

# FloralNEWS

No. 2, 2012

A Selecta Cut Flowers Publication



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## On The Cover:

**Adriana González,**  
Elite House Manager  
at Elit Flower  
(Colombia), next to  
**Lorca**, her favorite  
variety.



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## Seeing the Door in the Wall

Did you know that one of the world's most successful authors – J. K. Rowling with her Harry Potter Series – got more than 20 rejections of publishers? Today her books have been translated into 73 languages and sold more than 450 million copies!

Obviously most of the establishment did not see value in what she had written. Comments were: too long, not commercial! Yet there are always those that have the talent to see a unique opportunity, seeing a door where others see a wall too high to climb. Perhaps it was simply fear as the publishing industry is going through dramatic changes. However, it is difficult to discover new ways walking in existing footprints.

Our industry is also experiencing quite significant changes. I would think that those who are more creative, seeing opportunities, and executing those well will stay ahead and have nothing to fear.

At this point I would like to encourage all of us to walk around with open eyes discovering doors where others might see only a wall. And in that spirit I would like to invite you to leaf through our catalog. We are looking forward to getting into a discussion with you, our valued customer, to talk about opportunities that we may develop together, opening doors that lead us into a successful future.

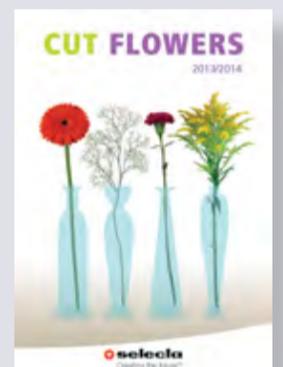
Sincerely yours,

Nils Klemm  
n.klemm@selectaklemm.de

## Our new Catalog has arrived!

Check out our new cut flowers catalog! **Flip through it now** and find a broad assortment of innovative, top-quality Carnations, Gerberas, Gypsophila, and Solidago. Learn all about Estelle, the whitest solidago on the market; explore about the Pearls® Series of Gypsophila; and browse the newest introductions for 2013. In the new catalog our customers are sharing with you their success stories and experiences with Selecta's varieties.

To request a catalog please click **here**.



## Q &amp; A

## with Jorge Alonso, from Teleflora

*Teleflora Grower Relations Manager discusses new trends, challenges, and opportunities in the floral industry.*

*Teleflora is a floral wire service company which brokers orders to local florists for delivery. Headquartered in Los Angeles, California, Teleflora has over 18,000 member florists throughout the U.S. and Canada, with an additional 20,000 affiliated florists outside North America. The company has 3,000 employees worldwide in 20 countries, and it is the largest privately held floral wire service company in the world.*

FOR MORE: [www.teleflora.com](http://www.teleflora.com)

**Q: Please tell me a bit about your company. When Teleflora started and how it serves their customers?**

**A:** Teleflora has been around since the 1930s. It was first conceived as a “wire-service” for retail florists, offering a wide range of services. A number of years ago, the company opened its cut-flower division for their florist members as an added value service



Jorge Alonso

– that division is called *Stems & Bunches*, and its mission/value-proposition is to supply the freshest high-quality flowers at the best prices to our shops.

**Q: Do you work closely with cut flowers farms or do you own farms?**

**A:** We don’t own farms, and that is one of the main reasons why we work extremely closely with the growers we deal with. We refer to those growers as “grower-partners,” understanding that in the end, they are the ones responsible for delivering our value proposition to our customers.

**Q: Which are the most popular cut flowers on the markets you serve? Which are the most profitable cut flowers for your business?**

**A:** Teleflora has a large network of florists in the U.S., and the consumption and preferences across the board go from A to Z. However, our product strategy focuses on what I like to call the “staples”: Roses, Al-

stroemerias, Carnations, Mini-Carnations, Pompons, Fillers, and Greens. The reason behind it is simple – that is where the volume is. With high volumes to source, our muscle to negotiate with the best players in the industry grows, and that translates into access to the best and latest varieties, best practices, and overall best customer service. In the end, those are benefits we always pass on to our shops. In terms of profitability, the staples add the most to our bottom line.

**Q: Which are the best-selling colors? And in which season are you receiving the highest volume of orders?**

**A:** We receive the highest volume of orders during Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day; however, we move a decent amount of flowers during Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas and even during non-traditional times of the year via promotions and incentive programs. When it comes to colors, it depends on the season. However, red, lavender, and pink are especially strong colors for us year-round.

**Q: In how many countries does Teleflora offer online service and in which country is the fastest growing business and why?**

**A:** Teleflora operates across the U.S., including Hawaii and Alaska. In terms of growth, we have accomplished most of our goals consistently even in a struggling segment of the market like the one we dedicate our efforts to: the retail florists.

**Q: The whole world is being operated with the help of Internet. More and more people are shopping in the virtual shops. Why people prefer to buy flowers online?**

**A:** There is a segment of the market that prefers not to deal with too many unknowns when making a floral buying decision. The online experience gives them a good visual on the options: a photo, a price, and a delivery date – it is quick and easy. If they have to go to a shop or a supermarket, the decision becomes more complex: cutting stage, length, variety,

“We are convinced that a good assortment is built based on both good performing varieties and the latest and most exciting ones.”

container, etc.

**Q: There are different lifestyle and economic trends that affect the floriculture industry. Which of them has the biggest impact on your business?**

**A:** In my opinion it is a combination of both. Buying trends have changed over time, and today’s consumers have access to several options to get their flowers: retail florist, supermarkets, and online marketers. So customers have options, and they have become smarter at choosing products, prices, and places to shop. The retail florist segment has also been hit with all that competition, but they have become better at sourcing their product and lowering their costs in order to stay relevant in the marketplace.

**Q: What are the biggest challenges you’re facing in your business right now?**

**A:** Price has always been a major issue as the market has become an aggressive place, and staying competitive could be challenging. The good news is that our partnerships with excellent suppliers have allowed us to stay relevant in the market.

**Q: Which opportunities do you see on the horizon?**

**A:** The biggest opportunity we have identified has to do with our product. We have re-defined our product strategy by selecting not only high quality “staples,” but also the best varieties within those staples. We are convinced that a good assortment is built based on both good performing varieties and the latest and most exciting ones. **SCF**



By Sabina Reiner

# News from AgriFlor 2012

The 13th edition of Agriflor 2012, also known as FlorEcuador Agriflor, was held in Quito (Ecuador) from Wednesday 3 to Saturday 6 October 2012. This international floral trade show is gaining more and more popularity and you shouldn't miss it.

According to Jasper van Dijk, HPP Exhibitions Marketing Manager, the attendance numbers are approximately 1500 visitors from 49 countries, and 85% of the visitors came from outside of Ecuador. People attend this trade show to see new products and plant varieties, to find new vendors, learn business and production techniques, and network with other professionals. It was encouraging to see so many fellow growers, importers, wholesalers, and industry friends from around the world visiting the show. The weather was great and the aisles were packed with an upbeat crowd that made their way to see many of the 206 exhibitors.

Entering the location it was impossible to miss Selecta and its #1 crop for the year, Pearls® Gypsophila. Right at the entrance a big "Pearls" billboard and a big banner welcomed the visitors and grabbed everyone's attention. Selecta has their presence at CoOp Farms booth and at the Ecuadorian Gyp booth, as well.

The plant qualities were impressive, and the friendly team of CoOp Farms and Nathalie Landazuri from Ecuadorian Gyp Association were warmly welcoming visitors to enter the stand and explore the best Gypsophila varieties. Let's look at some of the Pearls® gyp highlights from Selecta: All Pearls® varieties were selected for long vase life

(tests done by Florcontrol, FloraHolland, and OTA Tokyo proved a superior vase life of Pearls varieties) and superior quality. We presented three Pearls® varieties: Blossom, Ginga, and CV 352, our promising trial variety.

Many of our visitors who grow Pearls® Blossom confirmed to us that this variety has a very high productivity to compare to other Gyp varieties they have tried.

The most exciting feature about Pearls® Ginga is the fact that this variety is not only fast and vigor-



Nathalie Landazuri (first from left) from Ecuadorian Gyp Association, David Abuchar (in the middle), and Jordi Caballeria (on the right) from Selecta were warmly welcoming visitors to enter the stand and explore the best Gypsophila varieties.



Right at the entrance a big "Pearls" billboard and a big banner welcomed the visitors and grabbed everyone's attention.



ous but it is scent-free, which is a big advantage for the Asian market. Many growers were very positively surprised about the flowers of our trial variety **CV 352**: very small flower size (6 mm), unique in appearance, and similar to Limonium sinuatum. Some even suggested that we call it Gypso statice. This variety will fit the huge and growing market segment for bouquets.

We are proud to inform you that Pearls® varieties won 2nd and 3th prize at the 2012 Agriflor flowers competition.

It was a fantastic event, and we would like to take the opportunity to say a special Thank You to the team at CoOp Farms and Latinflor. Thanks to them Pearls® Gyp was the brightest star during Agriflor!

The next Agriflor trade show will take place on Wednesday 1 October to Saturday 4 October 2014.



Pearls® Blossom and Pearls® Ginga won the second and third prize at the 2012 Agriflor growers competition.

Sabina Reiner is Marketing Manager at Selecta Cut Flowers. You can reach her at [sabina.reiner@selectacutflowers.com](mailto:sabina.reiner@selectacutflowers.com)



## Mark your calendar!

International Floriculture Trade Shows in the upcoming 12 months.

INTERNATIONAL FLORICULTURE TRADE FAIR (IFTF) 2012	OCT. 31 - NOV. 2	VIJFHUIZEN, <b>HOLLAND</b>
IPM ESSEN 2013	JANUARY 22-25	ESSEN, <b>GERMANY</b>
WORLD FLORAL EXPO 2013	MARCH 13-15	NEW YORK, NY, <b>USA</b>
HORTIFLORA ETHIOPIA 2013	MARCH 20-22	ADDIS ABABA, <b>ETHIOPIA</b>
ASTANA FLORA EXPO 2013	APRIL 24-26	ASTANA, <b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>
INTERNATIONAL FLORICULTURE TRADE EXPO (I.F.T.EX.) 2013	JUNE 5-7	NAIROBI, <b>KENYA</b>
INTERNATIONAL FLORICULTURE EXPO 2013	JUNE 18-21	MIAMI BEACH, FL, <b>USA</b>
EXPO FLORA RUSSIA 2013	SEPTEMBER 4-6	MOSCOW, <b>RUSSIA</b>
PROFLORA 2013	OCTOBER 2-4	BOGOTA, <b>COLOMBIA</b>
INTERNATIONAL FLOWER EXPO (IFEX) 2013	OCTOBER 9-11	TOKYO, <b>JAPAN</b>
WF&FSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2013	OCTOBER 23-25	The Doral, MIAMI, FL, <b>USA</b>
INTERNATIONAL FLORICULTURE TRADE FAIR (IFTF) 2013	NOVEMBER 6-8	VIJFHUIZEN, <b>HOLLAND</b>



# Memorial Day bouquets

By Ramiro Penaherrera

**Memorial Day in the United States is a time for Americans to honor family and friends who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Millions visit cemeteries or participate in local parades. This year Selecta Breeding was a principal sponsor of Memorial Day Flowers. The Memorial Day Flowers Group organized the donation and handout of over 100,000 roses and 2,300 bouquets at 95 cemeteries across the U.S.A.**

At Arlington National Cemetery more than 60,000 roses were given out; one for the headstone of a loved one, the other to take home in memory. Additionally, Red, White, and Blue bouquets featuring our Pearls® Series Gypsophila were placed on specific headstones. Photos were taken and sent to family members who could not attend the Arlington National Cemetery event. Eighty-four florists signed up to hand out roses and bouquets in their communities. Each florist also received Pearls® Series Gypsophila and information as well and a chance to win an iPad. Memorial Day Flowers co-director Ramiro Penaherrera (a Pearls® Series Gyp grower in Ecuador) said that the bouquets gave a special touch to all the

events. "When we explained to Selecta Breeding that we wanted to include Pearls Gyp in the bouquets, the company immediately gave us the go ahead. Next year we plan to give out a Selecta Breeding sponsored tri-color bouquet to each of the 40,000 families that visit Arlington National Cemetery. Florists will also be able to freely order a limited number of bouquets for local ceremonies."

Co-director Kevin Clifford added his thoughts about the event: "With Memorial Day Flowers 2012 at Arlington National Cemetery behind us now, I find myself flooded with emails detailing accounts of stories from sites across the country and the volunteers that

Click on the picture to see the VIDEO.

participated. Overall, we distributed more than 103,000 stems to 84 locations in 26 states that honored people who have served our country, and we recognized the ones left behind that continue to carry the burden of these sacrifices. It is truly incredible how many people we have touched with flowers this weekend. I could not begin to count the number of people crying in my arms while they thanked me, and it all seems so reversed. A few simple stems meant so much to each of them. The encounters happened very quickly however, and even without knowing the person or anything about them, the gravity was so huge you could not help but become pulled in.

I presented a few stems to a woman name Sally in a wheel chair and offered to help her get out to visit the grave. She thanked me again and again and said she had already been out to each site earlier in the morning. I replied with, "Each site, so you have two family members here?" She then informed me that she has two husbands buried there. "I came out early so I could take care of them to find that you good people already

honored each of them better than I could possibly do. God bless you all," as she cried sitting in the shade of a tree for a few hours.

Next was a man with two small girls, who were maybe 4 and 6. They came back many times to take more flowers out to place stems on headstones that we did not reach. Their dad, Mike, asked me if it was OK and told me his girls wanted to make sure others had flowers on their stones. As I gave the girls flowers, I told them they were doing something very nice for others. The one girl replied with, "Yes, we want them all to look like our mom's."

A service woman came up to me in full uniform with several metals. She struggled to get the words out to ask if she could have four roses. As I was getting the roses she was thanking me for what we were doing. I responded that we are privileged to do this and you're welcome to have as many as you need. She broke down crying after a moment and said, "No thank you, there were only five of us out that day."

Often we forget how flowers can help people open up and express their feelings and emotions. Selecta Breeding recognizes this and feels that the Memorial Day Flowers Organization is helping us all connect to our families, friends, and communities.

Ramiro Penaherrera, President at LatinFlor (Ecuador) and Director at Flowers For Kids.

For more information please go to [www.memorialdayflowers.org](http://www.memorialdayflowers.org)



Selecta sponsored tri-color bouquet to each of the families that visit Arlington National Cemetery.

Ramiro Penaherrera, Flowers For Kids Director and Kevin Clifford, Delaware Valley Floral Group Director, Co-Organizers Memorial Day Flowers 2012.



By Felipe Gomez

# COLOR Your World



*It is an enormous challenge to bring innovation to our customers. Selecta, as a breeding company, wants to cooperate and participate in this process because the cut flowers industry is constantly seeking different ways of innovation. Differentiation today in all levels of the chains is a key to increase market share.*

There is a program for the U.S. market of a Chrysanthemum named "Crazy Daisies." It was developed for a specific niche of market some years ago. If you study the market carefully, there is an empty space for tinted carnations. In my opinion this is happening because the tinted carnations have not been developed like the chrysanthemums. Carnations, Alstroemerias, and Chrysanthemums are classified as basic products, and large quantities are grown. Tinted flowers are a category in the market for cut flowers, but tinted carnations have to exist as a regular program in this category in order for them to develop.

Selecta has carnation varieties that tint very well, using the absorption technique. It is the case of Randal, Hermes, Hermes Orange, and Caesar, which has yellow natural color.



*You can get nice results without always using a white flower for tinting. On this image you see tinted mini carnation Caesar, which has yellow natural color.*

sar among others. Using varieties that are originally white, yellow, and orange in combination with the inks, you can get amazing results and a great range of colors (red, blue, green, yellow, orange, etc.). It is about exploring the possibilities and understanding the variables of the process. **The variables for tinted flowers are: Carnation variety, cutting stage, ink, time of absorption, color of the ink, temperature, ink dose.** If you are able to control these variables, it is possible to achieve good results constantly.

To tint some flowers we follow a procedure developed by Colorquímica that offers inks for cut flowers and helped us get the results that we were looking for. As I mentioned before, the varieties used to tint were Randal (white), Hermes (yellow), and Hermes Orange (orange) as standard carnations and Caesar (yellow) as a mini carnation. The cutting stage was straight petal, the ink was Colorquímica, absorption time 20 minutes, ink color: orange blue, red, yellow, green and violet, and 10 grams per liter of water was the dose.

Flowers are fun, and every time I work with them I amuse myself with the results. In my personal experience large processes can be done if you control the variables in them. Tinted carnations need to be explored and offered to the market. As you can see in the picture on page 10 (mini carnation Caesar original color yellow), you can get nice results without always using a white flower for tinting. If you are a grower, you need to explore this possibility. It will give you mobility in improving your economic result.

*Cooperation to tint the flowers of this article was done by Juan Camilo Rúa +573116350667.  
[www.colorquimica.com.co](http://www.colorquimica.com.co)*

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By Stefan Reiner



# The Challenge of Buying Cut Flowers in Germany

**M**y family and I lived in the U.S. for eight years, in Southern California close to San Diego. Our shopping for groceries was divided among three grocers: Stater Bros, Albertson's (due to its close proximity to our house), and Trader Joe's. In all three stores cut flowers were part of their offering. Stater Bros and Albertson's offered not just bouquets but small florist sections offering bouquets and consumer bunches in different styles, colors, and most importantly pricing. Potted plants were part of it but on a much smaller scale. One could even order a special arrangement when needed. Décor items were available as well. Trader Joe's focused on local flower production and usually had the better quality (seasonal offering though).

The flower sections were conveniently located close to the registers and together with wine and chocolates. So when looking for something to bring as a gift, one could choose between flowers, wine, and chocolate, or combine it as needed.

This made it very easy for me to buy cut flowers for friends and family. One came by the flowers at least once during a grocery run, mostly more than once by the way the sections are located in the stores. Even my kids came up with the idea to take flowers home. I would say I brought home flowers at least once a month if not more. I did spend in average about \$20 per purchase. When shopping for gifts I mostly combined wine and flowers, which again was easy and always left a good impression.

**W**e are living in Germany for almost two years now. It was quite a change in many aspects, but one we just spoke recently about was buying cut flowers. My sister is a florist, and we had an interesting exchange about the availability of cut flowers in Germany.

Also here I divide my grocery shopping among three chains: Aldi, Rewe, and Kaufland. They offer potted plants most of the time (seasonal a bit though), but

cut flowers are rarely part of their offering. Maybe in spring they have tulips and some sunflowers in summer. Aldi offers bouquets holiday-related and on-line, but quality is on the low side (especially in the stores). Some do have a street-side shop offering cut flowers close to the entrance, but this depends very much on the location. None of the stores I visit has one though. So my regular grocery runs don't include cut flowers anymore, as they did in the past. Now I have to go shopping for cut flowers to a florist or garden center, which means an extra run. More challenging is parking as they are quite often inconveniently located, and their opening times (open late and close early) make it difficult for a full-time employee to buy cut flowers. Gas stations offer bouquets, but the fact that I just spent a fortune on gas does not create an urge to buy cut flowers, especially when the quality is below average. To be honest, I may have purchased cut flowers three times since I am back, which translates into three purchases in

two years. These purchases I made because I wanted to buy flowers. The grocery stores do offer wine and chocolates so as gift for friends I usually take those as they are easy available.

**B**ottom line is that I spent most of my money for flowers on impulse purchases and not planned purchases. This is very difficult in Germany, and so my spending on cut flowers has decreased significantly. It is not pricing, as cut flowers are actually cheaper in Germany compared to the U.S. but convenience is more important to me than what I bring as a gift.

Flowers are beautiful and still a favorite gift item. Consequently, making cut flowers easily available to a broad audience will be key in future for growth.

*Stefan Reiner is Head of Product Management Pot and Bedding Plants at Selecta Klemm, Germany.*

# 2013 TOP Introductions

By Felipe Gomez

We are continuously working on new varieties that will add to your company's bottom line. One example is the Estelle solidago we are adding to our program. Estelle is the first of its kind on the world market. It is the whitest solidago you have ever seen. This year we are introducing 16 new varieties. Let's take a closer look at some of the new highlights.



Ormea

Grace

Mandalay

Everest

**Ormea** is a reliable variety in all the aspects: excellent growth, very good quality, and productivity. It has big and bright red flowers. A must-have novelty!

**Grace** is an elegant variety, with a very deep burgundy color and an amazing size of flowers.

**Mandalay** has a long-lasting and an incredibly eye-catching hot pink color. This top quality variety is very fast to grow and has a superior vase life.

**Everest** is pure white variety with a high productivity and very good vase life. Everest won "2012 Best Introduction" prize at Keukenhof in the Netherlands.



**Jade** - the perfect GREEN MINT color among mini carnations. It delivers quality, long vase life, and resistance in the field against to fusarium



**Springfield** has a unique color expressing happiness. This mini carnation has reliable stems and flower quality.



**Red Trip** is a very highly regarded "spider" gerbera with a beautiful orange red color. It has long stems and very high productivity. Red Trip gives you the opportunity to innovate and achieve a unique look in bouquets and floral arrangements.

In our mini Gerbera program we are introducing three new varieties: **Mila** in salmon-white color, **Satomi** in hot pink, and **Trilli** in pure white. All three varieties produce high-quality flowers and have good vase life.



Mila

Satomi

Trilli



Estelle

Evita

**Estelle** is the whitest solidago on the market! This highly productive variety is easy to grow, early to flower, and quick to harvest. It has heavy stems with large cream-white flowers. Estelle is excellent for tinting!

**Evita** is the perfect filler for bouquets. It has heavy V-shape stems with large deep yellow flowers. Evita is easy to grow, early to flower, and quick to harvest.



By Nils Klemm

# How to Promote Cut Flowers?

A look into neighboring industry segments: Marketing and Promotion Initiatives of Pot and Bedding Plants.

One of the challenges of our industry compared to others that produce so called fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) is the fact that our industry is comparatively fragmented. This is true for all segments, whether we are looking at cut flowers, potted, or bedding plants. This is surely not helping, when we think about marketing and promotion activities. Marketing and promotion is one of the areas where size matters. As an industry we battle for a share of the consumer's wallet. The choices are numerous: flowers compete against perfume, candy, clothes and decoration accessories, and gift items, many of them stemming from large multinational consumer goods companies with deep pockets when it comes to marketing and promotion budgets.

Selecta is one of the breeding companies' active in all three segments: pot and bedding plants as well as cut flowers. In all segments we are faced in various product classes with flat or slightly shrinking markets, which says these products are losing consumer interest. Hence it might be worthwhile to learn of marketing and promotion activities that have managed to overcome this situation.

In that regard I would like to introduce to you the *Stars for Europe* campaign. *Stars for Europe* is an initiative of the leading Poinsettia breeders focused on the European market. Selecta is market leader, followed by others such as Dümmer, Ecke, Syngenta, and a few other breeders. The promotion is currently running in 16 European countries.



All images © Stars for Europe

Stars for Europe promotion is currently running in 16 European countries. It focuses in particular upon the versatile options for using poinsettias (such as gift item or decorative item for home and business).

It focuses in particular upon the versatile options for using Poinsettias. Other topics that are regularly addressed include the right way to care for Poinsettias, the range of varieties, and home decoration with Poinsettias. In addition there are umbrella themes that change every year, which show the Poinsettia in its almost limitless versatility. A consumer website offers helpful tips for purchasing and using Poinsettias. Tips on decoration are illustrated, using examples with step-by-step photos of how the arrangement shown can be copied quickly. Press kits are offered and media contacts have gone into the hundreds of thousands.

This promotion initiative is financed by breeders as well as the producers of finished material, by a marginal contribution of 0,005€ per plant, which generates a marketing budget of more than a half-million Euros per year. Most know the famous statement attributed to the legendary carmaker Henry Ford, who claimed half of his advertising budget was wasted - but he didn't know which half. I am mentioning this since it is interesting to know that in the U.S. and Canada Poinsettias are used in the same way: as a Christmas decoration item. During the years where *Stars for Europe* has been running, it has been interesting to see that the market size of Poinsettias in Europe was slightly growing, whereas it has been in decline in North America. Of course one may question if this is connected to the campaign. In my world it does make a difference.

In fact the campaign has been granted subsidies from the European Union, which are adding €2.1 Million for a 3-year period. A single company- or country-related project could not have achieved this. All in all it is a way that shows an interesting approach to overcome usually exist-ing disadvantages when talking about marketing and promotion of flowers.

I would be happy to provide more information to those who are interested. At the end we should all be interested in actively promoting the beauty of our products.

Nils Klemm is President & CEO at Selecta Cut Flowers. You can reach him at [N.Klemm@selectaklemm.de](mailto:N.Klemm@selectaklemm.de)



## A new face at Selecta.



Selecta Colombia, a sales division of Selecta Cut Flowers, has appointed **Paola Coba** as its junior sales manager. In her new role Paola will support Selecta's market development activities in Colombia. After graduating as an agronomic engineer at the

Earth University in Costa Rica, she has worked internationally and nationally collecting her experiences in the floriculture industry. "I'm delighted to share my experience in floriculture business with Selecta," Paola said. "It's my ambition to work with growers, support them, and build a strong relationship with them." She brings strong organization skills and a very pro-active and dynamic attitude.



By Dr. Yoseph Shoub

# Optimizing Gerbera Production

**How long is it advisable for a gerbera grower to keep his gerbera plants in the containers' media and still harvest an economical production? This issue is important for the plants-producers too, as they are interested in producing, selling, and keeping the reputation of their products. We are presenting here some morphological information that might describe the possible reasons for the significant decrease in flower production that starts 1.5 to 2 years after planting.**

All along the growth cycle of a gerbera plant, it continues to produce branches, leaves, and roots. Toward the period of a year and a half after planting, the plant already holds numerous branches and leaves and many roots that fill up the container volume almost totally (picture 1). This situation is encouraging leaf elongation above the efficient length, it reduces the aeration and the light intensity at the plant surroundings, it delays the growth-rate, and decreases gradually the flower production and their quality.

Along its growth, horizontal branches are continuously developed below the media surface, from the container center towards the container margins. (Pic. 2 A) This kind of growth is leaving behind "Nonproductive horizontal-branches"; in other words, branches that already produced leaves and flowers in the past. (Pic. 2 B)



Picture 1: Marinilla 2.5 years old in 4 Liter container.

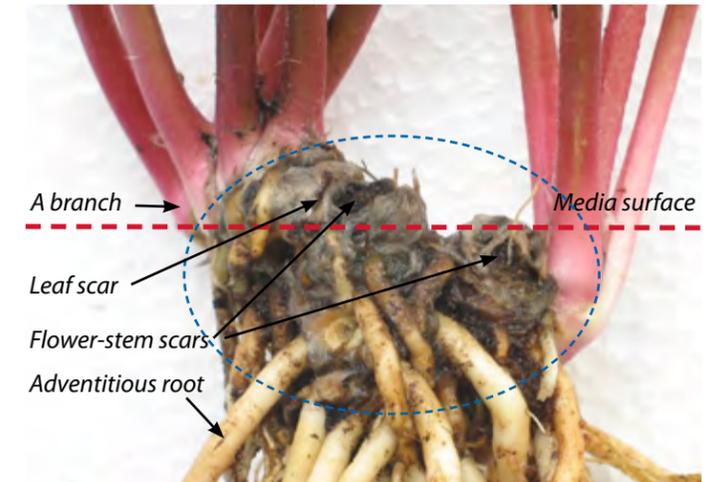
All images © Dr. Yoseph Shoub

At this stage the old branches are covered with many scars of historical flowers, stems, and leaves (Pic. 3).

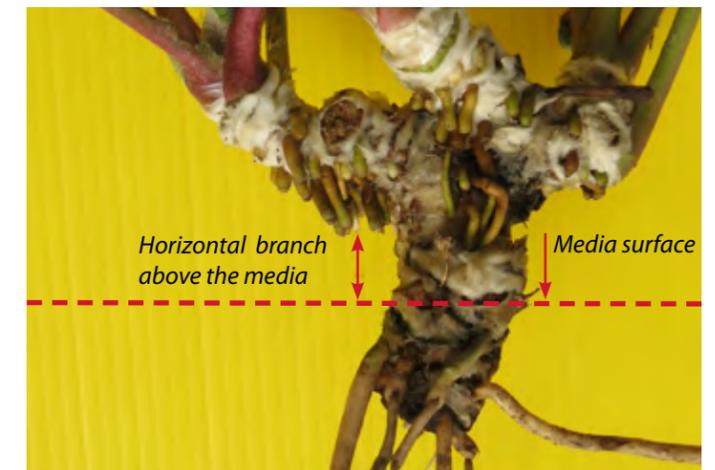
Furthermore, in many cases when the plants are kept longer than 3 years in the same container, and the horizontal branches are reaching the container margins, the branches change their horizontal-growth habit toward vertical growth in open air above the media. It means that the newly emerged roots are



Picture 2: A branch of 2.5-year-old of gerbera plant grown in container.



Picture 3: An old crown of 2.5-year-old gerbera plant.



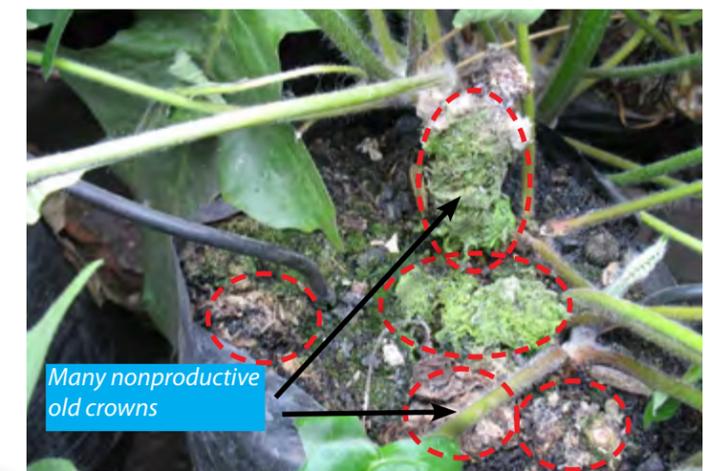
Picture 4: Roots of a 3-year-old gerbera are not able to reach the growing media.

not able to elongate anymore; they will not grow into the media, and they will not function as normal active roots (Picture 4).

Picture 5 shows an extreme state, but quite common situation in Colombian gerbera farms. It shows a gerbera plant kept longer than 3 years in a plastic bag. This nonproductive plant lost its production potential some time ago. Actually the production of gerbera plants at this age comes from only few branches per square meter, and this is not economical.

For more information visit [www.gerberaisrael.com](http://www.gerberaisrael.com)

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Picture 4: An "old" nonproductive split-up gerbera plant.



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