GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

11/1/2024

Making Magic

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I challenge you to suppress a smile or resist taking a photo of fluttering butterflies. It's pure joy to watch them in action and one of the top reasons gardeners say they love to plant flowers in their garden—to attract more pollinators!

Ball FloraPlant has launched a new, one-of-a-kind spreading ageratum called Monarch Magic that migrating Monarch butterflies flock to by the masses. The habit of this plant is what makes it unique. It's vigorous and spreading, making it ideal for use in hanging baskets or paired with other robust, sun-loving plants in mixed containers.

Ageratum, as a class, is generally low maintenance for the home gardener. It's a drought-tolerant choice and Monarch Magic hides its spent flowers well, so it always looks fresh. Landscapers will find this new variety useful, too, as it fills in beds fast and has the added benefit of attracting fluttering wildlife—always a showstopper in garden design.

Interest has been high for this new introduction for spring 2025. The growers and trial gardens that sampled Monarch Magic this year sent dozens of butterfly photos and videos to our marketing team—they couldn't contain their excitement! So to assist you in production and to send the best plants to retail, our experts have compiled key production tips and culture. We've also written a special PGR Best Practices guide that can be referenced easily at the new Ball FloraPlant website ballfloraplant.com.

Propagation guide

Ball FloraPlant delivers quality cuttings (rooted and unrooted) to customers exclusively through Ball Seed with URCs available from our Las Limas farm in Nicaragua. For the best success, you'll want to reduce the time from when you receive your cuttings to when they're stuck—shortening the time from the box to the bench. (Check out our "Grow a Better Liner" video series online at our YouTube channel BFPtv for many helpful tips and preparation guidelines.)

After you've received your cuttings and you're ready to stick, provide rooting hormone and an average mist of 10 to 15 days. An initial pinch in production is recommended. Monarch Magic roots quickly and will finish in three to four weeks in a split 102 tray.

In the liner stage, pinching is not recommended unless a prostate habit is desired for hanging baskets and combinations. When pinching, it is advised to pinch to two nodes minimum. Pinching to one node will create a Y-branched habit, which is generally undesirable. Pinching is also not advised if growing for a 6-in. pot or smaller. Pinching for 1 ppp applications can add crop time as the center fills in.

A B-Nine/Cycocel tank mix at 3,000/1,000 ppm should be applied at 10 to 14 days or when roots hit the edge of the cell. It's not advised to hold longer than seven days in the liner tray. A Bonzi rootzone dip for two minutes at 1.5 ppm may be used, but be advised, a lower PGR rate in the finished stage will likely be needed. Configure 300 ppm or Florel 300 ppm will increase branching, but will require a 0.5 Bonzi or low rate of B-Nine/Cycocel spray to control in the finished pot size.

General finishing tips & PGR best practices

After transplant, provide your Monarch Magic a soil pH of 6 to 6.8 and light levels of 5,000 to 10,000 f.c. Fertilize at a 175 to 225 ppm N and let the plants dry between watering to avoid creating a too-moist environment that attracts mites, whitefly, thrips or aphids.

• Day temperatures: 70 to 78F (21 to 26C)

• Night temperatures: 50 to 60F (10 to 16C)

Grow in full sun to tone the plant. Adding more grow time in a low-light situation will start a cycle of PGRs for control and potential lockup.

12-in. pot, 5 weeks after transplant

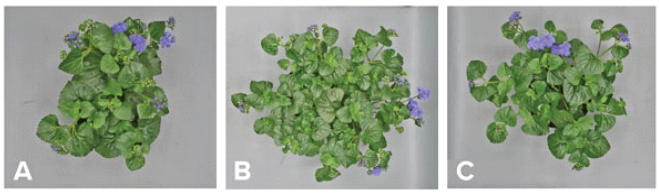


Option A:
- YP: B-Nine/Cycocel 3,000/1,000 ppm
- FP: Bonzi 1 ppm
- No pinch

Option B:
- YP: B-Nine/Cycocel 3,000/1,000 ppm
- FP: B-Nine/Cycocel 3,000/1,000 ppm
- No pinch

Option C:
- YP: Florel 300 ppm
- FP: No PGR
- No pinch

6-in. pot, 5 weeks after transplant



Option A:
- YP: B-Nine/Cycocel 3,000/1,000 ppm
- FP: Bonzi 1 ppm
- No pinch

Option B:
- YP: B-Nine/Cycocel 3,000/1,000 ppm
- FP: B-Nine/Cycocel 3,000/1,000 ppm
- No pinch

Option C:
- YP: Florel 300 ppm

■ FP: No PGR
■ No pinch

Use these helpful guidelines as you produce Monarch Magic Ageratum for your customers and bring the magic of fluttering butterflies to gardens everywhere. **GT**

Lauren Blume is a Technical Lead for Ball FloraPlant, as well as Territory Manager for the Midwest portion of the United States. Find more plant culture and production information online at ballfloraplant.com.