

Burpee prepares

[Continued from Page 50]

exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower and Garden Show. A visit to the greenhouses proved months of planning and care have produced a Summer garden in March.

With Jeannette Lowe, horticulturist, and Lois Stringer, vegetable trial manager and All American Vegetable judge, as guides, the fine points of handling an extensive exhibit of live plants became quickly apparent. Anyone who has ever aspired to exhibit green beans, tomatoes, asters, or potted plants at a community fair can identify with some of the problems of displaying produce and plants at their peak of perfection on a given date. Timing is the key factor. Produce and flower must appear at the right time, and this requires planning months ahead.

This Winter has been a little harder to work with but not because of the cold, according to Miss Lowe. Although it was unusually cold, it was also unusually bright. Clear, sunny days, week after week, forced the flowers faster than normal. "There have been very few overcast days this Winter," she remarked about dreary days.

There are many variables in producing plants and flowers for a specific stage at a given date, but extensive, accurate records kept over the years help control some factors. Lois Stringer, vegetable trial manager, carried a rule and notebook as she went through the greenhouses measuring and counting and recording the inventory for the exhibition the second week of March. Since the display will include potted and cut specimens, a detailed accounting of the number of plants to be used each day to maintain a quality exhibit are accurately tabulated.

Getting the plants to the display site entails quite a lot more than the stuffing of newspaper around pots in a cardboard box seen at local fairs.

Large flats are designed to hold many plants. Tomatoes are grown in baskets, trained on six-foot-high poles, grown in hanging wire cages, or grown in cylindrical shaped wire frames. These are only a few well-planned moving techniques.

To simulate a permanent garden plot at the show, "rows" of vegetables such as bib lettuce and green bean plants are grown in plastic-lined wooden boxes which can be separated into sections by snipping the plastic, lifting out a section and placing end to end to form the row.

In order to have the produce on the plant during the exhibition, special transporting arrangements are necessary. Cloth sacks are gently tied around the red-ripe tomatoes hanging on the vines. "They look like they have diapers on them," Miss Lowe graphically explained.



These tomatoes are stacked, and are six feet tall with beautiful clusters of fruit. They are specimens grown at the Fordhook Farms, Doylestown.

Besides the garden plot and the cut flower displays, Burpee's will be showing some of the processes of developing hybrids through selective plant breeding. A group of fuzzy-looking marigolds will show the female parent which does not have the ruffled petals characteristic of the marigold flowerette. Several stages will be represented.

Although hybrid varieties may take 20 years to develop, they are worth it according to Burpee information because they benefit the grower through increased yield, higher quality vegetables and flowers,

[Continued on Page 52]



Miss Lois Stringer (front) and Miss Jeannette Lowe inspect lettuce specimens. Miss Stringer's notebook is essential to her work for keeping accurate records. Both women work with the Philadelphia flower show display for W. Atlee Burpee Co.

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