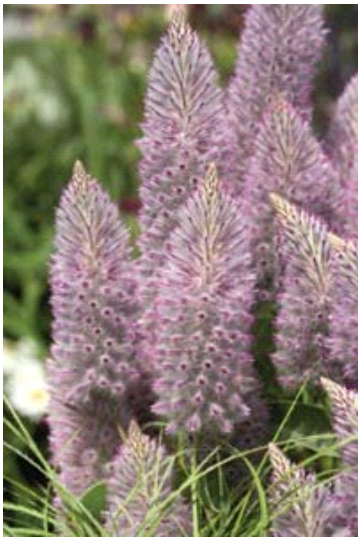
GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Ptilotus exaltatus Joey

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The new Ptilotus exaltatus Joey is a breeding breakthrough. A native to central Australia, ptilotus offers exceptional beauty with the benefit of heat and drought tolerance. Large, conical spikes of feathery flowers top thick, silver-green foliage. The 3- to 4-in. bottlebrush flower spikes are glistening silver with a darker neon-pink color near the tips.

Joey offers growers exceptional germination rates and a high percentage of transplantable plugs. Short crop times (approximately 14 to 16 weeks) allow for quick returns on this unique crop.

Excellent as an accent in mixed containers or as a complement to annuals in flower beds, Joey is a must-have in any sunny garden location. Joey is an exceptional plant to offer customers who are constantly asking "what's new?" Pair Joey with eucalyptus Silverdrop, pentas Northern Lights Lavender, and salvia Evolution for a show-stopping
combination.

Plug culture
Sow one seed per cell in a well-drained media with a pH between 5.5 and 6.5. Seeds will germinate in five to seven days at 76 to 80F (24 to 27C). Don't saturate the media, and maintain moderate soil moisture levels. During Stage 2, maintain 76 to 80F (24 to 27C) temperatures and moderate soil moisture levels. Gradually lower temperatures to 70 to 76F (21 to 24C) during Stage 3, and lower soil moisture levels. Begin feeding at 50 to 75 ppm nitrogen with a low phosphorus formula. Stage 4 temperatures can be lowered to 65F (18C). Continue fertilization at 75 to 100 ppm. Allow plugs to adequately dry out between watering. Transplant plugs as scheduled and don't allow plugs to become root bound.

Sowing time
Seeds should be sown from February to October for optimum plant performance. Although ptilotus can be grown year round, higher heat and light levels will decrease crop times significantly.

Growing on

Transplant plugs six to eight weeks after sowing into a well-drained soil mixture. Don't overwater and feed at 100 to 150 ppm nitrogen, avoiding excess phosphorus and calcium levels. Grow on at 65 to 70F (18 to 21C). Higher light levels promote shorter, better-branched plants with larger flowers.

Crop time

Crop time ranges from six to eight weeks from plug to flower and 12 to 16 weeks from sowing to flowering.

Hints

Excess moisture in the plug stages will cause uneven germination. Don't allow plugs or plants to become root-bound or the root system will never fully develop. High light levels or assimilation lighting at all stages of production improve plant quality. Grow with other similar crops such as pentas or vinca.

Alternative uses

Joey can also be used as a cut or dried flower for arrangements. Flower spikes last up to three weeks in the vase. GT

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