

✓ will, if well fed and properly watered, produce 2,000-4,000 flowers per season in full sun.

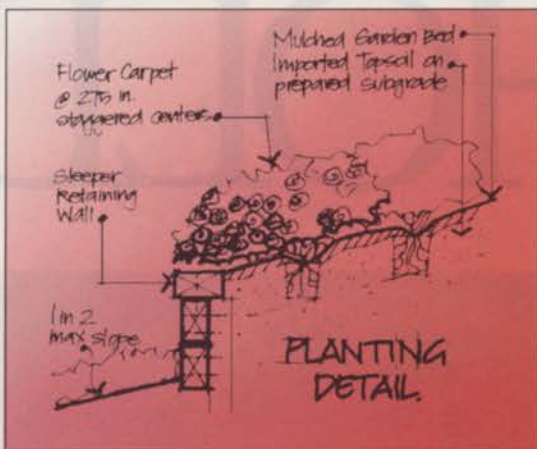
✓ blooms in shade, though in reduced numbers,

✓ requires no fancy pruning, just one good hard cut per year during winter.

✓ can be planted 2-3 per square yard for ground cover, or 32 inches apart to establish boundaries.

For more information contact members of the The Flower Carpet Growers of America:

- Angelica Nurseries, Inc., Ken-



nedville, Md., (410) 928-3111.

- Bailey Nurseries, Inc., St. Paul, Minn., (612) 459-9744.

- Clinton Nurseries, Inc., Clinton, Conn., (203) 669-8611.

- El Modeno Gardens, Inc., Irvine, Calif., (714) 559-1234.

- Flowerwood Nursery Inc., Mobile, Ala., (205) 964-5122.

- Midwest Groundcovers, St. Charles, Ill., (708) 742-1790.

- Monrovia Nursery Company, Azusa, Calif., (818) 334-9321.

- Zelenka Nursery, Inc., Grand Haven, Mich., (616) 842-1367. **LM**

How your employees can help you keep your old reliable customers

by Bess Ritter May

Like most alert landscape management business people, you know how hard it can be to attract new customers. But do you also train your workers to do all they can to help you keep your old reliable "steadies?"

It's often thought that those who comprise this important backbone trade will always be loyal unless some actual damage is done by your workers to an owner's lawns and grounds. However, it has been proved that unless such mishaps are really drastic, they will be forgiven when they're corrected. But what is rarely taken lightly by most "old" customers—and will often lose them—is the inability of employees to observe some simple, considerate and very easy common sense business practices.

To be sure they are careful concerning such matters, your answers to these questions should be "yes:"

1) Do your employees wear neat and appropriate uniforms with their names and your company name embroidered on a pocket or on the backs of shirts? If they look like skid row characters rather than competent and reliable landscape maintenance workers—unwashed, unkempt hair and ragged and dirty clothes—you've got a problem.

2) Do employees cooperate with each other and work together in harmony, efficiently and quietly? If they are quarrelsome, forever arguing about who does

what, and where and how, and other details—you've got a problem.

But what is rarely taken lightly by most 'old' customers—and will often lose them—is the inability of employees to observe some simple, considerate and very easy common sense business practices.

3) Are your employees considerate of your customers? Workers can be a real benefit if they offer these "extras:"

- carry empty trash cans from the curb to the garage (or some other place designated by the customer) on collection days;

- bag lawn clippings, pulled weeds and other trash and dispose of it properly and neatly, as directed by the customer;

4) Do you train your workers to be considerate and responsible to customers in other ways, including:

- moving garden furniture, croquet and other games; children's toys and similar items on lawns before mowing them,

and—if appropriate—replacing them?

- carefully covering all such items which cannot be moved before spraying the lawn with fertilizers and pesticides?

- neatly coiling and storing hoses near a faucet or some other practical place designated by the customer after watering?

5) Do you train your employees so that they are able to offer your customers more than the usual services, such as sodding, seeding, liming, irrigation and landscape installation? This is one important strategy in which many companies hold their important steady customers and keep them loyal. It also generates considerably more business and profit. You might also put together a complete but cookie-cutter-type lawn care program which employees can offer customers on the spot.

You may feel that angling for, and obtaining such, additional business isn't worth the trouble. But by neglecting to do so, you run the risk of losing many "steadies" to the competition, especially when cut-rate rates are being offered.

—The author is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia, and a frequent contributor to LM.