

B. RIGBY: You mentioned carnation and a particular recipe which you use. You buy a basic medium and then you add various millilitres of this and that.

L. DICK: With carnations, the solution was made up from scratch but you can buy the particular product. A lot of the time it is a basic Murashige and Skoog medium and then you add other things to it. A lot of the problems in making up the media have been taken away by the availability of products in packets.

A. CARTER: Can I just clear up this Chlorine/Domestos question? I think the advice was 10% Chloros — were you meaning 1% chlorine when you diluted it or are you actually using 1%?

M. STOKES: A 10% solution of the retail product

**HANDLING PLANTS AT
EGGERT PEDERSEN'S PLANTESKOLE,
NYKOBING, DENMARK**

ROGER PLATTS

*Perryhill Nurseries
Hartfield, Sussex*

During 1977/1978 I worked for Eggert Pedersen's nurseries on the island of Lolland in Southern Denmark doing a variety of tasks, mainly concerned with plant handling. A lack of knowledge of the Danish language obviously limited the jobs I could be asked to do.

I was interested in their system of plant handling because of the vast area covered with container plants. Approximately 80% of the staff of up to 200 were employed to move plants, and this meant that a very efficient handling system was necessary.

The plants were potted into rigid pots in a large potting shed housing four large potting benches for 16 people. During the winter the potting was done by hand; in the summer a potting machine was used.

As the plants were potted they were placed in small wooden boxes; eight 3½ litre pots were put in each box and the boxes were then loaded onto four-wheeled trailers, 33 boxes per trailer.

The trailers were then towed to the standing ground which comprised beds two metres wide, on sand.

During the selling season plants were labelled and packed directly into Pedersen's own metal crates, small wooden boxes, or pallets with small sides. The metal crates were approximately 1 cu. metre in size and were fixed firmly to pallets. One side of the crate was hinged for easier packing and the sides could be removed so that they could be stored more easily. Pedersen's sell or lend crates to regular customers. The crates held approximately 200 3½-litre pots — the most commonly used size. Smaller pots were packed in with cardboard. The crates were ideal for carrying conifers; other larger or more brittle plants were packed in wooden boxes or large pallets with wooden sides.

The packing shed was large enough to accommodate four lorries which parked in bays which were recessed, allowing fork lift trucks to drive directly onto the lorry. All doors opened automatically. The parking area outside the shed was also designed to allow fork lift trucks to load lorries during the busy season. Orders were placed in bays around the packing shed. The metal crates could be stacked three high when full, with small wooden boxes packed on top.

Bare-rooted stock was driven to a smaller packing shed where it was sorted and packed into metal crates.

Pedersen's export to several countries, mainly other countries in Scandinavia and to Germany. Although they had their own lorries haulage contractors were often employed to export plants; refrigerated lorries were also used.

Their system appeared highly efficient and the area around the packing shed was especially well designed for large lorries to turn and for orders to be set well apart. There were over 70 trailers and one of the few problems which occurred was that unless they were kept moving through the packing shed, there was congestion around the collecting area.

I enjoyed my year in Denmark and was pleased to work in such a friendly atmosphere. Anyone who wishes to see how a large establishment copes with vast quantities of container plants is well advised to visit Eggert Pedersen's nurseries.

A. CARTER: How do they unload the crates when they get to a small nursery?

R. PLATTS: I assume they either have a forklift or they sometimes do not transport them in crates.

O. LARSEN: Many nurseries have equipment now.

R. PLATTS: There are, in my opinion, two criticisms of the crate: one they are difficult to load; it is a tricky business with a forklift truck, and then the receiving nurseries may not have one.

B. MACDONALD: Would you alter the crate in any way?

R. PLATTS: No, I think reducing the large gaps between the wires gives problems when loading small plants into it. I did say it was difficult to load, but that was to start with — and practice makes perfect.

VOICE: You didn't mention potting machines?

R. PLATTS: They did have a Javo machine, but with the large staff of 140 they cut down during the winter and concentrated on hand potting with the remaining staff.

A YEAR ON AN AMERICAN NURSERY

ALAN J. HARGREAVES

*John Hargreaves and Sons
Gedney Dyke Nurseries
Spalding, Lincs.*

From September, 1976, until September, 1977, I worked on the James Wells Nursery, New Jersey, U.S.A., on their English Student Programme.

Firstly, I would like to give a brief history of the nursery for those who are not familiar with it. Jim Wells left England for the U.S.A. at the end of the last war and, after spending a few years on other nurseries, he took 20 acres near the coast in New Jersey in the late 1950's. After a few years of growing quite a wide range of nursery stock the range was cut down to mainly rhododendrons and azaleas.

In 1967 the English Student Programme was started when two students from Pershore College went over to New Jersey. And so it was in 1976 that David Hill and I, having both completed our N.C.H. at Hadlow College, applied for a job at Wells Nursery. After an interview at Pershore we were selected, together with two Pershore students to go over there for a year. The flight over and back was paid for by Jim Wells and this was repaid during our 12 month stay. Whilst there we had a large apartment on the nursery. I would like to mention at this point that it is extremely difficult to obtain a work permit or a 12 month visa for the United States, but, as Jim Wells had been bringing students over for 9 years, there wasn't too much of a problem.