

## HARVESTING OF PYRETHRUM FLOWERS

Pick flowers once in 2-3 weeks when ray florets are horizontal and about 3 rows of disc florets are open. Harvest once the daisies are in full bloom as this is when the concentration of pyrethrins is at its peak. Pick the flowers carefully and hang them in bunches in a warm, airy place to dry. The pyrethrum plant is cultivated for the production of pyrethrins. 92% of all pyrethrins are found in the flowers. The amount of pyrethrin concentration in the flower is determined by genotype and the environment (altitude, temperature). Farmers will make the most pyrethrin production by picking flowers at the right time. The flowers develop through 8 stages from the bud to the seed stage. The right stage to pick pyrethrum is when the ray florets are horizontal and the disc florets are open.

The picking interval is between 2-3 weeks and will have attained maximum pyrethrins content. Young immature flowers contain low pyrethrins concentration, which increases from the bud stage up to when its disc florets are open, and then decline gradually. Flower harvesting is selectively done by hand (Fig. ....), and flowers dried and delivered to the factory for processing. The best picking method is by holding the flower between the first and second finger and then pulling the flower head with the thumb.



Smallholders harvesting pyrethrum



Right flower harvesting stage

## DRYING PYRETHRUM FLOWERS

Dry in natural sunlight on a raised bed rack or by solar drying to 13% moisture content before transporting to the flower collection centers.



Solar drier for pyrethrum flowers



**Solar drier for pyrethrum flowers for smallholders - demo**

## **MAJOR STRATEGIES**

- Inadequate planting material, former PBK's nurseries and plant propagation sites that have been unable to produce the required material on time.
- Low flower production, explained by delayed payment to growers and poor extension services. As a result, some growers have neglected their crop while others have switched to alternative enterprises. Farmers' payments are tied to improved pyrethrum production and sales.



Dry flowers for sale