

GROWING LILIES AND OTHER FLOWERS FOR THE MARKET

Greenhouses in Omaha District Represent Thousands of Dollars Invested, Give Steady Employment to Hundreds and Furnish Delicate Flowers to City Dwellers from Chicago to Pacific Coast

“CONSIDER THE LILIES,” also the millions of other beauteous plants and flowers that will soon be seen everywhere in great profusion. In the fullness of their beauty and the extravagance of their fragrance they have really much more meaning than we are in the habit of attaching to them. Much work, great cost, and many rough and homely accessories go to the production of flowers that can be cut and sold in the market. Their value runs away up into the thousands.

Omaha and its immediate vicinity may with justice be spoken of as a center for the production of flowers. Chicago is a great producer and a great consumer, but from this section Chicago receives many a rich consignment, and sends to us many a check in return therefor.

When one sees 10,000 to 20,000 roses and carnations in retail florist shops like those of Henderson, Hess & Swoboda, Donahue and others in Omaha, Wilcox and Herman Bros. in Council Bluffs, the question springs up in the mind, where do all these flowers go? Yet 20,000 roses and carnations disappear daily from any of these headquarters for floral furnishings as rapidly as they can be handled. Ordinary bouquets, wedding pieces, armfuls, sprays, funeral pieces, hospital gladdeners—these take veritable oceans of cut flowers, even at this season of the year. And this is the “off crop” time for roses. Hundreds of thousands of separate flowers constitute the daily consumption in a city like Omaha alone.

Glass and soil mainly are the base of the cut flower business. But steel, iron, wire, lumber from the north and the south woods—there are thousands and thousands of feet of these materials used in the hothouses. Then there are the fertilizers, beef blood insecticides, tobacco, nicotine, pepper, ton on ton; and millions of tons of water consumed in bringing to the critical market a perfect, or even an acceptable, flower.

and funeral orders, as do others, for a territory having a radius of 300 miles.

Roses and carnations are the mainstay of the flower market from day to day; and here it may be noted that specialists attend to each particular kind of flower in the houses. One man spoken to about carnations while he was picking black leaves off rose bushes, said in the most matter-of-fact way, “I don't know anything about carnations.” Roses cost at different seasons from 3 to 12 cents apiece, often more; and carnations will average two-thirds the price of roses.

“Teas,” as the florists call them, are most numerous propagated and grown. There be Richmonds, Mme. Chatneys, brides and bridesmaids, and Killarneys, a breed from the famous lake of song and story, to name a few. These have strong roots, with lots of branches. The American Beauty is a hybrid, and the hybrids have nothing in the way of a root but fine, hairy toeholds, as it were.

favorites of the general public, roses and similar prize products of nature's laboratory must be especially cherished in their own home and habitat at times of danger. Thus alone can the bride have her happiness enhanced by flowers, the dreariness of hospital life be relieved, the sweetheart drawn closer, and the sadness of death be lightened. The flowers are cut and die that human joy may be heightened from day to day.

What do flowers cost to put on the market? Even the best posted men assert that is a poser. Steel, wire, lumber, glass, fertilizers and insecticides, cost heavily. Such a plant as Mr. Wilcox conducts requires 6,000 tons of coal a year. Several others use half to two-thirds as much, and burning coal runs into money. The bill for glass reaches a substantial figure each year; and every single house of ordinary size probably represents a cost of \$2,500 when completed and stocked. Iron pipe, wire, lumber, water, attendance, working tools, wagons and horses, store rent, all count in the aggregate bill before the florist be-

Is flower growing easy? Not so easy as clipping coupons, or riding on a street car, or playing ball—not even as easy as sawing wood, according to some men who ought to know. To begin with, eternal attention is the price of flowers, any flowers at all. The plants must be watched constantly, and treated persistently, either with fertilizer or with insect killers. The house kept free from insects of the dangerous kind is, of course, the best flower house.

When the earth is changed in the miles of long boxes once each year, there is a wholesale throwing away of plants; but those of extra good vitality or promise are kept, cut back, and re-planted. So in the breeding of finest flowers, selection is continually going on by experts. Only thus are the extraordinary specimens of chrysanthemums and other peculiar flowers produced.

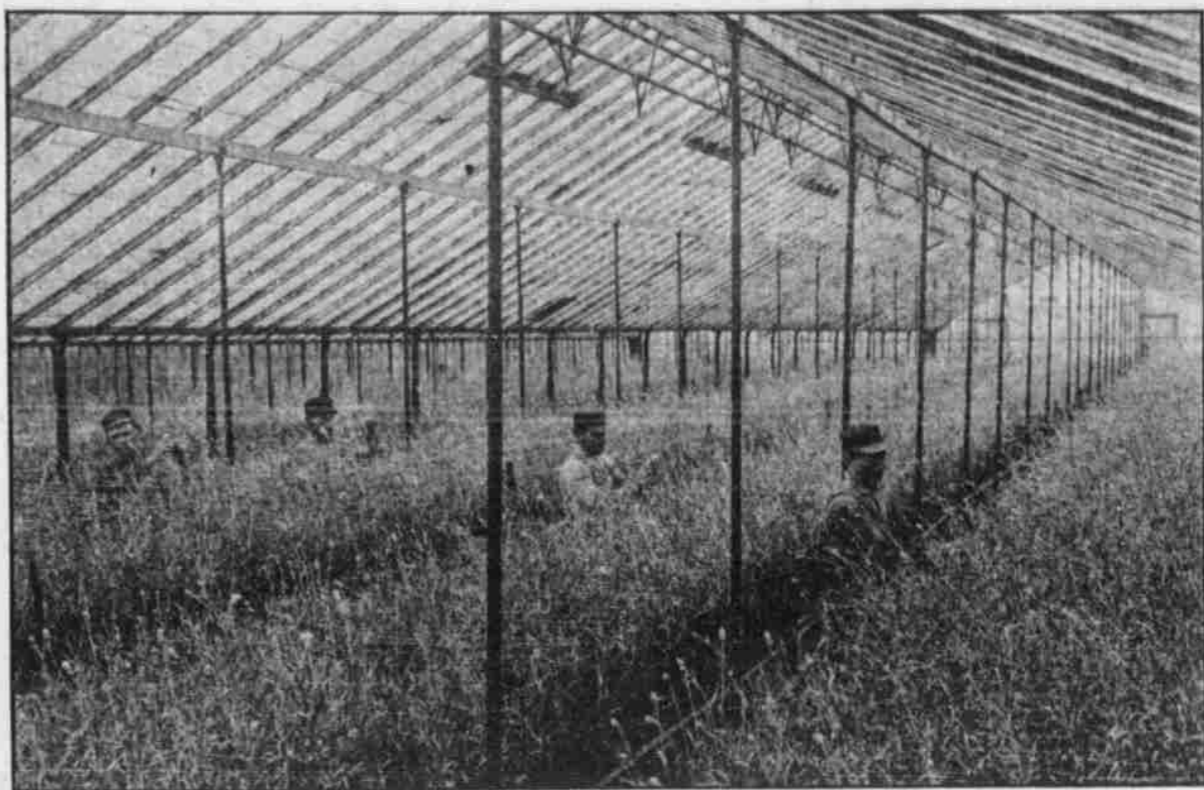
While it may seem common enough, the labor employed in greenhouses is really of a highly skilled order. There must be an understanding of flowers, their ways and habits, a large stock of patience and an ability to take pains much beyond the ordinary. As a rule, natives of other lands, and their sons, are the most successful in flower raising, and they practically have a monopoly of the business.

Probably a score of persons and firms are actively engaged in the growing of flowers as a business in Omaha and South Omaha; and in Council Bluffs about half a dozen. In addition to these, our florist pointed out that several hundred private conservatories must be taken into consideration when the extent of this business is being discussed. Most of the private conservatories are very small, but there are maybe a dozen that grow flowers on a fairly extensive scale.

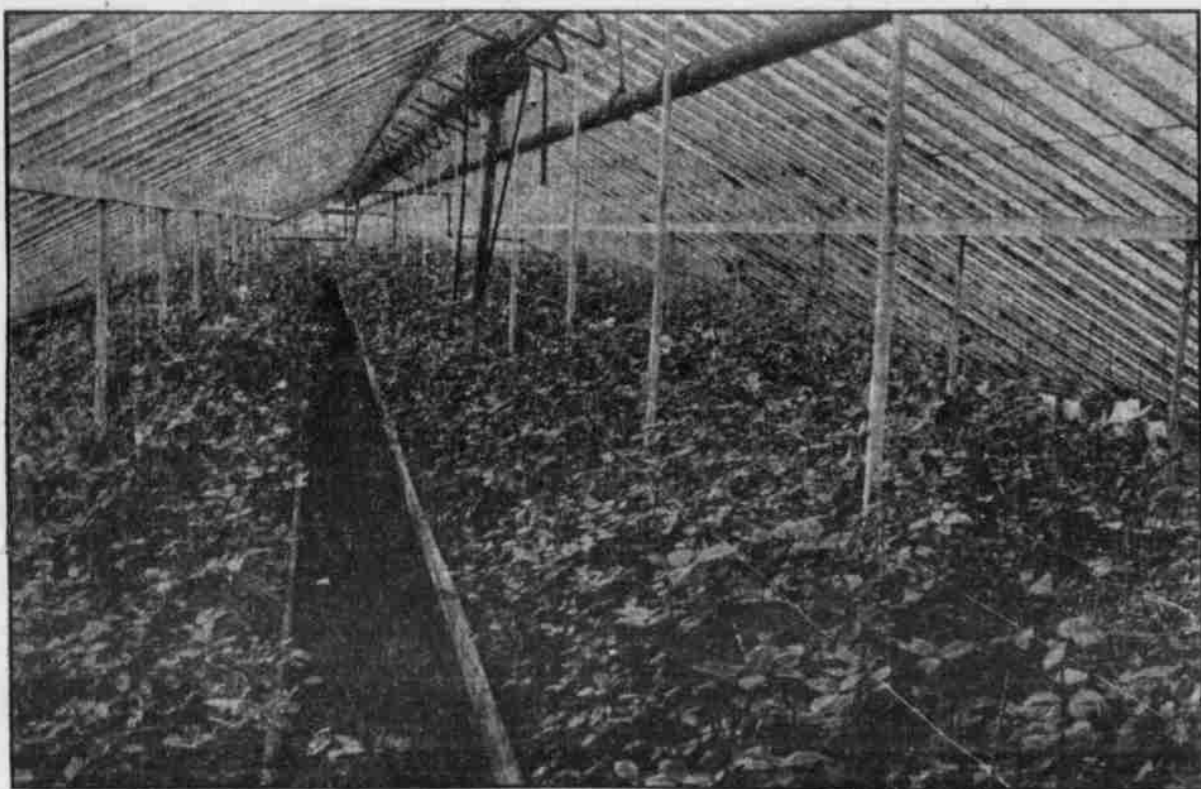
The Omaha florists who have smaller or larger areas under glass and raise flowers for the market, wholesale or retail, are C. W. Bondy, on Military



ROSE HOUSE AT HERMAN'S



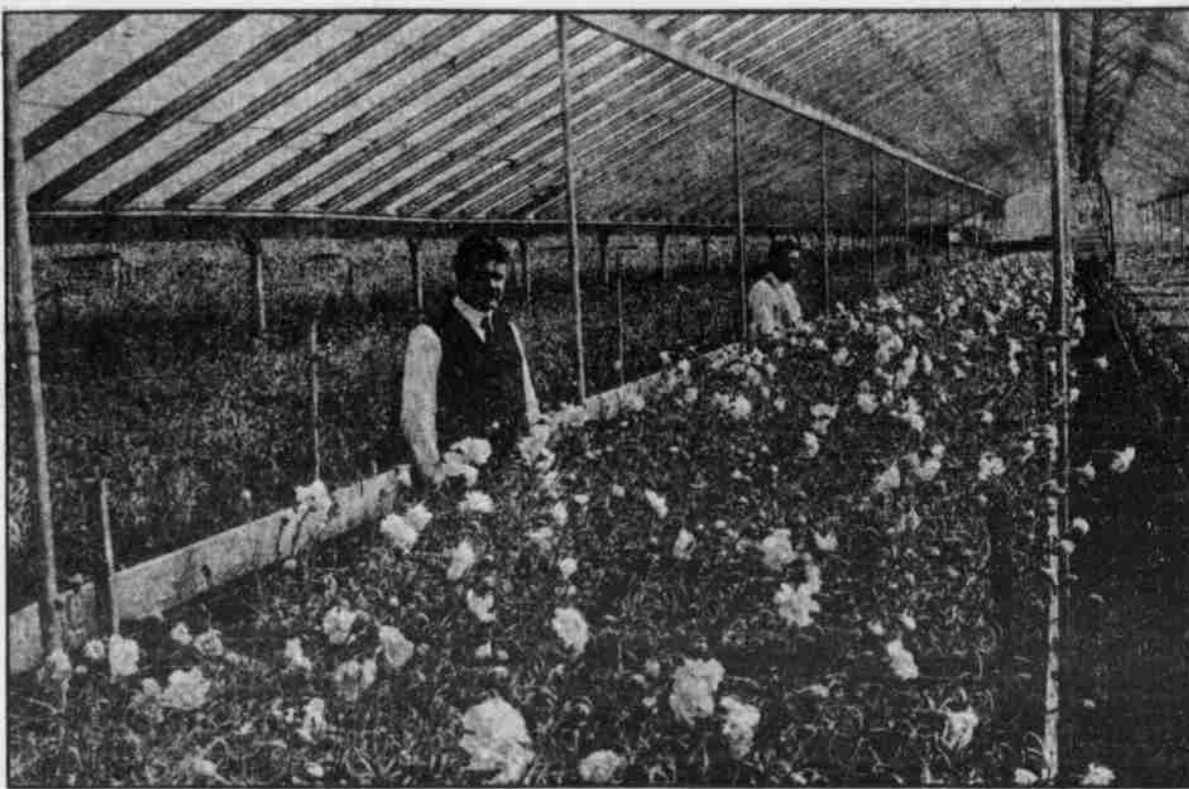
CARNATION HOUSE AT HERMAN'S



EASTER LILIES AT HESS & SWOBODA'S



PICKING "BLACK SPOTS"—HESS & SWOBODA'S GREENHOUSE



CARNATION BEDS AT HENDERSON'S

Acres of carefully prepared, and as carefully tended, soil are under glass in the environs of Omaha and Council Bluffs. To speak in terms, there are upward of 1,000,000 square feet of double strength glass spread on the frames of the greenhouses hereabout. It is bought by the carload by every florist of any pretensions, and comes from Kansas, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, wherever glass is made. Modern greenhouses are largely of steel construction, and there are systems of ventilation perfected especially for this business, with clever mechanical contrivances for raising and lowering the shining upper sections of the great flower nurseries.

How many among the ordinary run of citizens know that once during each year the earth in these acres of boxes has to be shoveled up and carried outdoors, to be replaced by other soil which has been prepared with the most extreme care. Soil that will be removed from the boxes say in July next will be spread outdoors on reserve ground and will be sown to grass or grain. It may lay so, under seed, for five or six years before it is brought back again to the boxes; but it will come back in good time—and thus there is a continual changing of soil and a progression of learning that the successful florist must have. In this business, of all others, care and work, work and care, are the foundation and the keystone.

Florists have to do with burglars and sneak thieves, too; not of the kind that are locked up when caught, but that must be killed. Their slaughter goes on hourly, and all the year round. Mr. Trip and Mr. Red Spider are the two particular undesirable visitors that the florists must guard against and murder on sight. Trip is very, very small, but Red Spider is even smaller, and to be able to know him next time you see him you must do the Bertillon stunt with a magnifying glass. Trip, he goes into the flower while it is in bud, if he isn't headed off, and saps the petals. Red Spider, he makes his unlawful camp on the under side of leaves, and proceeds to his work of sure destruction, until a busy man comes along with a hose spouting water under heavy pressure, which he directs to the location where Red Spider has ensconced himself. If the water be real cold, it stuns the infinitesimal outlaw, as it does also Trip; but to paralyze the miscreants entirely, preparations of tobacco and pepper are used.

No florist anywhere in this vicinity can meet the demand, as a rule. One man was asked if he kept ahead of the public demand, and with a half sarcastic smile he queried, “Why do you suppose we are always building new houses?” For example, Hess & Swoboda of Omaha, will this season build three new houses at their plant. They will be longer than an ordinary block and will be twenty-seven feet wide. Wilcox of Council Bluffs, has 400,000 feet of glass over his flower beds, and he hasn't enough yet. Henderson of Omaha is every year putting more money into greenhouses and the same is true of Herman Bros., of Council Bluffs, and of every other professional florist.

Before leaving Wilcox, it may be interesting to know that he has the greatest conservatories in the west, on the flat and terraced; 25,000 cut flowers every day is a conservative estimate of his production. Where do they go? Omaha gets a great many, and so do Kansas City, St. Joseph, St. Louis, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Denver, Chicago, Salt Lake City, Seattle, in Spokane, Wash., he finds a great market for rosebuds, which are there metallized into the natural flower hatpins that we see today in the jewelry and department stores. He fills wedding

At this season of the year, when roses are “off crop” to a great extent, much attention is devoted to Easter lilies. In the Wilcox houses one will see 10,000 pots of these plants, and in the other houses the number will range from 1,000 to 5,000. Inviting a visitor to see his Easter lily preparations, Lewis Henderson said, “Come on into the hot box.” Such it was, too, for the person unused to so much damp heat. But the first of April draws on apace, and shortly after that date the pure white emblems of the glorious Easter time must be ready for the demand that is becoming stronger every year. Just now the Easter lily plants are flush with the tops of the pots, a ranked army of shimmering green, but under the stimulus of heat and water judiciously used they will soon take on the required growth. Some are budding into entrancing loveliness already.

Specializing in flowers is the bent of some growers, as in the case of Paul B. Floth, whose houses are at Thirty-first and Burt. Carnations are his big specialty, and he has won many prizes for his exhibits in that line. Herman Bros. devote a great deal of attention to chrysanthemums in their season, and they supply a heavy demand from Chicago and other places that want the mop-like masses of color when they are as big as plates and as noisy as they can possibly be made. Perfect “mums are hard to grow.

Prowling around the greenhouses of Hess & Swoboda one gets most delightful whiffs of violets, and under low sashes we discover a whistling boy picking bunches of the delicious little plant that lovers and ladies delight in. Several thousand violets a day are picked from the Hess & Swoboda beds, and many thousands more go to the market from the other conservatories.

Pictures herewith were taken, it must be remembered, when roses and carnations beds are almost flowerless. To find them actually ablaze with the eye-filling beauty of growth that bursts and spreads with fragrant abandon, one must get to the conservatories before the scissor-men get busy in the early morning, or else in the late afternoon. Retail counters must be filled with cut flowers while the world is just beginning to stir into the active life of each day, and this makes it necessary for the superintendent and his men to cut and carry away the finest buds and blooms before breakfast time. The last available rose, and almost the last available carnation, are wanted out in the world; hence they are minus in the houses, unless one times a visit with certainty as to the hour.

Continuous, systematic and educated work is the rule in the big flower-growing expanses that are seen here and there in the open landscape; and night work is sometimes as useful as day work. On the night of the recent memorable blow, when the wind was ripping things front and sideways, every master florist was awake to stay. At the Henderson houses, just below the Omaha line in South Omaha, the proprietor was holding onto the iron frame work of one of his houses, with another man hanging onto his feet; and by snail force and weight they prevented damage that would have been exceedingly heavy. Here, and in every other flower house exposed to the wind, shattered panes of glass had to be replaced with others, or with paper, cardboard, anything and everything that would protect thousands of delicate plants, potent in earning power, from freezing. Cherished

and greenhouses must also be taken into consideration, say the florists. Taken altogether, the dozen or more professional flower growers of Omaha and Council Bluffs have a very large investment in the glass houses, whose owners never indulge in the pastime of throwing stones.

avenue, near Forty-fifth street; H. C. Carstens, Forty-sixth and West; Alfred Donahue, North Twenty-fourth and Fort; Charles Ederer, corner Bristol and North Thirtieth; S. R. Faulkner, on South Fortieth; P. B. Floth, North Thirty-first and Burt; Lewis Henderson, Twenty-fifth and G, South Omaha; Hess & Swoboda, North Twenty-fourth and Himebaugh avenue; Ammet Hooze, South Twentieth avenue and Thirty-fifth; Hruban Bros., South Twenty-ninth and Dorcas; Hans Jensen, Leavenworth and Forty-fifth; Paul Kosack, Sprague, near Twenty-fourth; Paul Paulson, Browne, near Seventeenth; Peterson Bros., South Fifteenth and Spring; S. B. Stewart, Kansas avenue and Thirty-fourth; George Zimmer, Twenty-third and Fort.

Mexican Beauties in Old City of Tehuantepec

ONE of the most interesting places on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is the old Indian city of Tehuantepec, about which comparatively little is known by the people in the United States. It is famed up and down the Pacific coast from Panama to California as the abode of the most beautiful Indian women living.

These women are noted for their beauty, fine figures and peculiar style of dress. Their dress consists of two pieces, one a loose blouse, cut low at the neck, rather short-waisted and without sleeves, which shows their beautiful rounded arms. The other garment is a piece of many-colored cotton wound around the hips and fastened to the waist; it reaches nearly to their bare ankles.

The women of the more well-to-do families try to conform to civilized notions on important occasions by wearing a real skirt made of two pieces of cloth. The upper part, reaching about to the knees, is of the usual colored cotton, but the lower part is of white cotton, and is so fastened to the upper part that it can be removed for the purpose of washing.

Simply to rest it over the forehead, allowing the lower portion to hang down the back, while the collar flares up and back from the head as before. To see several women on the street wearing it reminds one of a flock of mammoth sea gulls with their wings all flapping at once.

There are Indian families of this queer old cities who are reputed to be wealthy, yet they stick to their old customs and dress and live practically the same lives their ancestors did, and hardly ever leave their native town. A good deal of their wealth is put into jewelry for the women and the principal article of jewelry is strings of gold beads.

The beads are roughly beaten out by native workmen and on these strings of beads are hung American gold coins. Sometimes as many as a dozen or fifteen coins are so used. Often two or three strings of beads are worn at the same time. The smaller gold pieces are strung on near the neck and larger ones are put on further down, while at the bottom of the string of beads, which reaches to the waist, will be hung one or two double eagles.

Some of the strings have three or four two and a half, several five, several ten and one or two twenty-dollar gold coins; so that these strings of beads with the gold coins are worth from \$100 to \$500 Mexican (\$50 to \$250 gold) each. There are also necklaces that fit the neck rather tightly made from American gold dollars. Sometimes to such a necklace is attached a pendant set with diamonds and other precious stones.

The city has a population estimated at from 10,000 to 20,000. The houses are built of adobe, usually one story high, and form three sides of a square. As you enter from the street through a gate in the high fence you find yourself in the patio or court-

yard, which is thirty or forty feet square. The house has a veranda extending around its three sides. The living room and the kitchen are in the center part and the bed rooms in the wings.

The floors are of stone or hard-pressed dirt, the walls bare and there is very little furniture. In two of the rooms of a house we were in there were only three chairs, a table and a bedstead; in one of the rooms the only furniture was a chair and the bedstead. We went to this house to see some strings of beads and necklaces and were shown half a dozen or more, worth probably \$1,000, so that the family was comparatively wealthy, while appearances indicated that it was poor.

The poorest classes live in the outskirts of the city in huts loosely built of bamboo poles and sticks and the roofs thatched with banana leaves and straw. Frequently two or more families live in a one-room hut. The children of the poorer people run around naked. It is a mystery how they all manage to live.

It is an ordinary sight to see the women and children going in bathing from the sandy beach of the river that flows past and near the city. They do not wear bathing suits.

The railroad crosses a bridge on the edge of the city and the bathers are plainly seen from the car windows. And yet these people are the most moral of Indians, and they have not intermarried with other Indian tribes or with the Spanish, Mexicans, Japanese and Chinese, as have the Indians of Central America and some other parts of Mexico.

The women always carry on their heads whatever bundles or packages they have to carry. For this reason they are unusually (Continued on Page Three.)