

SOIL TEMPERATURES FOR PLANT GROWTH: Forty-five to seventy degrees are the soil temperatures usually recommended for hotbeds. Use lower temperatures for growing cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce plants, a medium range for tomatoes, and the higher temperatures for peppers. Celery should be grown at about 60 degrees. Peas and radishes grow well at 50 to 60 degrees, and cucumbers at 70 to 80 degrees. When automatically controlled the thermostat should be set for these temperatures. Temperatures may be regulated downward after two or three weeks, to harden plants. To protect the plants from frost only place the thermostat bulb in the air just above the soil and set the thermostat just above freezing temperature.

ELECTRIC WIRING: All wiring necessary to connect up the hotbed cable to the existing light meter should be installed in a safe manner, and in accordance with Municipal and Provincial regulations. The cost of wiring will depend upon the capacity available in the present wiring of premises and upon the distance of the hotbed from the source of supply. Any electrical contractor will gladly quote a price on this work.

The heating cable most generally used has a wattage of 62.3 watts per foot and 60 feet of it must be used across 115 volts, which is the average lighting voltage. This length of cable is sufficient for a six by six foot hotbed and has a capacity of approximately 400 watts.

OPERATING COST: Many factors govern the consumption of electrical energy such as the efficiency of the bed construction, soil temperature maintained, outside temperature, and method of operating the bed. For these reasons it is difficult to accurately estimate the operating cost. During the months of March and April, 1932, some six by six foot beds averaged less than 3 K.W.H. per day, while others of poorer construction ranged up to 5 K.W.H. per day. These were cool months and soil temperatures were kept at 65 degrees F. The consumption of energy is easily kept low if the grower exercises care in construction and operation.