

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Viking Begonia Conquers the Greenhouse & Landscape

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There are few things more rewarding to growers than when they see a genuinely new product or improvement to a bedding plant class—something catches the eye immediately upon sight. Such is the case with Sakata's new interspecific Viking Begonia series. Sailing into the horticulture world with large and bold brightly colored blooms, sitting atop the deepest chocolate or green foliage, Viking Begonias are sure to become the standard of its class.

Pictured: Viking XL Red on Chocolate Begonia.

When planning and implementing spring and summer grow plans, growers require solutions and safeguards as they review the best choices and practices for their facilities, their customers and the final consumer. Success for the garden-buying public is essential and imperative to securing repeat business. Viking Begonias will easily fulfill that responsibility. Coming in two sizes, standard and XL, as well as three foliage colors—bright green, bronze and deep chocolate—trial growers across the country are convinced that Viking Begonias will be added to their revised product offerings. Vikings are suitable for gallon-size containers and up, large combinations and hanging baskets with a choice of rose, pink, scarlet and coral flame flowers.

Viking XL Red on Chocolate is one of this year's All-America Selections award winners with the deepest (almost black) chocolate foliage.

Plug production is no different than what plug growers are currently accustomed to doing in finishing quality trays for their customers. The notable exception that some trial growers have experienced is the best germination percentage they've seen among all Begonia series ... 95%-plus across all varieties within the Viking series.

- Sakata recommends one seed per cell, maintaining a temperature of 72 to 77F (22 to 25C) and sufficient moisture to melt the pellet.
- The media should be wet to saturated with 100% relative air humidity.
- After transplanting, water early in the day if using overhead irrigation to avoid leaf edge burn when leaf

temperatures are high.

- Optimum transplanting stage is when the seedling roots reach the edge of the plug and have four to six true leaves.
- Supplemental lighting, up to 2,500 foot-candles (2,600 lux) will hasten development and flowering.
- The use of Cal/Mag formulations like 15-5-15 work well to supply adequate amounts of magnesium.
- Tall and stretched plants with few flowers indicate too much or too little phosphorous. Stunted, chlorotic plants with marginal leaf burn indicate a lack of calcium and magnesium.
- No plant growth regulators are required if growth is controlled by temperature and feed. But if needed, particularly in warmer climates, lower rates of B-Nine (daminozide) or Cycocel (chlormequat) can be utilized.

Viking Begonias offer solutions to growers with:

- 95%+ germination
- Compact internodes and an overall dense mounded habit
- The deepest, darkest, chocolate foliage available in any series
- Intense, lustrous green foliage
- Masses of large, brightly colored blooms all season, in sun or part shade

Crop Scheduling:

Series	Containers	Total crop time
Viking	4-in./10-cm	15 to 16 weeks
Viking	6-in./15-cm	16 to 17 weeks
Viking	1-Gallon/4-liter	18 to 19 weeks
Viking	10-in./25-cm, Baskets	19 to 20 weeks

Series	Containers	Total crop time
Viking XL	8-in./20-cm	18 to 19 weeks
Viking XL	1-Gallon/4-liter	19 to 20 weeks
Viking XL	10-in./25-cm, Baskets	20 to 21 weeks

Series Specifications

Series	Garden Height	Garden Width
Viking	20 to 24 in./50 to 60 cm	24 to 28 in./60 to 70 cm
Viking XL	28 to 34 in./70 to 85 cm	32 to 36 in./80 to 90 cm

With all of this and more, the new Viking Begonia series from Sakata Seeds is sure to take America and the rest of world by storm. For more information, go to www.sakataornamentals.com. **GT**

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