

# GROWERTALKS

## Culture Notes

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### Cyclamen: Advice for Easy Growing

*Joan Verges and Isabelle Andre*

Cyclamen are a popular pot crop with consumers in midwinter. With their brightly colored flowers and mottled, heart-shaped leaves, cyclamen make a pleasant gift for others as well as for oneself. And in today's tight economy they are a good value, too—they can bloom indoors for six weeks or more.

Producing the crop, however, can present you with a few challenges. Following these tips for cyclamen production will help you produce a healthy crop and take advantage of the plant's midwinter popularity.

**Pot and Media Choice:** Plant cyclamen in a pot with plenty of drainage holes that will allow excess water to drain. Adapt the pot design to your watering system and be careful with the number and the location of the holes. The media should also allow for easy and thorough draining.

**Potting Up:** Before potting, visually check the young plant for healthy roots. Place the young plant with the tuber just visible above the soil surface.

**Initial Watering:** To prevent early stretching and encourage quick rooting, water lightly and let the upper third of the pot dry before you begin spacing the pots. If overwatered at this stage, the roots won't grow correctly.

**Spacing:** Proper spacing prevents stretching while the plant is in production. Early spacing is essential to avoid long stems and a poor habit. Once cyclamen grow in that manner, the plant will keep that improper habit in its "memory."

**Irrigation:** The best watering system for cyclamen is one that allows watering in small doses yet wets the soil almost fully. Recommended systems include low-flow drip systems, capillary mats, gutters and fast ebb and flow systems. The purpose is to keep the plant's finest roots on the bottom and to maintain a dry surface, which will prevent botrytis.

**Light:** Shade your crops for the first few weeks at 2,000 foot-candles to improve rooting. Then increase lighting to 4,000 foot-candles. Cyclamen roots are very sensitive to unbalanced moisture levels. If you can't maintain good moist levels, keep the light level less than 4,000 foot-candles.

**Ventilation:** Maintain good air movement to prevent a soft crop. It will also encourage a nice, rounded habit.

**Temperature:** The ideal temperature for cyclamen production is around 64F (18C). Keeping the plants at 52F (11C) will hold the plants from flowering.

**Fertilization and Watering:** Adapt your feed program to the appropriate watering frequency. During hot periods, water cyclamen often but keep a low nitrogen level in order to control growth. During cooler periods, water cyclamen less often but maintain a higher nitrogen level.

We recommend a water quality around 0.5 ms/cm. The best pH level is around 5.8. Cyclamen are heavy calcium users. To prevent calcium depletion, your feed program should contain 100 ppm calcium and 25 ppm magnesium.

Visit [www.cyclamen.com](http://www.cyclamen.com), where you will find more than 400 pages on cyclamen culture and pest and disease control. From the site you can also access Morel Diffusion's technical expert who will answer your questions.

*Joan Verges is technical advisor and Isabelle Andre is export assistant for Morel Diffusion.*