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S. A. Safeena

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), India

Title: Evaluation of different ornamental asparagus species / varieties for production of cut foliage and vase life

Biography:

S. A. Safeena is Scientist in the field of Horticulture (Floriculture and Landscaping) presently working at ICAR Research Complex for Goa. She obtained her M.Sc (Ag.) in Horticulture degree from University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India and PhD in Horticulture from University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, Karnataka, India. She has published several papers in the journals of national and international repute and is a member of several professional societies.

Abstract:

Ornamental *Asparagus* serves as excellent filler materials for bouquets and are highly valued as florist greens due to their elegant symmetry and lush green foliage. Even though ornamental filler plants like *Asparagus* is grown by many farmers, there are no systematic studies on the performance of different cultivars for commercial cut foliage production in India. This supports the importance of conducting studies on ornamental asparagus to meet the ever growing demands for cut foliage in domestic and international markets. Therefore to exploit the potential of ornamental asparagus as cut greens, the present investigation was undertaken during 2011-2012 to evaluate the performance of different ornamental asparagus species/varieties for growth, yield and vase life attributes. The experiment was conducted in randomized complete block design with five replications. Significantly wide variation was recorded in all parameters studied. The maximum plant spread[E-W direction(65.64 cm) and N-S direction(56.51 cm)], maximum cladophyll length (212.65 cm), breadth(43.43 cm), cladophyll stalk length(11.09 cm), maximum internodal length(3.12 cm) and minimum physiological weight loss(39.56 %) was recorded in *Asparagus setaceus* syn. *plumosus* followed by *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Sprengerii'. *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Sprengerii' compacta was early to initiate newer cladophyll(3.80 days) and produced maximum cut foliage yield/year(1677.28 no's) but it recorded least plant spread of 38.82cm(E-W direction) and 38.98 cm (N-S direction), minimum cladophyll length(23.87 cm), cladophyll breadth(6.32 cm), minimum no of branches per cladophyll (8.93), minimum cladophyll stalk girth(0.14 cm), lowest fresh weight(2.16 g) and less vase life(6.20 days). *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myers' recorded maximum vase life(11.20 days), followed by *Asparagus setaceus* syn. *Plumosus* (8.40 days). Keeping these characters in view, ornamental asparagus species viz., *Asparagus setaceus* syn. *plumosus* and *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Sprengerii' were found to be highly suitable for cut foliage production because of their attractive lustrous and good size foliage, higher yield and good keeping quality.

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