

GROWERTALKS

Columns

11/26/2013

Stick to a Sticking Order

Dr. Royal Heins

Vegetative propagation for spring 2014 will be starting soon. This means suppliers will be shipping cuttings to customers, which mostly will arrive either Monday or Tuesday of each week. On shoulder weeks, all cuttings that arrive on each day can be stuck for propagation the day of arrival. But during peak weeks, more cuttings arrive than can be stuck in one day. This means some cuttings must be held from time of arrival until they can be stuck one, two or more days later.

Before discussing sticking order, we should discuss how to handle cuttings on arrival. Most important is to open the shipping boxes on arrival and remove the cuttings, preferably placing cuttings immediately in a cooler. As a point of reference, measure temperature of cuttings on arrival preferably using an IR thermometer. When using an IR thermometer, it's best to measure actual cutting temperature by opening bags as the temperature of the plastic bag can change quickly and deviate from the temperature of the cuttings.

As a general guideline, if cutting temperature is above 70F (21C) on arrival, immediately remove cuttings from the box and place bags spaced out in trays in a cooler at 50 to 55F (10 to 12C) for a minimum of 4 hours so cuttings can cool. The longer cuttings remain warm, the greater the problems in rooting and survival.

Some growers will remove the cuttings from the plastic shipping bags if they have fog in their cooler. Fog is ideal, as it helps prevent dehydration and promotes hydration of cuttings until they're stuck. If the cooler doesn't have fog, it's generally best to leave cuttings in the shipping bag to avoid dehydration. Any cuttings that appear wilted on arrival or later when bags are opened are better removed from their bags and then hydrated in a cooler by fog or wetting and covered with moist paper or plastic. It's also important to note that all surfaces that cuttings are placed on should be clean and disinfected before use. Quaternary ammonium salts are effective, safe and easy to use.

Cuttings of certain species are rather tolerant of "storage" after cutting, while other species may deteriorate rapidly and should be stuck and placed in the propagation house immediately on arrival to avoid further deterioration of the cuttings.

The table provides a guideline for cutting sticking order. Cuttings of species listed in Category A should be stuck the day they arrive or there's significant risk of leaf abscission, leaf chlorosis, uneven rooting or cutting

death. Cuttings of species in Category B also should be stuck the same day of arrival, as cutting quality decreases rapidly on these species as well, but Category A species always should be stuck first. Continue sticking cuttings in category C followed by Category D.

A few final comments to help prevent loss of cutting quality during sticking:

- Only remove enough cuttings from the cooler that can be stuck in an hour so cuttings don't dehydrate and deteriorate waiting to be stuck and placed in mist.
- Never leave cuttings lying on sticking trays during break times and over lunch; cuttings should all be stuck before these breaks or alternatively, be misted with water and covered with a moist paper towel until the break or lunch is over. **GT**

Group A **stick cuttings on arrival day**

Crossandra
Euphorbia
Heliotrope
Lantana
Purslane
Sweet Potato (yellow)
Thunbergia

Group B **takes priority over C & D**

Agastache
Dahlia
Dipladenia
Erysimum
Geranium, Zonal
Lavandula
Mandevilla

Group C **takes priority over D**

Achillea
Arenaria
Artemisia
Bacopa/Sutera
Bracteantha
Buddleia
Chenille
Coleus
Erodium
Evolvulus

Fuchsia
Geranium, Ivy
Helichrysum
Impatiens, Double
Impatiens, Exotic
Jamesbrittenia
Lithodora
Nepeta
Perilla
Perovskia
Phlox paniculata
Plectranthus
Rosemary
Salvia
Snapdragon
Stachys
Strobilanthes
Sweet potato (other)
Viola

Group D

Ageratum
Ajuga
Alternanthera
Angelonia
Argyranthemum
Aster
Begonia
Bidens
Boltonia
Brachycome
Bracteantha
Calibrachoa
Calitunia
Caryopteris
Ceratostigma
Chrysanthemum
Chrysocephalum
Coreopsis
Coreopsis nana
Coreopsis rosea
Coreopsis verticillata
Cuphea
Delosperma
Diascia

Euryops
Felicia
Gaillardia
Galium
Gaura
Hedera
Heuchera
Hypericum
Iberis
Impatiens, New Guinea
Iresine
Lamium
Leucanthemum
Lobelia
Lysimachia
Nemesia
Oenothera
Osteospermum
Pachysandra
Penstemon
Petunia
Phlox subulata
Plumbago
Russelia
Scabiosa
Scaevola
Sedum
Solidago
Torenia
Verbena
Veronica longifolia
Veronica spicata
Vinca major
Vinca minor

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