

continued

'Hinadi-jor'	pink semi-double
'Ubatama'	maroon, semi-double, large
'Dai-kagura'	semi-double pink, large

PROPAGATION IN THE LATE SEVENTIES

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Some of us can remember back quite a few years—let us say 70-75 years. This, of course, cannot be called ancient but neither is it new, so let us call it old. I want to dwell a couple of minutes on propagation in Boskoop, Holland. I recall propagation by hardwood cuttings where wounding was used with a double long cut which gave a larger surface for callus which meant also a better chance for rooting. Wounding was and still is practiced in propagation by layering. Even evergreens, such as junipers, in a somewhat crude way were propagated by cuttings on the north side of a windbreak. The medium, generally dredged out of a canal, was mud; later it was mixed with peat moss. The cuttings were inserted by pushing them into that mixture with the finger so that below the soil the cutting was "V" shaped with the base of the cutting heading up. Softwoods were grown too but this required either frames with double sash or a greenhouse.

At the age of 24 I came to these United States and worked one season at Hicks Nurseries where I was introduced to propagation in hotbeds and this was novel to me. The method used was a layer of fresh horse manure about 3 ft deep, wetted and packed down and covered with a layer of sharp sand 6 inches deep. The cuttings were covered with sash and shaded with cloth overhead on a wooden frame about 5 ft above the sash. The cloth was rolled up on dark days and every evening. The cuttings were kept moist by hand syringing according to the weather.

After spending 3 years in Painesville, Ohio and 3 years in Long Island I had the good fortune of joining the firm of The Rhode Island Nurseries. In 1924 we propagated about 300 sash of softwood cuttings at about 800 cuttings per sash (240,000) and at the peak of production approximately 500 sash (400,000 cuttings). All this was done in cold frames with about 70% shade and were kept moist by hand syringing 2-3 times a day. All those shades were carried on and off every day; it was really a chore.

After Mr. Vanicek, the founder of the business, passed away I was given a free hand in the propagation department and it was soon

proven that one can sometimes kill cuttings by being too kind and cautious. The first thing that we eliminated was the carrying on and off of the shades. This also meant one less syringing job. From this point we made rapid steps towards easing the constant care of softwoods. Note the word "easing". When we introduced the use of polyethylene—which I call a major breakthrough—to our operation and, close upon that the mist system—also a major breakthrough in the field of propagation—plus the hormone powders, we really had it made and the final results were much better.

This year I started making cuttings on April 15 and continued until August 12. I still enjoy my work, noting of course that I have no labor problems. I cut most of the cuttings myself, or supervise it, and have a man who does all the sticking for me. I started in April with junipers in outside frames with intermittent mist, most of the cuttings being treated with Hormodin No. 3 and, as the season advances, some are treated with Hormodin No. 2. Some of the more difficult ones, such as *Juniperus* 'San Jose', *sargentii* and 'Blaauwi', we treat with a double dip, that is, 5 seconds in straight Chloromone and, after drying them a while, in Hormodin No. 2. We make all our rhododendron and azalea cuttings from July 14 through August 10—and all the deciduous material as they become ready. The use of benlate mixed with Hormodin (9:1 v/v) has really some value. We have found that this treatment gives a more solid root system and no trouble with fungus at the basal ends.

Now I come to the title of my talk, "Plant Production in the Late Seventies". This is the title I had chosen but when I received the program I found it had to be "Propagation Old and New". I would like to show that a healthy, active man in his seventies without any hobbies other than the nursery business does not have to be put on the inactive list especially when it comes to the production of plants. When I told Mr. Vanicek in 1965 that I was going to retire the following year he took it with a grain of salt and made the remark, "How could you retire, you are too active". He asked me to stay, on whatever terms I wanted, but I always said if I cannot be a 100% asset to the business then I want to leave it. When I told my sons my intentions they asked me to do some propagating for them in my spare time, using their facilities of course. This spare time job has become almost a full time one. Help is provided whenever I need it as you understand I could not make all the cuttings alone. I also do not overly neglect my wife. After all I *am* retired so once in a while I take her out to lunch or on a short vacation. Nothing is more important than having a pleasant home. By now you might understand the title of my talk because in a little less than 2 months I'll be 80 and if this is not the late seventies, I would like to know what is. If there are some of you oldsters who would like to have less responsibility; look around, you might find it in your own profession.