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## Hey Joe, Can You Believe They Outsourced My Job Too?®

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During the last couple of years, top greenhouse growers have largely come to the conclusion that it doesn't pay for them to make their own cuttings. For example, one of Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation's significant bedding plant producers in Québec, Canada, recently told me that his usual price for an unrooted geranium cutting with tag is about \$0.30. His customers last season could buy the same cutting for \$0.11 from Costa Rica. Cutting sales were a large part of his business, and he's now considering his options. Most of the bigger Ontario greenhouse producers have already made the change.

Is there any reason to believe it will be any different in the nursery business?

Many of you already know that Ball Seed, in the next few years, is rolling out a softwood cuttings program from Costa Rica and Guatemala. Ball has been selling perennial cuttings for a while, as has Yoder Brothers. These floral breeding programs don't take any cuttings until the stock plants have been cleaned up of viruses. So their cuttings will be superior to those coming from non-indexed stock plants. The size and distribution networks of companies like Yoder and Ball are such that the cuttings can be delivered quickly and cheaply from off-shore facilities.

I don't think outsourcing will affect seedlings much, as long as the species involved are not reproduced from cuttings. Greenhouse companies are not used to scheduling crops that take a year or more to produce.