

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

8/29/2025

Osteospermum BESTIES

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The search for a uniform series of osteospermum is over. Bred and selected for consistent bloom time and uniform growth, Danziger's new BESTIES series may just be the most flexible and colorful osteos available.

During breeding and selection, our Danziger team had a long list of must-have attributes for the new osteo series. We were focused on improving the category, choosing only those plants that offered lots of large blooms, good branching and an upright mounted habit. The new series also needed to have good rooting abilities, be uniform across the colors and provide similar flowering periods.

BESTIES combines the best of all worlds for osteos, with seven eye-catching, vibrant colors and consistent habit and bloom time. This award-winning series also offers growing flexibility with no vernalization requirements, thriving in a warm greenhouse along with other spring annuals. Suitable for small pot programs, this series also provides outstanding performance in hanging baskets and larger patio pots.

Propagation tips for BESTIES *Osteospermum ecklonis*

Average growth time is five weeks. We recommend using a hormone treatment on cuttings. Be sure to stick on priority. BESTIES are a number 3 out of 4 categories.

Applying a PGR such as Daminozide the day of sticking helps stack the nodes, helping to maximize branching. If the nodes are stacked well, you may be able to avoid trimming later. Using PGRs frequently can help avoid stretching. Just make sure you're choosing one that the plant can grow out of easily.

An application of IBA or K-IBA can jump-start rooting. An application of Daminozide at 2,500 ppm on the day of sticking can help maximize branching and avoid stretching. Lighting in propagation will speed up flowering response—we recommend night interruption or extended day. Pinching is not recommended.

Keep temperatures at 70 and 72F (21 and 22C) in Weeks 1 and 2, dropping temps to between 65 and 68F (18 and 20C) in Weeks 3 to 5.

Fertilize 50 ppm N in Weeks 1 and 2, increasing to 100 to 150 ppm in Weeks 3 to 5.

Spraying fungicide the day of sticking can help control Botrytis and bacteria. Apply a second spray of fungicide in

Week 2.

Rooting tips

Monitor pH levels, making sure they don't dip below 5.8 in Week 1. Keep pH levels between 5.8 and 6.2 in Weeks 2 through 5.

- Week 1: Keep temperatures between 72 and 74F (22 and 23C). EC level should be at 0.80. Feed at 50 ppm N in a mist. Apply fungicide the day of sticking.
- Week 2: Similar to Week 1, be sure to keep temperatures between 72 and 74F (22 and 23C). Feed at 50 ppm N in a mist. Apply your second fungicide application. EC level should be between 0.80 to 0.90
- Week 3: Cool temperatures to 68 to 70F (20 to 21C). EC levels should be between 0.90 and 1.0. Feed at 100 ppm to 150 ppm.
- Week 4: Hold temperatures at 68 to 70F (20 to 21C). EC levels should be between 1.0 and 1.2. Feed at 100 ppm to 150 ppm. Apply a PGR such as Daminozide as needed.
- Week 5: We recommend dropping temperatures to between 66 to 68F (18 to 20C). EC levels hold between 1.0 and 1.2. Feeding continues at 100 ppm to 150 ppm.

Finishing tips

Average finishing time from liners is 12 weeks. Be sure to keep soil moisture levels consistent, allowing the soil to dry out slightly between irrigations. Make sure to maintain dry foliage when entering night temperatures.

Keep average day temperatures between 60 to 68F (15 to 20C). Pinching isn't recommended and no lighting is required. Continuing feeding at 100 ppm to 150 ppm. PGR use can be continued in liner and finishing stages.

Transplant in Week 6 and spray with fungicide after transplanting.

In Weeks 6 through 12 maintain soil pH of 5.8 to 6.2, EC levels at 1.0 to 1.2 and continue feeding at 100 to 150 ppm. Lighting is not required. We recommend a Paclobutrazol drench at 1 to 2 ppm when the plants reach 85% of desired size.

Pest and disease control

If you're experiencing aphid or thrips concerns, pests can be controlled by common insecticides. For aphids, we recommend applying Acetamiprid, Flonicamid, Imidacloprid or Dichlorvos. For thrips, Methiocarb, Acrinathrin, Abamectin, Dichlorvos or Spinosad can be used.

For Botrytis, Cyprodinil+Fludioxonil, Iprodione or Polyoxin can be used. Pythium and Phytophthora can be controlled with Propamocarb / Mefenoxam. **GT**

More details can be found on DanzigerOnline.com.