells success.



[Green and Hahn Ltd. photos. Left—An iris bud at the correct stage for picking. Right—A good, long-stemmed iris spike. The bud is beginning to unfold, and picking should not be delayed beyond this stage.