

VARIETIES

Acura®



Acura®

Acura is a variety which is probably unknown to you: a nacreous pink flower with green ears, especially in winter. The colouring is very special, partly due to its unique, well-defined fresh vein. The flower size fluctuates between 14 and 18 cm and in winter the flower gets green ears and measures 18 cm. In summer, though, the green colour disappears to a large extent and it measures about 14 cm.

The average shelf life of Acura is 25 days. The stem measures 60 cm and the flowers stand out beautifully above the plant. The leaf is small, which allows planting of 16 plants per

gross square metre. Anthura expects a production of 90-95 flowers to be possible. However, this expectation is based on a test period of only two years. This flower, in a colour which is not yet available in the assortment, is a welcome supplement to the existing varieties.

Ing. Marco Knijnenburg

Palermo®

A major plus point of orchids is their versatility in terms of size, colour and flower pattern. It is up to breeders and growers to keep surprising the consumer to achieve repeat purchases. An orchid that will certainly surprise the consumer is our new variety Palermo. It has a special appearance because the front two flower leaves are pink and the back three flower leaves are light yellow, which is unique. The flower measures 6-7 cm with a red lip and the branch length is approximately 40 cm. Palermo offers growers a high percentage of plants with two spikes, sometimes even three, and a good plant structure. This variety will be available in 2008 as a young plant.

However you have already been able to enjoy Palermo. Last spring, there was an orchid exhibition at the Keukenhof in Lisse. Anthura sent in Palermo, which was nomi-

nated for best Phalaenopsis pot plant! It goes without saying that other people were also impressed by this variety, as Palermo won a prize, namely second prize for pot Phalaenopsis!

Ir. Robert Kuijf

INTERVIEW

With Ad Sprenkels of Nursery garden DA-BRI

Ad and Brigitte Sprenkels' new company is located in Prinsenbeek (Holland) and covers a surface area of 15,000 m² of Anthurium cut flowers. The company's former location had to give way to the high-speed railway line and therefore they had to reconsider their future. The farewell to the old location coincided with the farewell to growing leaf vegetables. In 2005, Ad started growing plant material and last autumn the first Anthurium flowers appeared at the Aalsmeer auction. Everything has been carefully thought through, with an eye for detail.

Why have you decided to cultivate Anthurium cut flowers?

While searching for another crop, we set ourselves several objectives. We were looking for more regular labour needs as well as a clean cultivation. We wanted to leave behind the peaks in labour and production which are typical in vegetable farming. We believed it was important for quality and cleanliness to be rewarded in the market. We preferred a smaller cultivation so we could distinguish ourselves in these aspects. Thus, we started considering Anthurium cut flowers and we made inquiries with growers, traders and auctioneers, among others. After careful consideration, we took the plunge. Pot plants were less appealing to us because of the intensive build-up phase with customers, which is necessary to achieve good sales. For this we had too little experience from vegetable growing and that was not



Palermo®

our biggest challenge. Finally, we were inspired to start growing Anthurium cut flowers because at that time hardly anybody was investing in them. At that time it seemed illogical, but we were confident that we would soon be part of a leading group. Now we have been supplying flowers to the auction for a couple of months, our buyers have confirmed this.

How did you decide on the variety?

Choosing the variety was the most difficult part when setting up the company. We have opted for Calisto®, Carnaval®, President®, Tropic Night® and Pistache®. Over-wintering varieties are the basis, because we did not want an experimental garden. In the lay-out, we planned four areas with one variety in each, but there have turned out to be five. We chose, for example, Tropic Night because we also wanted something new and the decisive factors for this variety were its good production and the positive reaction to the young leaf removal technique. President was a logical choice: the area was decreasing, so it aroused our interest.

Why have you opted for lighting?

Our company has to meet high standards and in Holland we have to face a dark winter period. During this season, the lighting allows us to achieve higher production. Furthermore, we have a high pressure air humidification system to guarantee the high quality of our final product.

Why have you organised two open houses?

Anthurium products are still fairly unknown and we wanted to give the people in our surrounding area the opportunity to get to know Anthurium cut flowers and our com-



Brigitte and Ad Sprenkels in the 'presidential' department of their company



At the end of a dark winter, the plant puts in a top performance with regard to flower production

pany, DA-BRI. Bringing Anthurium to the attention of the public is something that should happen more frequently.

Why does DA-BRI use the leaf removal technique?

In the build-up we first heard about removing leaves from plants. We discussed it with Anthura on several occasions and Bureau IMAC advised us on this subject too. We were able, of course, to have a look at Anthura's results. These were so positive that for a new company like ours it was the ideal point to start using this new technique. DA-BRI is the first newly-created company to apply the leaf removal technique on complete young plants. It is an advantage that everything in the company is new, including the staff. Thus staff members do not have to forget what they have learned previously and the leaf removal technique can be mastered more quickly. Furthermore, there are no people available in this area with experience in Anthurium cultivation. The labour saving and easy, clean way of working fit in perfectly with our objective. Work is also carried out more efficiently, because there is less waste. About our expectations? We still have a lot of questions. We are still looking, for example, at the right time for leaf replacement and are trying to keep the leaf in good condition for as long as possible by applying an adapted protection strategy.

How do you look back on the process?

Mission accomplished! We are working towards a clear goal and we have put a lot of energy into it. We have also taken care of a lot of things ourselves, like obtaining the right permits, the tenders and planning the culti-

vation system. We have received a lot of help from the IMAC cultivation advisory experts. I am satisfied with the production and the pricing and I feel as if we are already very familiar with this cultivation. A few years ago I would never have thought that I would be growing Anthurium cut flowers in a new company, using one of the newest techniques in the Anthurium cut flower sector. A technique that entails removing a part of the plant, namely the young leaf, thus achieving more efficiency in the long term. One step back to take two steps forward.

Ing. Hans Prins

TRAVELLING ABROAD

In Canada: Canadian bears



Be aware, watch for bear!

Canada is the second largest country in the world and yet it 'only' has a population of approximately 30 million inhabitants. Canada offers opportunities to immigrants from all over the world and that is why a lot of Dutch people emigrated to this country to start their own business. Among others, you find flower and plant nursery gardens, the grown products of which are exported mainly to the USA.

In Holland, we use a famous saying that literally says "seeing bears on the road". This means more or less seeing non-existent problems or restrictions. Actually it means that somebody imposes unnecessary restrictions on himself, or raises objections. You see, in Holland there are no bears on the road. And it cannot be denied: restrictions are abundant in this country. A slow market, decreasing prices, steep energy bills, plenty of rules, competitors and logistical problems.

The trick is to convert these restrictions into opportunities. This is the strength of a successful entrepreneur. All great entrepreneurs on this earth have always focused on opportunities and never imposed restrictions on themselves. The Canadian immigrant/grower is very good at this, because when you start over in a huge country, you should not be afraid of the proverbial bears.

But sometimes reality bites! This becomes clear from this warning sign which I found along a Canadian road during a stop. Well, at times like these you shouldn't see bears on the road either. Although they might be out there!

Ing. Maarten van der Leeden

CULTIVATION TECHNIQUE

Leaf replacement using the young leaf removal technique

In the July edition of Anthurinfo 2006, an article was published about removing young leaves. It was the initial impetus to a fundamental change in the cultivation method of Anthurium cut flowers. When using this technique, young leaves are removed at an early as possible stage while the older, hardened leaves are kept.

Last year, the new technique was further developed and by now approximately 60% of the cultivation area in Holland is already being grown according to this method. Bureau IMAC has written cultivation instructions on this innovative method for plant maintenance.

Practice has shown that the new technique yields a considerable increase in flower size and quality. There is a greater incidence of light for the lower plant (cutting) which results in higher production. Furthermore, the ease of removing the 'new' leaf is an advantage as it allows people to work more quickly. Plus the young leaf removal technique appears to be suitable for both young and older plants.

It was mentioned above to keep an average of two leaves per plant, aiming at an

LAI (Leaf Area Index) of about two (2 m² leaf per m² greenhouse surface). Therefore, most varieties are grown with two leaves per head, but varieties with big flowers can even be cultivated on one leaf. One leaf produces sufficient assimilates for the correct flower size. The number of leaves to be kept per plant can differ and depends on the variety.

An important point, though, is that in the event of damage or too much shadow on the hardened leaf, the production of this plant slows down. To create a better incidence of light in a quick and easy way, it is



Remove half a leaf bud

recommended in certain plants to keep two half leaves instead of one leaf. By tearing the front tip neatly from the leaf buds, the leaf will develop into a half leaf. To achieve an ideal leaf surface, it is also possible to choose one and a half or two two-thirds of leaves per plant in certain varieties.

It seems that with most varieties the recommendation is to cultivate for one year with the leaf that has been kept. In this case, the leaf can be replaced every year. It is preferable to do this in the summer months, when plants have a surplus of assimilates. Replacing the retained leaves in summer will result in the lowest drop in production. Summer leaves also seem better for cultivation than winter leaves. In autumn, you can start removing leaves again and growers also benefit from higher prices.

When the time comes to replace the 'old', retained leaf, you can stop removing the young leaves. As soon as the new leaves have hardened, the old ones

can be removed. Then, as soon as sufficient new leaves have grown (depending on the plant), you can start removing young leaves again. Finally, the last old leaves can be removed.

Old leaves can be removed in different ways. It is important to keep labour intensity as low as possible and not to lose sight of the cultivation circumstances.

The choice of strategy for replacing old leaves depends on the variety, the available labour and the required leaf surface. Four strategies can be considered:

1. After stopping the removal of young leaves, old leaves are removed every three or four weeks. When a plant has a newly formed leaf, one old leaf is removed. Once all the old leaf has been removed, young leaf removal can be started again;
2. After stopping the removal of young leaves, one leaf is removed from each plant after approximately eight weeks. After approximately 16 weeks, the second old leaf of every plant can be removed;
3. All plants keep one old leaf before young leaf removal is stopped. As soon as two leaves have grown, the oldest leaf can be removed. This technique seems especially suitable for varieties with sufficient flower size and which are less sensitive to a poor microclimate;
4. After stopping the removal of young leaves, the tips of all leaf buds must be



Plant of which two half leaves are kept

removed. As soon as sufficient shortened leaves have developed, the old leaf can be removed.

Currently tests are being performed on whether a leaf can be kept for more than one year. You are advised to test this your-

self on a small scale only, since it is still not clear whether the leaf will continue production sufficiently after one year. The technique is still being developed and not all the effects of the new cultivation method have been mapped yet.

Until then, we advise you to experiment on a small scale to see for yourself if this new cultivation method for Anthurium cut flowers is convenient for you and your plants. If you want to use the removal of young leaves on a larger scale, we recommend you to obtain good advice from experts. We wish you good luck with your cultivation and will be happy to offer you our advice!

Ing. Hans van Eijk
Bureau IMAC Bleiswijk B.V.

ANTHURVARIA



Gerrie Schumacher

New employee in the sales department

My name is Gerrie Schumacher, I am 29 years old and I live with my wife Blanca in Berkel en Rodenrijs. Since April I have been working at Anthura as Sales Manager Export.

Cultivation tip

Direct sunlight raises the plant temperature quickly, so you should protect and moisten the plants quickly as soon as greenhouse temperatures and light intensity rise. This will prevent the plants from closing their stomas and, consequently, stopping photosynthesis.

After completing my studies in Commercial Economics at the HES in Rotterdam, I worked for four years in the sales department of the export slaughterhouse T. Boer. At first sight, meat and plants do not have much in common. Yet they are both fresh products for which both the control of the production process and the time factor are of vital importance for product quality and, eventually, the success of the producer. At Anthura I have the opportunity to put into practice my experience in export as well as to acquire new experiences. I also find it challenging to gain new product knowledge in an interesting sector. Finally, I hope to be able to make a valuable contribution to optimal geographical sales distribution and, of course, to help you as much as possible, maintaining a pleasant relationship with both customers and agents.

New employee in PR & Marketing

Since January, Eveliene Hartmanns has held the new position of PR & Marketing Manager at Anthura. Eveliene, who was formerly the Sales Manager Export, is the contact person for all matters concerning marketing and public relations.

Anthura attendance at trade fairs from July to October 2007:

Kunming International Flora Exhibition, trade fair in Kunming, China: 06/09/2007 – 09/09/2007

Flora Expo 2007, trade fair in New Delhi, India: 12/09/2007 – 14/09/2007

Flormar – Miflor, trade fair in Padova, Italy: 13/09/2007 – 15/09/2007

Hortifair, trade fair in Amsterdam, Holland: 09/10/2007 – 12/10/2007

Opening of Kunming Anthura Horticulture Co. Ltd.

Anthura has a new overseas establishment in China. Kunming Anthura Horticulture Co. Ltd. was inaugurated on April 9. In addition to the full Chinese workforce, delegates from Holland and China, customers and agents also attended the ceremony. It was an official and festive opening which culminated in a traditional Chinese firework display. During



The opening is front page news in China Flower and Gardening News

the opening, everyone present was given an Anthurinfo Special Edition, which has been enclosed in your Anthurinfo in Dutch, English or Chinese and offers all the information with regard to the construction of the establishment in China.

Phalaenopsis cultivation guide

From now on, the Phalaenopsis cultivation guide is not only available in Dutch and English, but can also be ordered in Spanish. Please contact your sales manager for more information.

C O L O F O N

Anthurinfo is a publication of Anthura B.V. This newsletter is distributed free of charge to customers and is available in Dutch, English, Italian and Spanish. Anthurinfo appears four times a year.

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