

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

8/31/2026

Dramatic Dark Foliage: Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight II Ipomoea

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Typically known for their trailing habit, *Ipomoea batatas* are perhaps most commonly used as “spillers” in container combinations, but Proven Winners has a more versatile option in the newly improved Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight II *Ipomoea*. Featuring a unique compact mounding habit that appears more upright initially, this sweet potato vine works equally well in containers and landscapes.

Combined with a deeply serrated leaf shape and dramatic purple-black color, this newly improved variety isn't your typical sweet potato vine. Its deep, rich hue sets off other colors in container recipes and adds a dramatic element to landscapes, where it performs more similarly to coleus than a traditional *Ipomoea batatas*.

Originally introduced in 2017, this improved variety builds on the award-winning lineage of the Sweet Caroline Bewitched series and will be available at retail in spring 2027. It's been proven to deliver a stronger performance for both growers and gardeners from north to south, displaying a consistent purple-black color all season, even at the height of summer.

It features a compact and well-branched habit with nodes that stack nicely on top of each other, making it a naturally dense and robust plant. However, it mixes well in recipes thanks to a longer petiole that leaves space for other components to grow through.

Best practices for production

Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight II should be established in a warmer greenhouse, preferably at 68 to 70F (20 to 21C). While a range of 65 to 72F (18 to 22C) is acceptable, it'll grow slower or stall out at colder temperatures.

These sweet potato vines don't require any rooting hormone and typically don't require PGRs or pinching for small pot production as long as you stay within the appropriate crop time. The only time you would need PGRs are during holding or if the greenhouse is warmer than the recommended temperature range.

Holding Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight II is relatively easy, but there are a few things to keep in mind. Be

sure to space plants properly to ensure light reaches throughout the canopy. If plants are placed too close together, they'll grow straight up to reach the light rather than bulking out.

If a longer holding period is necessary, you can pinch the tips for height control or use a low-rate Bonzi drench of 1 to 2 ppm. Note that ipomoea is one of the last crops to move outside, as it requires a holding temperature of 50 to 60F (10 to 15C) outdoors.

Pest & disease prevention

Pests aren't common with Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight II Ipomoea, but scouting for aphids is recommended. Because leaves emerge light green, aphids will blend in with new growth, so be sure to inspect carefully. Luckily, leaves quickly transition to olive and then nearly black, making aphids more obvious. Scouting for spider mites is also recommended.

In terms of potential diseases, air circulation is key for dry foliage to prevent bacterial leaf spotting. Thankfully, Bewitched After Midnight has a thicker leaf than many other sweet potato vines and stands up to disease pressure well, but this is always a good practice.

Try it in a new tray

Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight II Ipomoea is available in Proven Winners' new Half Tray 52 Liner, which lets you maximize variety in your orders, try new genetics and fine-tune your production plans. They're perfect for smaller runs of individual containers, as well as recipes. If you want to build more depth and breadth at retail without over-committing, consider adding this option to your order.

Growing tips

pH: 6.0 to 6.5

Growing temperature: 68 to 70F (20 to 21C)

Fertilizer: 200 ppm nitrogen for optimal growth

Water: Moderate **GT**

Crop time

Finished Container	Crop Time
4- to 5-in. pots	4 to 6 weeks
6-in. pots/gallons	5 to 7 weeks
8-in. pots	7 to 9 weeks
10- to 12-in. pots	10 to 12 weeks