

ICAR - DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURAL RESEARCH
PUNE, MAHARASHTRA

Advisory to Flower Growers in the light of lockdown due to Corona (COVID 19) pandemic

All the flower growers are requested to follow the guidelines issued from time to time by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt as well as guidelines from respective State Governments for the effective containment of Corona (COVID19).

At present every sector is facing hardship due to the pandemic and floriculture sector is not an exception. It is expected that situation would change for better in coming months.

The Directorate of Floricultural Research, Pune offers the following advisory to the farming fraternity.

General Advisory

1. Harvesting in majority of the seasonal flowers is getting over with the onset of summer months.
2. For many crops, the season is not so demanding in terms of resources with few exceptions (crops like tuberose, jasmine, crossandra, nursery industry, etc). Hence, employment of labour may be kept at minimum essential for maintenance.
3. As it is lean period for many flower crops, the incidence of insect pests/diseases would be minimum.
4. Summer showers with strong gales are likely in the next two months. Nursery growers are advised to take enough precautions to protect their nursery stock by adequately strengthening the growing structures.
5. New activities (planting, nursery raising (seed propagated crops), plant multiplication (vegetative propagation) may be deferred. Only maintenance activities (irrigation, weeding, plant protection sprays, if any as per the need, etc) may be continued with minimum labour.
6. In case of bulbous crops (gladiolus, tuberose, etc), lifting, treating (fungicide), drying and storage of bulbs is important but not an immediate requirement. Hence, these may be attended as and when there is relief from the lockdown.
7. It would be a good idea to dry flowers that are colourful (rose, marigold, chrysanthemum and China aster) instead of discarding the flowers. The dried petals could be used to make eco-friendly *gulaal* for later use.
8. High temperature coupled with low relative humidity often encourages spider mite incidence. Application of miticide (Abamectin) would control the mites. Further application of 1% neem oil also helps to a great extent. Regular irrigation would increase the relative humidity and reduce the multiplication of the mites.

Crop-wise advisory

Tuberose

- March – April is the right time of planting this crop. Planting, however, can be deferred till June-July. In case the bulbs are lifted, dipping of tuberose bulbs in *Bacillus subtilis* – 1 % W.P. suspension followed by soil application of 5 tons/ ha of FYM enriched with *B. subtilis* (5 kg) will be helpful for the management of nematodes. Please go for application of any nematicide (pre-plant incorporation) before planting.
- Upon favourable conditions, start preparing the land by deep ploughing and expose the soil for soil solarisation.
- For standing crops, life saving irrigation and weeding should be taken up. Dried/withered spikes need to be removed.
- For the control of leaf blight and stem rot Azoxystrobin (@0.3 ml/l) and Difenconazole (@0.5 ml/l) are found effective.

Jasmine

- This the season for Jasmine (especially for *J. sambac* and *J. grandiflorum*). Provide adequate irrigation and recommended nutrition.
- Bud borer infestation in some of the areas could be managed by spraying contact insecticide.
- Care should be taken for the control of insect pests/diseases, as and when required.

Gladiolus

- Flower harvesting is complete in most of the areas. Except in hills.
- Lifting of bulbs, their treatment and storage needs to be taken care upon the improvement of labour availability. Till such time the corms can remain in the soil.
- There is adequate time for fresh planting of gladiolus.

Chrysanthemum

- In the standing crop (mother block) pruning the dried & unwanted shoots, top-dressing with nitrogenous fertilizers, life saving irrigation and weed control are to be taken up.
- In off-season crop, irrigation, weed management and inter-culture (pinching/disbudding) needs to be taken care.
- Upon the improvement of the situation, prepare the land by deep ploughing and expose the soil for solarisation.
- Cut back all the branches and irrigate to encourage the sucker production. Top cuttings can be taken from the suckers after one month.

Rose

- Summer showers may result in fungal incidence, hence please go for prophylactic spray of fungicides (carbendazim). Hot and dry climate is favourable for the incidence of spider mites. Application of miticide (Abemectin 1.9EC) would control the mites. Regular irrigation would increase the relative humidity and reduce the multiplication of the mites.
- Farmers who are growing desi roses may prepare *gulkand* instead of discarding the flowers.
- Un-harvested flowers on the plants may become the site of fungal attack, hence, dried/withered flowers may be removed from the plants.

China Aster and Marigold

- In most places the flower production might have been completed as the season is over. However, in those areas where harvesting is not yet done, farmers may go for collecting the seed (from best performing individual plants) for self use in the next season and also for distribution to others.

Annuals

- Seed collection, processing and storage is an important activity upcoming in many summer season annuals and also in late sown winter annuals.
- Allow the flowers to completely dry and collect the flowers/seeds when the situation improves.
- Cleaning, processing of the seed could be taken up upon the improvement of the situation.