

*Michela Muci, Floricoltura Bonato:*

## Italy: "Wide range gives competitive edge across markets and seasons"

Spring is upon us and this means busy times for many growers. Also for Italian grower Floricoltura Bonato. After International Women's Day (March 8), for which their yellow Zantedeschia is usually the bestseller, their greenhouse is now starting to become a sea of colors. "It is the most important season to us and during this time of the year, we grow the broadest assortment", says Michela Muci of Floricoltura Bonato.



Veronica Camazzola, Corina van der Heiden (of Addenda) and Michela Muci at the [Myplant & Garden](#) 2019.

From March to May, they grow a large range of products including cymbidiums, zantedeschias, dipladenias, Graff HibisQs, ambella bellflowers, clematis, hydrangeas and roses from breeders David Austin, Meiland Roses and Poulsen Roses. "We are known for our roses, zantedeschias, cymbidiums, and cyclamen in winter time, but this large assortment enables us to stay competitive both nationally and internationally. Last year, we had a growth in production. This season, as it just started, it still has to be seen, but we always hope that it is the same."

### Structures needed to grow such a large assortment

In 2001, the company was established and the first yield of hydrangeas and potted cyclamen came out of a 2,000m<sup>2</sup> greenhouse that owner Rubens Bonato rented. And the company has grown ever since. Currently they grow on 24 ha. Over the years, the assortment increased and their cultivation areas have adjusted accordingly. "We grow under different structures and we are continuously working on finding the right construction for the different plants and sizes we produce." Besides, to keep up with the increasing fuel prices, they are also continuously looking for solutions to keep their production costs low. "By using thermal screens and a biomass power station, we reduce the heating costs. In this way, we do not have to increase the prices of our products."

**Trialing new varieties**

Besides cultivating products, they are also dedicated to trial new varieties. The Ambella bellflower of Addenda is one of the varieties they trial. They trialed this plant in Italy and are now the Italian nursery that is licenced to grow this variety. Currently, they grow 40,000 Addeda Ambella bellflowers on 1.5 ha in a 14cm pot and mainly export them to the Netherlands, Germany and France.

**Post harvest**

The warehouse is the place where all the plants produced in the different sites go. "It allows us to make all kind of orders." Then, when the orders are made, the plants can be shipped out. Floricoltura Bonato works with several transport companies and this enables them to cover the Italian territory, including the islands, in 12 to 48 hours. Besides, they also export their products to countries all over Europe.