

From Ontario: "My answer is yes, but not to such an extent as to radically change our procedures. We do propagate more items directly in pots to be shifted into larger containers or planting-on which we formerly handled bare root. Our main interest is in faster and more economical production, such as *in situ* propagation, rather than in better or newer marketing procedures. I naturally envisage a more and wider use of containers but, at present, have no immediate plans due mainly to over-wintering problems and to customer acceptance".

From Indiana: "All this adds up to one thing; as for propagation, it means the need for far more plants . . . not only must we meet the demands of a more affluent society, but also the demands of the cash and carry shopper — the one who is satisfying an impulse by purchasing the smaller plant — one he can carry home and plant (and one he can afford)".

From Pennsylvania: "An exerted effort is made now toward mass production in containers, utilizing polyethylene for winter protection, sparing no expense in growing excellent plants in the shortest possible time through constant feeding, multi-pruning, all grown under highly concentrated conditions".

From Ohio: This one was difficult to excerpt. In summary he stated that modern marketing has seemed to take the craftsmanship, with its resulting pleasures and pride, out of propagation — trading skills for dollars — and has tended to create a mass production and buying attitude that does not properly respect the quality plant but rather the popular ones, and these mostly because of price.

These comments, plus what we have gathered from our own experiences as well as reflections on the future, lead me to conclude that the demands created by modern marketing when integrated with the developments in propagation techniques require that the present-day nurseryman choose between one of two possible areas of specialization:

- (1) Mass production of any or many of the popular and fast-moving items, or
- (2) Patient production of the more difficult, more costly, slower growing, rare and unusual plants, for which, I am happy to say, there is an increasing demand.

Happy is, and hats off to, the one who can do both!

TOK FURUTA: Our next speaker is Jack Matsuda. He will discuss the effect of modern marketing on propagation as it pertains particularly to bedding plant growers. Jack:

MODERN MARKETING EFFECTS ON PROPAGATION

JACK MATSUDA
Union Nursery, Inc.
Gardena, California

Propagation in the bedding plant industry has been basically the same for many years — sowing seeds, transplanting,

and hoping for the weather to break at selling time. However, there has been many changes in modern marketing.

Discount houses and mass outlet retail centers have mushroomed around suburban living. To become more familiar with marketing trends of today, we must become more merchandising-oriented so that we may better serve our sales outlets.

Timing, distribution and packaging are some of the factors involved in marketing.

If you read your newspaper ads you will no doubt become aware that all retail outlets have anniversary sales, 1c sales, birthday sales and what have you, besides their regular holiday specials. To feature a certain plant for their ads, the grower must be informed well in advance since most stores place their copies ahead. We use our IBM system for computing and planning by categorizing our sales. No matter how much planning is involved, timing on certain crops is critical, especially when color is needed for appeal factor; therefore the importance of controlled environment for growing is considerable. This involves usage of chemical growth regulators, a fertilization system, lights, black-cloth, CO₂, and perhaps a UTOPIA-type of growing house.

Packaging and distribution becomes another factor resulting from marketing. We at Union Nursery have developed a shipper display unit we call the "Union's Shelf-Rak" for merchandising our product. This unit consists of a package 18" x 18" x 47" to hold six flats of bedding plants. We have overcome much of our distribution problems by utilizing this package for shipping by common carrier. Since we use a lightweight mix, this unit only weighs about 60 lbs. It also has many features for the retailers, such as self-service, sales appeal, ready display, reduced handling, no flat deposits, and a higher dollar return per square foot of space.

Modern marketing involves many changes in our growing methods. I have just touched on some of the changes involved in the bedding plant industry. However, I feel this could be generalized in the whole nursery industry. We must utilize the ideas of our allied industries, our Agricultural Extension Service, and our Universities to keep pace with our changing economic picture.

TOK FURUTA: We will withhold questions until the Question and Answer period and go right on to our next panel which deals with "In-Service Training" of employees. Actually, we are going to be talking about a topic which is very important and very dear to the hearts of most of us — or all of us, I should say — since the future of our industry depends upon what kind of people we bring in to it and how well they are trained.

A few weeks ago, in an address to nurserymen, I stated in part: "The greatest strength of the community, and at the same time the biggest problem faced by the community, is

people—those that make up the community and those that come to the community for its products and services. There is need in the community for more people to spend more time thinking. We should not be hidebound with preconceived notions or with tradition. We should let our imagination soar. We should put ideas from everywhere to work . . . ”

We hear that we are not able to attract the type of employees we want. I would ask if we really know what we want in terms of skills.

You must be willing to invest in the future of your firm by paying competitive and attractive salaries, and by developing more and more proficient training programs. Training programs serve to impart the skills needed by your firm and also to identify the employees with management capabilities.

Fortunately, leaders of the community are paying more and more attention to these problems. In-service training is not something to be handled only occasionally when the time permits. It is not something to which little thought is given. Rather, a regular program should be established, not only for the new employee, but for the retraining of the permanent staff. The authority and responsibility should be delegated to a definite and identifiable person. It should not be put off until tomorrow. The consequences of putting it off until tomorrow can be serious.

Now, for our Panel — I would like to call first on Dan Veyna, Orange County Nursery, now in Visalia, Tulare County, California.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

DANIEL C. VEYNA
Orange County Nursery, Inc.
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As I see it the purpose of in-service training is to have a labor force that can operate a smooth and efficient, profit-making business. Before we go into how and what we as a business are doing about it, please ask yourselves these questions: Are you so important in your work that your business couldn't do without you? Would your business suffer a serious setback, or go broke without your services or the services of one of your key employees. If your answers are in the affirmative the chances are that your in-service training has room for improvement. I personally believe that *no person* from the lowest paid employee to the boss *should be indispensable*. With a good program of training, your work should be able to continue with or without you. Hopefully, of course, no one should be quite as good or do as well, otherwise we would be out of a job.

In our own business we have a lot of “chiefs”—so, at the managerial level, we shouldn't be running short for awhile.