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Exactly thirty years ago, New Bern's mother city (Bern, Switzerland) decided that something must be done to brighten up the ancient town. Municipal authorities, the time honored "street guilds" and private citizens put their heads together.

They founded an association called "For Bern." The group's aim was to bring more business to the Swiss Capital, attract foreign visitors, and encourage occupants of flats and offices to bring a gay note to the street scene by erecting window boxes of showy flowers.

Prizes are offered annually for the finest floral displays. Since it would entail too much work and expense if all the districts in the town were to participate at the same time, the suburbs take it in turn to join in the competition.

In autumn, prizes are awarded for the displays that are most attractive and have lasted the longest. The prizes are tasteful ceramics, other useful articles, and art prints. These have always proven popular with the recipients, and spurred them on to even greater effort the following year.

From 800 to 1,000 awards are given each year. In 1957, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the program, nearly 2,000 prizes were presented to residents of the town and its suburbs.

Judging the displays is the job of a committee of 40 to 50 members under the Head Gardener of the city. This must be a gigantic task, but everybody pitches in to get the job done with the least possible confusion.

"But why are all the flowers red?" visitors are always asking. It is a natural question. The reason is that no other color is so effective as geranium red against the greyish green of the sandstone facades in Bern's old streets.

Besides, being a semi-succulent plant, the geranium is particularly desirable for a dry position like the town's window sills. Streets of the older part of Bern run more or less east to west. This means that some house fronts face south and receive the full heat of the sun. That can be bad, even for geraniums, unless they are planted in boxes.

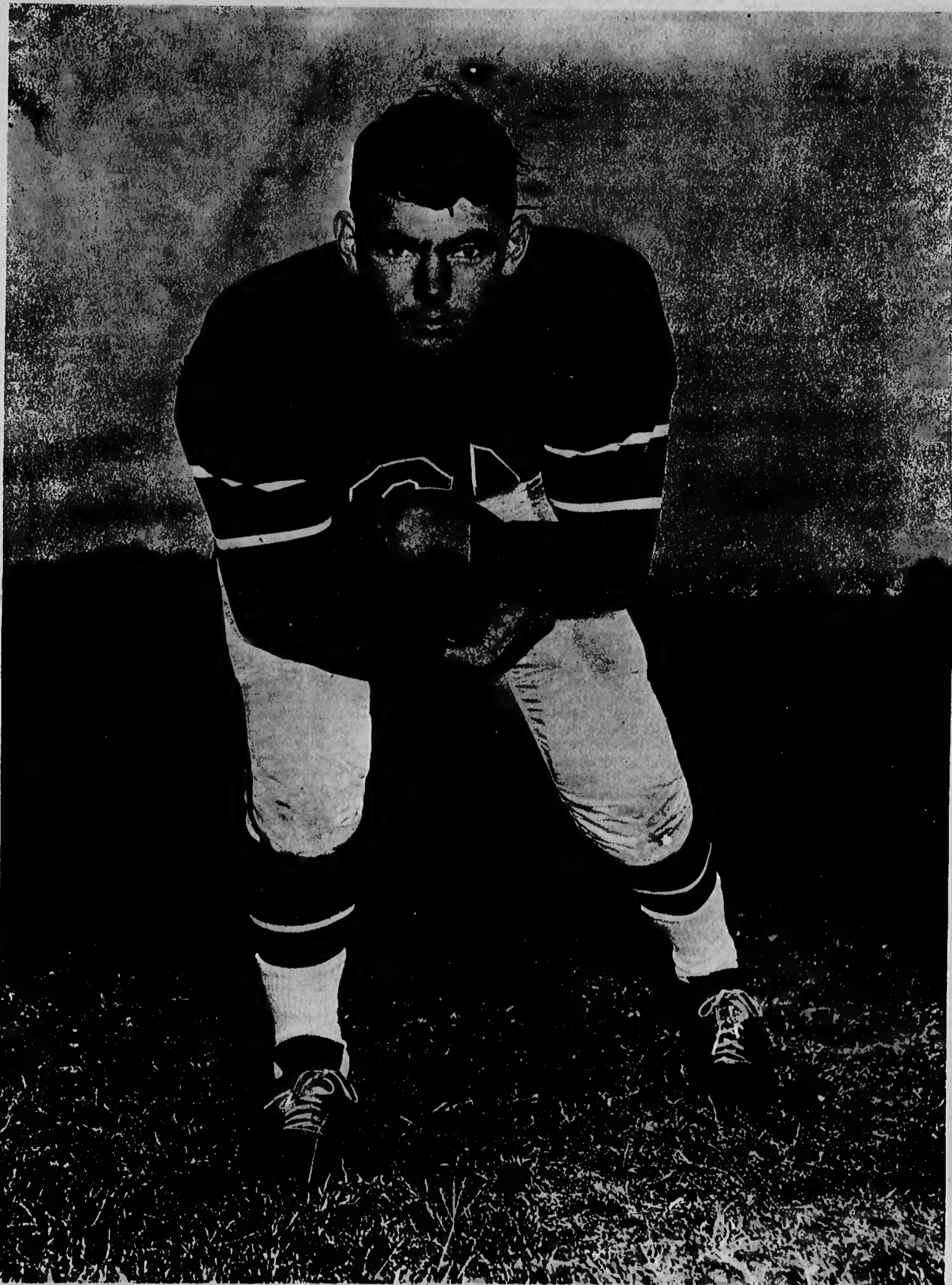
How does the planting and care of geraniums in Bern compare with the methods used by you New Bern flower growers? Here is that information, sent directly to The Mirror by officials of our mother city.

In Bern, we are told, the best time for propagating geraniums is from July to August. They put the cuttings into sandy soil in single pots, then transplant them after New Year's Day in well fertilized geranium soil.

According to residents of the Swiss Capital, geraniums can be planted outside at the beginning of May. There is sufficient room for two or three in a box 20 inches long, and for three or four in a box 28 inches long. Boxes of Eternit (asbestos cement) are recommended by the Bernese as the most economical available.

In view of the millions of geraniums that give the Swiss Capital a dazzling cloak of crimson splendor, it is easy

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PRO PROSPECT—Charlie Davis, pictured here during his days of stardom for the New Bern High School Bears, may not make the grade with the Washington Redskins, but he won't be easily disposed of by other aspirants in training sessions at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Despite injuries that would have discouraged gridders less stout hearted, Davis made a valuable contribution to the University of North Carolina Tar Heels during his college career. While carrying a

lion's share of the load at New Bern High, the powerfully built athlete made All-North Eastern, was picked for the annual East-West game, and given honorable mention in the High School All-American selections. Scouted by the Redskins, he showed enough promise to merit a closer look in this year's pre-season work outs. As they say, there isn't a nicer guy in sports than Charlie Davis. We wish him well.