

September 2009

Early planting for **COOL** growing spring crops

These four crops offer you the possibility of producing for early flowering pot sales with minimal energy consumption.

- Potting from early November
- Establishment in the pots over 10-14 days
- Low temperature during December – January
- Marketing in March and April

Crop	Plant weeks	Start	Growth	Forcing
	Growth period	2 weeks	6 weeks	last 6 weeks
Dianthus	44-06	12-14°C	4-6°C	12-14°C
Osteospermum	44-10	16°C	4-6°C	12-14°C
'Regals'	40-08	16-18°C	6-8°C	10-12°C
Senetti	44-08	14°C	5-8°C	12°C



Dianthus Roselly® series- Culture

- Hygiene** Start clean with pots, soil and containers. 10.5 cm pots may be finally spaced at 50/m².
- Soil** Use free draining peat compost with an NPK Mg balance of 200: 150: 200: 70. pH should be 5.5-6.2 and clay may be included at 15-25% to improve water and fertiliser buffering.
- Fertiliser may be added to the mix at 1.5kg/m³
- Feeding** The crop should be watered uniformly throughout its life using a balanced liquid fertilizer with an Ec of 1.6, changing to a higher potash feed as the buds become clearly visible.
- The use of slow release fertilizer is recommended (combined with liquid fertilizer)

Plants can use a great deal of water in the spring but this may lead to tall, untidy looking plants. Always ensure that the crop is dry after watering to avoid fungal disease.

Pinching

Plants need pinching as soon as the main bud appears after approximately 4-6 weeks or sometimes earlier depending on the condition of the stock. This is necessary to ensure good branching and growth.

Temperature

Plants root best in a temperature of 12°C- 14°C.

Light

Grow the plants in as much natural light as possible. The plants will flower most rapidly as the daylength increases in the spring.

Flowering may be advanced by giving the developing shoots either dusk to dawn low intensity lighting or a short period of night break lighting. During periods of low light in winter and very early spring the crop growth may be advanced by giving high intensity lighting.

Plant growth

Regulator

Apply PGR using CCC of B9 as desired. Later potted plants grown quickly in the spring may require growth regulant to avoid stretching in the peduncles.

Notes

Dianthus	Pot weeks	Cooling weeks	Force weeks	Sales weeks
Early potting wk.	40-50	1-6	6-10	13-16
Temperature	14°C day 12°C after 14 days.	4-6°C	12-14°C	14°C
	Vent set at 2° over heating temperature			



Osteospermum Culture

- Hygiene** Start clean with pots, soil and containers.
- Soil** Use free draining peat compost with an NPK Mg balance of 200: 150: 200: 70. p H should be 5.5-6.2 and clay may be included at 15-25% to improve water and fertiliser buffering.
- Feeding** 10-14 days after potting, begin to feed with a balanced feed solution with Ec. of 1.6. Increase potassium feeding toward the end of the crop.
- Pinching** Pinch the plants fairly hard at 5-6 leaves approximately 10 days from

potting. The plants may be pinched a second time if desired to help balance up growth. Shoots should be developed to 2-4 cm prior to commencing cool treatment.

Temperature

Plants root best in a temperature of 18°C- 20°C.

Light

Grow the plants in as much light as possible and increase levels to 3000 lux for 14-16 hours in winter.

Plant growth

regulator

Apply PGR using CCC of B9 as desired. CCC may be used as a 100ml drench of 0.3- 0.5% solution or sprayed at 0.15% a.i.

Osteospermum	Pot weeks	Cooling weeks	force	sales
Early	40-50	1-6	6-10	13-17
Late	1-10	Optional	10-17	18-22
Temperature	18°C day 16°C after 14 days.	4-6°C	12-14°C	14°C



Regal Pelargonium- Culture

Hygiene

Start clean with pots, soil and containers. 12 cm pots may be finally spaced at 18/m². Avoid conditions that assist the development of fungal diseases such as Botrytis and Phytophthora.

Soil

Use free draining peat compost with an NPK Mg balance of 200: 150: 200: 70. pH should be 5.5-6.2 and Perlite may be included at 15-25% to improve drainage.

Fertiliser may be added to the mix at 1.5kg/m³

Feeding

The crop should be watered uniformly throughout its life using a balanced higher potash feed with an Ec of 1.6, changing to a Nitrogen balanced liquid fertilizer as the buds become clearly visible.

Pinching

Plants do not normally need pinching but larger plants may be obtained af-

ter pinching at 6-8 leaves with a consequent delay in flowering of some weeks.

Temperature Plants root best in a temperature of 16°C- 18°C.

Light Grow the plants in as much natural light as possible. The plants will flower most rapidly as the daylength increases in the spring.

During periods of low light in winter and very early spring the crop growth may be advanced by giving high intensity lighting @ 3000 lux for up to 16hours per day once the low temperature phase is complete.

Plant growth

Regulator Apply PGR using CCC or Bonzi as desired. This should be applied once or twice in the early vegetative phase sometimes after the cold period.

Notes Regals are susceptible to attack from Whitefly and it is advisable to inspect plants regularly in the spring and spray to control them.

Regals	Pot weeks	Cooling weeks	Force weeks	Sales weeks
Early potting wk.	40-50	1-6	6-10	13-16
Temperature	15°C day 12°C after 14 days.	8°C	10-12°C	12°C
	Vent set at 2° over heating temperature			



Senetti- Culture

(Pericallis Senetti® Hybrids)

Hygiene

Start clean with pots, soil and containers.

Soil

Use free draining peat compost with an NPK Mg balance of 200: 150: 200: 70. p H should be 5.5-6.2 and clay may be included at 15-25% to improve water and fertiliser buffering.

Feeding

The crop should be watered uniformly throughout its life using a balanced liquid fertilizer with an Ec of 1.6, changing to a higher potash feed as the buds become clearly visible.

The use of slow release fertilizer is recommended (combined with liquid fertilizer) at a rate of 2kg per m³ of compost with longevity

of 8-9 months.

In hard water areas it may be necessary to use iron chelate in the stock solution.

Pinching

Pinch the plants fairly hard at 5-6 leaves approximately 10 days from potting. The plants may be pinched a second time if desired to help balance up growth. Shoots should be developed to 2-4 cm prior to commencing cool treatment.

Temperature

Plants root best in a temperature of 12°C- 14°C.

Light

Grow the plants in as much natural light as possible. The plants will flower most rapidly as the daylength increases in the spring.

Plant growth

regulator

Apply PGR using CCC of B9 as desired. Later potted plants grown quickly in the spring may require growth regulant to avoid stretching in the peduncles.

Notes

The plants are naturally day length neutral and some premature budding may occur. This is not a particular problem and plants will grow and flower normally once these buds are pinched out.

Senetti	Pot weeks	Cooling weeks	Forcing weeks	Sales weeks
Early	40-50	1-6	6-10	13-16
Late	1-10	Optional	10-17	17-19
Temperature	14°C day 12°C after 14 days. Vent set at 2° over heating temperature	4-6°C	12-14°C	14°C