

## Alstroemeria as a locally produced cut flower for Northern Ireland

### Summary technical note, 2009

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**Introduction:** Alstroemeria is a popular cut flower within the UK. A lot of the Alstroemeria is currently imported into the UK from the Netherlands and other countries but it is now becoming popular as a locally produced cut flower due to the successful technology demonstration and adoption of this cut flower by Greenmount Campus, CAFRE.

**Technology project findings:** CAFRE, Greenmount Campus trialled and demonstrated the production of cut flower Alstroemeria between 2004 and 2006 in a polytunnel with side ventilation. The project and experience of growers who have adopted Alstroemeria has shown that very good quality marketable stems are produced between late May and early November under Northern Ireland conditions.

**Technology grower adoption:** Several new growers have started to produce Alstroemeria for marketing to local florists and shops with good success.

**Obtaining planting material:** Young plants are available as tissue cultured plants potted into liner pots available for planting in April from several different specialised young plant suppliers.

**Planting density:** Alstroemeria are planted into the soil at a spacing of 4 or 5 plants/m<sup>2</sup>.

**Lifespan of plants:** Alstroemeria plants should last for 4 or 5 years and provide a yield each year before requiring replacement.

**Marketable Yield:** Alstroemeria should produce between 100 to 200 stems per m<sup>2</sup> once the plants have matured and established. This should be achieved in year 2 after planting if plants have been grown correctly.

**Harvest period:** Late May to early November in tunnels if dependent on weather conditions.

**Vase Life:** Alstroemeria will have an anticipated shelf life of 2 weeks.

**Weeds, Pests and Diseases:** Experience to date under Northern Ireland conditions was indicated that Alstroemeria appear to have few pest or disease problems. Weeds should be controlled prior to planting using chemical or steam sterilisation. Beds can be mulched each spring with a 5cm layer of wood shavings to suppress weeds.

**Facilities and equipment required:** Alstroemeria can be grown in a side ventilated polytunnel or a well ventilated glasshouse. Use ground level trickle-tape irrigation for watering the crop; 3 layers of wire support to keep stems straight; and a cold-store for postharvest storage of harvested stems.

**Marketing opportunities:** Alstroemeria can be marketed to local wholesalers, retail florists, local shops and farmers and town markets.

**Advantages of selling locally produced Alstroemeria over imported stems:** Extra freshness, longer vase life, larger more vibrant coloured flowers, can mix colours to suit local client's specific requirements.

**Interested to know more about cut flower Alstroemeria production?**

If you would like to find out more about growing cut flower Alstroemeria please contact David Davidson, Ornamentals Development Adviser, CAFRE, Greenmount Campus on email [david.davidson@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:david.davidson@dardni.gov.uk) ; tel: 028 37 515605.