

# Colloquium Papers and Authors

Presiding: L. George Wilson

## **Tropical Horticultural Crop Development for Export Marketing: Introduction to the Colloquium**

L. George Wilson

## **Horticultural Crop Production Capabilities and Opportunities in the Tropics**

Dyanand Raj Kumar

## **Techniques for Producing Export-quality Tropical Horticultural Crops**

Carl W. Campbell

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## **The Role of Foreign Assistance Programs in the Development of Exportable Horticultural Crops**

Howard L. Steele

## **Colloquium Summary**

L. George Wilson

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# **Tropical Horticultural Crop Development for Export Marketing: Introduction to the Colloquium**

**L. George Wilson**

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Anyone who visits the produce department of a present-day supermarket in the United States, Canada, and many "other countries is always amazed at the broad spectrum of fruits, vegetables, ornamental (flowers and container-grown plants), and ethnic items offered for sale at any given time during the year. There is a wide and expanding diversity of products, many of which are imported according to seasonal availability and market demand. Given contemporary transportation facilities, there is a substantial potential for imported horticultural items from practically anywhere in the world. Obvious constraints, such as consumer acceptance, sufficient quantities of any given item, maintenance of proper pre- and post-harvest quality, adequate physical facilities for transportation, export and import governmental regulations, competitive price structures, and seasonal availability apply regardless of source of market.

Geographically, Mexico, the West Indies, and Central and South America are favorably located to supply North American markets. The diverse historical background and origins of the populace in these countries is such that there has been scant cooperation thus far, especially among the numerous islands scattered throughout the Caribbean area. Here, the general lack of exploitable natural resources; restrictive land tenure policies, with consequent fragmentation of arable land ownership; rapid population growth; frequent changes in governments and policies; and a general reluctance among individual islands to collaborate has hampered their viability as sources of exportable horticultural crops.

The antecedents of this colloquium were instructions to the ASHS Ad Hoc Committee on Tropical Horticulture at the time of its establishment in 1984 to study the relationship of the Tropical Region of ASHS affiliate to the parent Society and make recommendations

to the Board of Directors as to how the Tropical Region's needs might be better served. Preliminary planning of the colloquium proper began with discussions of the Ad Hoc Committee at their business meeting at Davis, Calif. in 1986. Meanwhile, the Members of the Tropical Region opted to become a separate entity as the Interamerican Society for Tropical Horticulture (ISTH). The latter did, however, join forces with three ASHS Working Groups (Tropical Horticultural Products Research and Development Opportunities; Postharvest; and International Horticultural Consultants) plus the ASHS Tropical Horticulture Committee in organizing this Colloquium, held 9 Nov. 1987 in Orlando, Fla. These groups agreed that interactions among growers, marketers, and professional horticulturists in tropical and temperate areas are expected to expand in future years.

The purpose of this colloquium was the clarification of opportunities, realities of producing and marketing tropical horticultural crops profitably, and the constraints and challenges in maintaining organoleptic qualities, as well as extending the shelflife of perishable commodities. Together, authors of these papers present the latest comprehensive review of tropical horticulture in the Caribbean area. Topics covered are: Crop production capabilities and opportunities in the tropics; techniques for producing export-quality tropical horticultural crops; realistic examination of the factors involved in international transportation and marketing aspects; the realities of national and international trade regulations and policies as seen from the exporters' viewpoint; and the role of foreign assistance programs in the development of exportable horticultural crops. Finally, a summary of the main issues discussed and future directions for tropical horticulture is presented.