



more than one slot. This is a simple necessity in a family-owned and operated business. The production starts with cuttings taken from current production, not from stock plants. The cuttings are not stripped, except for the lower leaves, and are not pinched as in the past. This appears to shorten the rooting time, generate more breaks when pinched after rooting and, of course, eliminates the necessity of a stripping crew.

The cuttings are taken from the on-going production area and stuck in 96, and some 72, cell pak trays containing a medium of peat, perlite, and vermiculite. The propagation crew is separated into a sub-crew for taking and sticking cuttings, and a sub-crew for growing the cell paks. This crew also moves the rooted cuttings so there is room for new cuttings. They also pot all finished cuttings into 4-inch pots. The responsibility of the propagation crew ends with this potting.

The 4-inch potted cuttings go into the liner area to be used for 4-inch sales in the spring, or into the other production sections where they will be grown for potting into 5-, 6-, or 7½-inch pots.

The azalea production is geared for two markets; growing on plants for sale in May and June, and budded plants for October shipment. There are actually three basic crews that grow these plants past propagation, with each group providing more than one function. The separation of responsibility is determined by whether the plants are for growing-on or for budded sales, and division is according to species and cultivar. The idea is to divide the growing so all plants are cared for and to minimize any overlapping of work. By consistently growing certain groups of cultivars, in a particular sized pot, for one or more precise markets, a crew knows their responsibility without having to guess.

The assignments must necessarily change with the changes in production techniques and markets; but if you have a record of being consistent in the past, you can reassign and go forward with no problems.

## SALES

The marketing function is considered a continuation of production since, generally, the same crews are responsible for grading the crops they grow. As stated earlier, all the azaleas, growing-on and budded, are graded according to head size, not pot size. This sometimes creates a situation where you may have a similar grade coming from two different sized pots, but this way the customer knows what he is getting each year. Our business is built on repeat orders and a consistent grade, year to year, seems to be the better way to maintain this

position. The trucking is done by individual carriers experienced in horticultural products or by the customer's picking up their orders. A few smaller orders are sent by UPS, bus, or air freight.

#### MAINTENANCE AND CLERICAL

The maintenance group is small and provides basic services for the other crews. This involves one man for installing water lines, basic carpentry, and covering the polyhouses. Another maintenance man takes care of the service to tractors and equipment. The maintenance crew also loads trucks and provides general weed control through herbicide application or mowing.

The office staff is composed of one full time employee for processing orders and handling inventory, bookkeeping, and correspondence. During busy seasons, we will hire part-time help here as well as in the maintenance or production areas. The company we hire for part-time help provides their employees' workmen's compensation coverage so that we have no problem with our unemployment tax rate when they leave.

Before being hired, all employees are required to fill out and sign an application that includes a 90-day probation period.

#### PESTICIDE SAFETY

BRYSON L. JAMES

*P. O. Box 13*

*McMinnville, Tennessee 37110*

CAUTION is the signal word on the label of the least toxic pesticides. *When used according to label directions, there is no danger to the applicator nor to the environment from any pesticide, even the most highly toxic ones. No pesticide is safe when used haphazardly.*

#### TOXICITY AND HAZARD NOT SYNONYMOUS

Toxicity value is not the *only* factor to consider regarding the potential danger or hazard of a chemical to human or other animal life. Users of pesticides should be concerned with the hazard of exposure to the chemical and not just the toxicity of the material itself. Hazard and toxicity are not synonymous. Toxicity is the inherent capacity of a substance to produce injury or death.

Hazard is a function of toxicity and exposure and is the potential threat that injury will result from the use of a given formulation or quantity of chemical.