
Introduction

The market for cut flowers in the UK has grown quite markedly in recent years. Considerable potential exists for Commonwealth developing countries to supply this expanding market and it is the aim of these guidelines to provide, in an 'easy to read' format, straightforward answers to exactly how, when, where and what to send. The booklet is directed at existing Commonwealth developing country flower producers/exporters and, more particularly, at the large number of potential new entrants to the market.

Separate profiles are included for a range of cut flowers, with most emphasis being placed on the more popular varieties which are grown, or have the potential to be grown, in Commonwealth developing countries. Some flowers of lesser importance are included in 'group' profiles.

Flower profiles are included under three main headings, according to method of cultivation.

Perennials:

Roses, Carnations, Gerbera, Anthurium and tropical exotics.

Annuals:

Chrysanthemum, Gypsophyla and summer flowers.

Bulbs:

Gladiolus, Iris, Lily, Orchids and tropical exotics.

Each profile includes the following information:

- What the market wants - varieties, colours, sizes, etc;
- How to get to market - including harvesting, grading, storage, transport and distribution requirements, import legislation and customs tariffs;
- When to sell - i.e. peak periods of import demand.

Subsequent chapters cover general aspects of production and post-harvest technology; marketing channels in the UK; prices/costs involved, including investment costs, transport and selling costs and indicative wholesale prices.

Success on the UK market cannot be won easily - investment costs are high; production and post-harvest handling of flowers can be technically difficult; UK quality standards are exacting and competition from both domestic and overseas suppliers is intense during certain times of the year. However, for developing country growers/exporters capable of achieving the required high standards, together with competitive prices, the UK cut flower market offers significant opportunities.