

SUMMER FLOWERS FOR FLORISTS

PAPER READ BY

MR. WM. HUNT

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, GUELPH.

THE commendable and increasing demand on the part of the flower-loving public during the last few years, for a greater display of taste in the more natural arrangement of flowers, necessitating their more lavish use in the make up of designs and floral decorative work in general, makes it imperative on the part of florists, to consider well as to how they can best supply the wants of their customers in this respect.

The grouping of palms and foliage plants, as well as the very general use of large quantities of fern fronds, asparagus, etc., for room decorative purposes, often requires the use of large quantities of flowering plants and cut flowers, to brighten up the density of these masses of green. Bright colored foliage plants, such as crotons, pandanus veitchii, etc., are admirable for this work, but they are not always available, and cannot be used in many positions, even where they are to be had.

Roses and carnations can of course usually be obtained, but these cannot always be had at prices that will warrant their use except for the finer points of florists' work. Out of door flowers can usually be had in summer, but with the failure or partial failure of the sweet pea and aster crop, even these during the hottest weather in summer are often very limited both in quantity and quality, and many kinds of out-door flowers are too common almost to allow of their being used satisfactorily.

It seems to me that the empty benches so commonly seen in many florists' establishments, could be more profitably used than

they are, to supply this demand for a better class of flowers than is often obtainable out of doors during the summer months.

Japan lilies, more especially *lilium speciosa alba*, *lilium rubrum* and *lilium auratum*, as well as other varieties of this class can be, and are grown in large quantities, but these sometimes, like our at one time reliable and beautiful Easter lilies, have of recent years become more fickle and uncertain in their character, and are at the best too costly, except for the very best class of work.

Although it is impossible to attempt even to fill the place of the gorgeous beauty of roses and carnations, as grown at the present day by our florists, or the more chaste and delicate beauty of the lily, there are some plants that I have found most useful as accessories and auxillaries to these indispensable florists' flowers mentioned. I have reference more particularly to begonias.

For many years past I have grown *Begonia Weltoniensis* and *Begonia MacBethii* and *Begonia Weltoniensis alba* in as large quantities as desired, and although these varieties have been known to most of us for over a quarter of a century, or at least two of them, - they cannot in my opinion be surpassed by any of our newly introduced varieties, taking ease of culture, handling and keeping qualities, as well as profuseness in flowering habit into consideration. By wintering over a few old plants and starting them in April or May, and propagating as soon as the cuttings are ready, a fine batch of plants can be had early in August, that will furnish a good supply of bloom or pot