

A Note on Chrysanthemum Cultivation in Vellaikinar, Coimbatore.

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Introduction. The cultivation of flowers on marketable scale has lately become a profitable enterprise among the ryots of villages situated in the neighbourhood of towns and cities. Of the different flowers that have a demand in the market in South India, Chrysanthemum is the most common. The village of Vellaikinar is situated five miles from Coimbatore town. Many ryots of this village cultivate this crop in their garden lands. The crop comes in rotation either after Cambodia Cotton or Cholam.

Soil and preparatory cultivation. A successful crop is seen in localities where the soil is a fairly deep medium loam, with good irrigation and drainage facilities. After the harvest of the previous crop, the field is given 6 to 8 ploughings with a country plough and thus brought to fine tilth in the month of March-April. The field is next thrown into beds and channels with a mamutti.

Season. The preparatory work comes to a close at the end of April and planting will be in progress in May soon after some showers are received. The planting material consists of the root-stocks taken from a previous crop which has been exhaustively harvested. About 2 to 3 cents of the main field, if reserved for the rootstocks, will be sufficient to transplant an acre.

Manuring The crop responds to heavy manuring. Generally about 30 cart loads of farm yard manure per acre are carted and ploughed in before planting.

Irrigation. Just before planting the whole field has to be watered. On the fifth day after planting, a ~~like~~ irrigation will be given. As the crop requires copious watering, regular irrigation every week is essential. On the whole about 34 irrigations are given during the period of ten months (May—March) in which this crop is in the field. Two weeks after planting a hoeing is given. Afterwards the plots must be well hoed and weeded at regular intervals.

Picking. During the ten months' duration of the crop it gives two flushes. The first flush is from October to December after which the main flowering stems (vegetative portions only) are pruned off. The side suckers will then begin to develop and within about 1 to 1½ months the second flush commences. Picking is generally done once in six days either early in the morning or late in the afternoon. A small knife with a curved blade facilitates easy and quick harvest of the flowers. Women coolies are usually engaged for the harvest.

Yield. For each flush, about 10 pickings will be taken. A single picking yields about 25 baskets of flowers containing 4 to 5 thousand flowers per basket.

The cost of each basket varies from 4 annas to 2 rupees, according to the season and the demand for flowers in the market. It is a general practice with the ryots to grow chillies, bendai and onions on the edges of the irrigation channels of this crop. These give an additional income of Rs. 5 to 10 per acre.

Economics of Cultivation. The cost of cultivation comes to Rs. 160 including picking charges. Calculating the income at Re. 0-8-0 per basket of flowers, the gross income from an acre will be Rs. 250. The net gain will thus be Rs. 90 per acre. There is a contract system of disposing of the crop in which case the contractor has to pay Rs. 100 per each flush—the picking and watching charges being borne by the contractor himself. The net gain for the ryot in this case will be about Rs. 80 per acre.

Conclusion. It will be a paying proposition indeed, to take up the cultivation of flowers by ryots of villages situated within five miles from towns and cities as there is a good demand for the flowers.

Cost of cultivation per acre—details.

Preparatory cultivation	Rs.	12	0	0
Manures—30 cart-loads of F. Y. M., carting, spreading etc	..	32	0	0
Planting	..	1	8	0
34 irrigations @ Rs 2 per irrigation	..	68	0	0
Weeding and hoeing	..	9	0	0
20 pickings for the two flushes @ 10 women per picking	..	37	8	0
	Total.	160	0	0
Yield—500 baskets valued at 0-8-0 per basket	..	250	0	0
Net gain	..	90	0	0

Acknowledgment. The author wishes to express his thanks to Sri. T. Nataraj, B.A., B. Sc. (Ag) for his valuable suggestions on the paper.