

CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR

Flowers and Ornamental Plants

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THE AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE OF TEXAS
TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
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summary

Three consumer flower panels with approximately 25 members each were selected to participate in a study in 1957-59 on consumer buying habits, use and preference of plants and flowers for the home and the possibility of changing and developing consumer buying habits. The panel members selected and purchased the type of plants they preferred and completed questionnaires for each week during the 12-week period each panel operated.

Important points resulting from the study were:

The general public likes flowers, especially for the home, and will use them if they are readily available at a reasonable price.

Customers want to know how to care for their plants. They like instruction cards which include scientific and common names, some history and complete directions for plant care.

Customer habits in using flowers can be changed or developed. Once the habit has been established, it should be cultivated continuously.

In purchasing flowers, customers prefer a varied choice and like prices plainly marked.

Consumers are concerned about the keeping quality of plants and flowers. This affects some of their purchasing selections.



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Consumer Preference for Flowers and Ornamental Plants

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THE TRADITIONAL MARKET for floral products has depended on funerals, holidays, weddings, illness, births and various social functions. The flower industry is eager to find ways which might induce consumers to increase their expenditures for flowers.

The president of a chain store recently made the following statement: "We are definitely interested in the flower business, but a thorough study has convinced us that the time is not yet ripe for mass outlets to get into the cut-flower business, since sales in the volume that interest us are not in the picture, except for a few days and special occasions each year."

Little has been done in the past to determine customer preference in flowers. Growers and retail florists produced and handled what they could grow or preferred to handle.

With larger incomes and more leisure time to spend on entertainment in and around the home, American people are looking for ways to beautify their surroundings. Progressive retailers in the flower industry, whether they have retail flower shops, garden centers in a variety store or an outlet for flowers in a grocery store, seek information about customers' flower preferences.

This study was conducted jointly by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Sociology and the Department of Floriculture to obtain information such as, consumer buying habits, use and preference of plants and flowers for the home and the possibility of changing and developing consumer buying habits. The demand for floral products may increase if these habits can be changed or developed.

BACKGROUND

This study was conducted in College Station and Bryan. These two adjacent cities have a combined population of approximately 39,000. Mem-

bers of the panels were employees of the Texas A&M College System. Their incomes varied from less than \$5,000 to more than \$10,000 per year.

Bryan and College Station have seven retail floral shops. These shop owners have made a limited effort to sell plants and flowers for home use. Their business was based mainly on sales for special occasions and gifts. Therefore, these businesses could be considered as a low volume, high markup and high service type of operation.

During the time these panel studies were underway several chain stores had plant departments, but the plant selection generally was confined to small, green-foliage plants. There had been sporadic attempts to merchandise flowers and flowering plants in some of the chain stores, but most of these were discontinued because of difficulty in obtaining good merchandise of the type felt necessary for this purpose.

The participants in the panel study were accustomed to using plants and flowers in their homes (Figure 1). Of those who had plants, 77 percent indicated they had owned some plants for at least a year.

More than 90 percent of the panel participants had visited a retail floral shop one to five times or more during the previous year. About 10 percent of their purchases had been for home use and about 90 percent for special occasions. Of those who had visited a flower shop the previous year, about 82 percent had made 1 to 15 purchases. Most of the panel members could be classified as regular flower users and had some concept of the value, use and care of flowers and plants.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The first study was conducted in the spring of 1957 when a panel of 25 employees of the Texas A&M College System was selected to participate in a preference study of floricultural products for home use. The panel members were selected

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Figure 1. Panel members making their weekly selection of cut flowers and potted plants for the home.

from five income groups ranging from secretaries to deans of the College.

Each Thursday for a 12-week period, plants and cut flowers suitable for home use were packaged and displayed. The panel members were allowed to make selections for use in their homes. In return, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire. In some cases the plants were priced and in others the panel members were asked to set the price. A normal markup above cost of production plus cost of packaging was used in pricing items.

To refine the panel technique and to make the selection of plants and cut-flowers more realistic, several changes were made in the study conducted in 1958. A new panel of 25 members was selected on the same basis as in the previous study. The panel members were given a budget of \$18 with which to purchase plants and flowers for a 12-week period. Again, all participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire each week, regardless of whether they made a selection.

To further refine the technique and make the panel more realistic, members for the 1959 study were selected from employees of the Texas A&M College System who were willing to make a deposit of \$10 and participate for a 12-week period. Members were not selected by income groups, but questions concerning age and income were used during the study. In spending their own money, it was assumed that reactions of the panel members would closely parallel what they would be in a commercial establishment. The members were allowed to purchase as many items each week as they wished. If they spent more than the \$10 deposit, they were billed for purchases in excess of this amount. Again,

all participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire each week regardless of whether they made a purchase.

Throughout the 3-year study, the selection of plants and cut flowers was changed each week. Various combinations of types of plants and cut flowers also were used. In general, all items were packaged except in cases where it was not feasible or it was desired to test the reactions of the panel members to unpackaged selections. The packaging consisted of sealed cellophane bags and sleeves.

In the second and third panel, all plants and cut flowers were priced at a normal markup above cost of production plus cost of packaging. Care tags were attached to each item. These care tags gave such information as scientific and common name, native habitat, light, requirements for moisture, soil and fertilizer, and a brief description of the plant character and its uses.

The questionnaires were developed to explore buying habits of the panel members, their use of plants and flowers in the home and their concept of the floricultural industry. The questions also were designed to obtain such information as: why they made certain selections; when, where and how they preferred to buy plants and flowers; whether buying habits could be changed or developed; and many other factors in the purchase and use of flowers for home use.

The following groupings of plants and cut flowers were used throughout the study: cut flowers, flowering potted plants, foliage plants, bedding plants and nursery plants.

CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE OF PLANTS

Preference for Flower Types

The panel members were asked if they preferred foliage plants, flowering plants or cut flowers to determine any difference between their stated preference in plants and flowers and their actual selection if given a wide choice. Compilation of the answers for the last 2 years of the study indicated the following: foliage plants were preferred by 49.4 percent, flowering plants by 36.7 percent and cut flowers by 13.9 percent. A comparison of the types actually selected during the 1959 study indicated the following: foliage plants selected by 45.2 percent, flowering plants by 27.1 percent, bedding plants by 6.9 percent, nursery plants by 10.4 percent and cut flowers by 10.4 percent. This indicates a close relationship between the type of plants actually selected and indicated as preferred.

When asked whether they preferred potted plants or cut flowers, 78 percent answered potted plants and 13 percent answered cut flowers and 9 percent answered both.

About one-third of the people would not purchase cut flowers for the home. This was the case when only cut flowers were offered to the panel. When asked if they had any preference between foliage and flowering plants, 60 percent preferred foliage plants. If they had a chance to purchase regularly, 78 percent said they preferred potted plants to cut flowers.

General Knowledge of Plants

At the beginning of each panel study in 1958 and 1959, the participating members were asked if they had any plants or flowers in their homes at that time. One out of 23 in 1958 and 1 out of 26 in 1959 reported they had no plants or flowers. During the last 2 years of study, 96 percent of all the panel members had some type of flowers or plants in the home, Table 1.

Concept of Plant Life Spans

Approximately 50 percent of all panel members reported that they had had some of the plants more than a year. In addition, about 20 percent had plants at least 3 months and 22 percent had plants at least 1 year.

When asked if the "keeping quality" had any influence on their selection, 88 percent said "yes" and 6 percent said "not always." When asked what they thought was the expected life span of flowers and plants, the participants indicated that 3 to 7 days was the span of cut flowers in the home. This may have a big influence on the purchases. At the opposite extreme, foliage plants were expected to last indefinitely (for years) and flowering plants were expected to last several weeks. The short span associated with cut flowers has a tendency to limit their purchase and use. In some countries, custom tends to dictate the use of cut flowers in the home.

Since most people pride themselves on the length of time they can keep a foliage plant, it is important to stock a wide variety of this type of plant to attract repeat sales and to tempt the customer at frequent intervals.

Knowledge of Plant Care

To develop the desired market, consumer interest should be increased and customers should be educated in the care and use of plants and flowers in the home. Generally, the present marketing

TABLE 1. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON KNOWLEDGE AND CARE OF PLANTS BY PARTICIPANTS IN FLOWER STUDY

Questions—3-year totals	Yes	No	Combination yes and no
	—	—	Percent — —
Do you have any plants or flowers in your home now?	96.0	4.0	
Do you object to the amount of care potted plants require in the home?	13.0	78.3	8.7
Have you found any difference in the care of the various potted plants you have selected?	77.8	20.0	2.2
Do you feel that caring for your selections was a chore or inconvenience after they were placed in the position you used them?	6.8	93.2	
Have you gained any knowledge on the use and care of plants and flowers in the home through your participation on this panel?	95.3		4.7

system makes little effort to provide instructions to help the consumer care for the plants.

In these studies, however, plants were identified by name, and care instructions were given with each plant. Panel members were asked if they desired such information; they were unanimous in their desire to have this information with each plant or flower, both in 1958 and 1959. When they were asked what other information they would like to have on the package, the answers varied. Approximately 50 percent of the members did not have a suggestion, or felt that the information given was adequate. Other suggestions included information on plant origin, propagation, susceptibility to diseases and various cultural practices. Many of these suggestions had been covered already by the care cards used during the study.

It has often been thought that people object to the time and effort it takes to care for the plants and flowers in the home. To test this theory, the panel members, both in 1958 and 1959, were asked if they objected to the time and effort spent in the care of plants and flowers. Only 13 percent answered yes, Table 1. They were asked if they were better able to take care of the plants after having participated on the panel and having had the opportunity to obtain and care for a wider selection of plants; those answering the question were unanimous in their belief that they had learned more about the care of plants. Also, 64.5 percent indicated that their concept of quality of plants and flowers improved during the study.

TABLE 2. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN RETAIL FLOWER SHOP

Question	Yes	No	No answer
	— — — Percent — — —		
Adequate selection	46.2	46.2	7.6
Adequate price range	7.6	76.9	15.5
Adequate size range	38.5	53.9	7.6
Adequate knowledge	15.5	76.9	7.6

To approach the question in another way, the participants were asked if they found much difference in the care of the various plants selected. Approximately three-fourths of the members found that different types of plants require different care, Table 1.

The question was approached from a third viewpoint. When asked if the plant maintenance had been a chore or inconvenience, only about 7 percent felt that it had been, Table 1.

Reasons for Selection

One of the major objectives of these studies was to determine what criteria people use in the selection of plants and flowers. The compilation of the answers for the last 2 years of the study makes a varied list. Appearance and color rated highest, followed by amount of care required and plant sturdiness. In grouping similar criteria together, about one-third of the choices were based on appearance, color, bloom and difference in varieties or types. About 25 percent of the choices were based on health and longevity of the plant while plant adaptability made up about 10 percent of the choices. Size and price comprised only 4 and 3 percent, respectively.

TABLE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS PARTICIPANTS GAVE FOR ENTERING A RETAIL FLOWER SHOP

Reasons for entering shop	1958	1959	Average ¹
	— — — Percent — — —		
Make specific purchase	93.8	58.1	67.7
Accompany a friend	0	9.3	6.8
Shop around	6.2	0	1.7
Purchase an item advertised in newspaper	0	7.0	5.1
Purchase an item advertised on radio	0	0	0
Purchase an item advertised on TV	0	0	0
Purchase an item advertised by direct mail	0	4.7	3.4
Price an item in the window	0	18.6	13.6
No particular reason	0	2.3	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹Weighted by number responding.

When asked what size plants they preferred to use in the home, 13.9 percent preferred large plants; 63.9 percent, medium plants; and 22.2 percent, small plants.

Most panel members felt that price was important in their decision to buy flowers for the home. Ninety-three percent indicated price was the determining factor in their purchase of flowers. Eighty-eight percent said keeping quality affected their selection.

Conclusions from the study indicate that retail florists would benefit if they made a special effort to get people into their shops. When asked their reasons for entering a flower shop during the past year, the panel report showed that 94 percent had a specific purchase in mind and only 6 percent entered to "shop around." No one entered to check something seen in an advertisement or to price something seen in the display window.

When purchasing cut flowers for home use, 60 percent of the panel members wished to purchase flowers unarranged. All panel members indicated they would increase their purchase for cut flowers for the home, and 96 percent said they would increase their purchases of pot plants in the future if they were available in these low-cost units. Sixty percent reported they would purchase low-priced, junior-sized pot plants if they were available in a flower shop on weekends.

To determine what types of flowers people wanted, participants were asked what length of stems they preferred. Eleven percent reported they wanted long stems, 18 inches or longer; 78 percent reported they preferred stems of medium length, 12 to 18 inches; the remainder reported they preferred short stems, 9 to 12 inches. Regarding color choice, 29 percent reported they preferred yellow, 24 percent red, 19 percent pink and 17 percent preferred white. Forty-four percent said they preferred flowers of the same color, 29 percent said that they preferred flowers of mixed colors. Eighty-nine percent said they would pay more for flowers for use during a dinner party than for general family use.

Participants were asked if lack of knowledge of a certain plant affected their purchase. Sixty percent said that this influenced their plant choice. Concerning the reason for purchasing flowers, 58 percent said they planned their purchases, while impulse sales accounted for 42 percent of the sales.

To determine if plant and flower purchases could be expanded, participants were asked if they

would purchase plants in a flower shop more often after the study than they had before. The response was favorable since 69 percent said they would if care instructions were given and 85 percent said they would if the price were plainly marked.

Participants were asked if they would purchase more if flowers and plants were available on weekends, if the shop had cash-and-carry specials and if they were advertised on the radio. Sixty-five percent said they would purchase more if they noticed the ad in the newspaper; about 12 percent reported they would if they heard it on the radio, and about 24 percent said that they would if they heard it on television.

Buying Habits

The questionnaire was designed to determine the current buying habits of panel members and their dealings with retail flower shops.

To tie in the retail flower shop with the idea of small plants for home use, the members were asked if they would make a special trip to a retail shop that had special sales on week days. In this group 71 percent said they would, while 27 percent said they would not. The remainder did not answer the question.

Concerning frequency of visits to flower shops, 43 percent reported that they had visited a flower shop more than five times during the past year. About 48 percent said they had visited a shop one to five times during the past year, while only 4.5 percent reported they had not made any visits.

It is important to know if people feel welcome in a flower shop and if they can obtain what they want while in the shops. Questions were asked about adequacy of selection, price range, size range and sales people's knowledge of plants. The study indicates a narrow price range and a lack of adequate knowledge among selling personnel, Table 2.

Sixty-eight percent of the participants stated they had entered a flower shop in the preceding year to make a specific purchase. Thirteen and six-tenths went in to price an item in the window, 6.8 percent to accompany a friend, 5.1 percent to buy an item seen in a newspaper ad, 3.4 percent to purchase merchandise advertised by direct mail and 1.7 percent to shop around, Table 3.

About 20 percent of purchases made in the flower shops during the past 3 years were for plants and flowers for home use. The remaining 80 percent of the purchases consisted of flowers for

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF FLOWER PURCHASES BY PARTICIPANTS IN FLOWER STUDY FOR THE PAST 3 YEARS

Reason for purchase	Percent
Funerals	20.9
Home use	19.9
Hospitals	17.5
Gifts	17.5
Special events	16.5
Holidays	5.8
Weddings	1.9
Total	100.0

funerals, weddings, hospitals, special events, gifts and holidays, Table 4.

Results of a 3-year compilation of responses as to the number of times the participating members had purchased flowers for home use from a flower shop during the past 12 months indicated that 18.5 percent of the members had not made any purchase, about 66 percent had made one to six purchases and about 16 percent, 7 to 15 purchases, Table 5.

Among purchases for funerals, weddings, special events, hospital, gifts and home use, flowers for home use seemed to have the best possibility for sales expansion. Nationally, sales of flowers for the home comprised about 5 percent of the total flower sales in the average retail flower shop.

The panel members were asked to estimate their purchase of flowers by types for the past 3 years. Flowers for home use averaged about 20 percent of all flower purchases. This proportion is much higher than the 5 percent national average for sales by retail florists or the 2 to 3 percent of flower sales for the home by Texas florists.

Participants indicated they had been in a flower shop during the past year an average of six times, and they seemed to know something about price and quality of plants. Eighty-nine percent indicated that price was important in their decision to pur-

TABLE 5. FREQUENCY OF FLOWER PURCHASES FOR HOME USE FROM A FLOWER SHOP DURING THE PRECEDING 12 MONTHS, ALL PANELS

Number of times	Percent
0	18.5
1 - 2	32.3
2 - 4	16.9
5 - 6	16.9
7 -11	7.7
12 or more	7.7

TABLE 6. SALES DISTRIBUTION BY MAJOR PLANT GROUPS IN FLOWER PANEL STUDY

Type of plant	Sales	Value
	— — Percent — —	
Foliage plants	45.2	36.8
Flowering plants	27.1	28.7
Cut flowers	10.4	16.9
Nursery plants	10.4	12.6
Bedding plants	6.9	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0

chase a certain item. Seventy-nine percent said the amount of plant care required did not influence their selection, but, they all wanted complete care instructions, including common and scientific names.

TYPES OF PURCHASES

Purchases by Plant Types

A knowledge of plant types that will sell is necessary to expand sales of flowers, especially for the home. The plant material used in the study may be placed in five major groups: cut flowers, flowering plants, foliage plants, bedding plants and nursery stock. All of the plant material, except cut flowers, was growing in 3½-inch to 5-inch plastic pots. All types were used and sold successfully, Table 6. These sales only indicate that the plants will sell since not all of the major plant groupings were used each week, and there was no choice offered.

TABLE 7. DISTRIBUTION OF SALES BY PRICE FOR VARIOUS TYPE PLANTS, THIRD YEAR OF STUDY

Price ranges	Cut flowers	Flowering plants	Foliage plants	Bedding plants	Nursery plants
	— — — — —	Percent	— — — — —		
.39		36.0	45.8	40.6	
.49		12.0	18.9	37.5	
.59		12.0	7.4		
.69	2.1		2.3	18.8	26.3
.79	25.5	5.6			
.89		7.2	1.1		7.9
.98	38.3	1.6	2.3	3.1	39.5
1.19	8.5		1.7		5.3
1.29		22.4			7.9
1.39			2.3		
1.49	4.3				
1.59	2.1				
1.69		3.2	1.1		
1.79			1.7		
1.89	19.2		.6		
1.98			5.1		
2 for \$1.00			1.7		
3 for \$1.00			8.0		
3 for \$1.98					13.1

Purchases by Price

Panel members, 89 percent, stated that price played an important role in their selection. During the study, with all types of plant materials, the majority of the purchases cost between 39 cents and \$1, Table 7. This varied with the major plant groupings; bedding plants and foliage plant sales were predominantly in the lower price group, while the sale of nursery plants ranged from 69 cents to \$1.29; cut flowers were approximately in the same range.

The buying habits of the panel were similar to those of people in general in the Bryan-College Station area; previous studies on selling of flowers in volume markets indicated that the best sales period is the first weekend in the month. The sales volume and value decreased with each succeeding week in the month, unless a special sale or holiday occurred.

Budget Purchases

Another point that is very important is the time and the way people plan their purchases. Fifty-eight percent of the flower purchases for the home are planned, usually at home. Some advertising should be used to inform the people of the flowers available for the home. Most panel members said that advertising had influenced their purchasing decision. When asked which day they would shop for flowers, if they were on sale, they replied as follows: Thursday, 12 percent; Friday, 53 percent; Saturday, 35 percent. They chose their regular shopping day when they tried to make all their purchases; therefore, the advertising and sales program probably should be aimed at Friday and Saturday sales. When asked if they would make their special weekend sales purchases at retail flower shops, 78 percent replied affirmatively.

Ninety-four percent said they would take advantage of discount purchases in a retail flower shop. For industry to offer such a program successfully, it should be done over a long period of time and with adequate advertising to indicate that it was cash-and-carry. Advertising should be aimed at inducing the customer to come into the flower shop to make purchases.

Only 11 percent reported that they purchased plants and flowers as a general practice, 22 percent bought flowers for entertaining while 67 percent purchased plants or flowers occasionally. Thus, less than one-third of the people purchased flowers regularly—about once a month. This information on buying habits is valuable in considering a potential expansion of flower sales.

Seventy-two percent of the panel members stated they would have a flower budget if such merchandise were available in a supermarket, Table 8. This would be true whether purchases were weekly or monthly. If given a discount for cash-and-carry, 94 percent said they would make some flower purchases. They said they would purchase flowers from a retail shop if special sales were held on weekdays. Fifty-three percent preferred Friday and 35 percent Saturday for making their purchases at special sales in a retail shop.

RESPONSE AND REACTION OF PANEL

A three-part objective of the study was to find out where, when and how often the panel members bought flowers or plants for home use. The participants were asked if they would use more flowers and plants if they were available in the size and price range used on the panel study. In both 1958 and 1959, 88.6 percent of the panel members said that they would use more under these conditions.

To approach the question from another angle, the members were asked if they would buy more often for the home if flowers were packaged and priced as they were on a certain day of the panel study. There were 93.3 percent who indicated they would buy more for the home, Table 8. Only 66 percent answered they would expand the budget amount used in the panel study for flower purchases if similar plants were available at supermarkets at these prices. This indicates some resistance to buying flowers from supermarkets.

Another question was designed to find out where they would prefer to buy plants and flowers. Approximately 54 percent preferred supermarkets while 40 percent preferred flower shops. The remainder indicated preference for variety stores, drug stores and others.

They were asked, "If flowers were available in this form and at this price each Thursday, Friday and Saturday, how often do you think you might purchase them?" Responses were: 14 percent would purchase each week, 19.3 percent every 2 weeks, 33.3 percent once a month, 21.1 percent occasionally, 3.5 percent seldom and 8.8 percent, no answer. In other words, two-thirds of the members would buy at least once a month.

The number of items selected per week varied from 18 to 78 with an average of 39. The number of items selected per person by those making selections varied from 1.1 to 3.9 items with an average of 1.9 items per person, Table 9.

TABLE 8. THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF FLOWER PANEL TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS

Question	Yes	No	Don't know	No answer
	— — — Percent — — —			
Would you use more plants and flowers than you do now if they were available in these sizes and at these prices?	88.6	11.4		
If flowers were priced and packaged as they are here today, would you purchase them more often for use in your home?	93.3	6.7		
If plants and flowers similar to these included in this panel were available in supermarkets at these prices, would you expand the budget amount used in this panel for flower purchases?	65.9	27.3	4.5	2.3
Would you make a special trip to a retail flower shop if they had special sales on weekdays?	71.1	26.7		2.2
Has participation in this panel increased your desire to have plants in your home more often?	100.0			

The sales varied in price from 73 cents to \$2.17 with an average sale of \$1.38. Average value of purchase per number of selections varied from 39 cents to \$1.34 with an overall average of 75 cents per item.

Of the 27 panel members in 1959, the percentage attendance each week varied from 66.7 percent to 100 percent with an average attendance

TABLE 9. WEEKLY DISTRIBUTION OF PURCHASES, AVERAGE EXPENDITURES AND PARTICIPATION OF FLOWER PANEL

Week	Average selection per person	Average purchases	Percent of people making selection each week	Percent participating each week
1	1.7	\$1.24	100.0	74.1
2	1.9	1.22	81.4	100.0
3	1.2	1.63	100.0	88.8
4	2.7	1.75	100.0	88.8
5	2.0	1.38	88.0	92.5
6	1.8	1.38	90.9	81.4
7	1.6	1.22	86.3	81.4
8	1.1	1.15	69.6	85.2
9	3.9	1.54	95.2	77.7
10	2.5	2.17	81.8	66.7
11	1.4	.73	95.2	74.0
12	1.6	1.15	69.6	85.2

of 83 percent. The number of members varied from 18 to 27 with an average of 22.

The percentage of the participants making some selection varied from 69.6 to 100 with an average of 88 percent. The number of members that made selections varied from 16 to 24 people with an average of 20.

CONCLUSIONS

Previous market studies indicate that there is a large undeveloped market potential for plants and flowers in the home. It has been assumed this market could be developed further. To test this assumption, at the close of each panel study, the members were asked if their participation in the study had increased their desire to have plants and flowers in the home. All members answered in the affirmative. This indicated that even in a short time people can become accustomed to using more plants and flowers.

Customer Preference Observations for Florists

Certain preferences should be considered by the retail florist in developing the market for flowers in the home. Some consumer suggestions that would make the customer feel more at home in the shop and could be followed without too much expense are:

The flowers should not be arranged (according to 60 percent of the panel).

There should be a large variety.

Care instructions should be included.

Merchandise should be priced plainly.

There should be medium-sized potted plants.

Factors Affecting Purchases for the Home

Many factors may affect the purchase of flowers and plants for home use, even after the customer is in the flower shop. These may be prejudices or lack of information on the part of the customer. Patience and education will be needed by both buyer and seller to overcome some of these obstacles. Among some of the items needing the most attention are: price, inadequate knowledge about certain plants and flowers, availability throughout the season, keeping quality, care required and appearance.

Suggestions for Improved Flower Markets

An analysis of the information obtained from the different flower panel members reveals that a much better market for flowers can be developed through the cooperative efforts of the grower, florist and consumer.

Other conclusions pointed up by the study which might be used in the development of improved flower markets are:

Plants and flowers make home more pleasant and inviting.

Plants and flowers are now priced too high in retail shops for home use.

Flower shops do not have adequate selections, price range, size range and knowledge of their merchandise.

Concept of quality can be changed with experience.

Ability to care for plants can be increased with experience.

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