

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

8/1/2022

Expand Your Begonia Program

Merel Vlaar



For new plant consumers, the trouble-free nature of gardening with begonias makes them feel successful and accomplished, and ultimately they'll return to the garden center year after year. PanAmerican Seed is happy to encourage their success by keeping this plant class infused with new, top-performing genetics.

Launching for spring 2023 is the new Hula series, a unique spreading type of begonia that's highly branched with loads of small flowers and attractive, high-impact color. It's fastest to flower and fastest to fill. Hula looks fantastic trailing out of hanging baskets, but the plants also provide an instant performance advantage for landscapers, with its masses of flowers showing on top

and its blanket-spread to fill beds.

The entire seed begonia market continues to boom—especially in interspecific begonias. Now Hula joins the other begonia offerings from PanAmerican Seed, including hanging basket staple Dragon Wing, petite BabyWing and mega-sized Megawatt. Having all four series in your begonia portfolio will help you meet each selling season with versatile container options that retailers—and consumers—are craving.

Here are a few production tips and guides to help you grow and ship the best Hula Spreading Begonia plants to market.

Plug crop time: 6 to 8 weeks

Transplant to finish: 5 to 8 weeks for spring timing, depending on temperatures

Plug culture

Hula Begonia is offered as pelleted seed. Sow 1 seed per cell in a 288-plug size. Seed germinates at 72 to 77F (22 to 25C) and takes seven to 10 days. Do not cover the seed, as light is required for germination. Maintain media pH at 5.8 to 6.2 and EC of 0.5 mmhos/cm during plug production. Keep moisture high at level 5 until the first true leaf develops.

During Stage 2, continue to provide high moisture at levels 4 to 5 with temperatures at 72 to 75F (22 to 24C). Set light at 1,000 to 2,500 f.c. (10,800 to 26,900 Lux). Apply fertilizer less than 100 ppm N, less than 0.7 EC.

Maintain your high temperatures and light levels during Stage 3, but decrease moisture slightly to level 3 to 4. Fertilizer should be applied at 100 to 175 ppm N (0.7 to 1.2 EC).

In Stage 4, apply moisture at level 3 and maintain the same fertilizer as Stage 3. Decrease temperature to 65 to 67F (18 to 19C). Increase light to 2,500 to 5,000 f.c. (26,900 to 53,800 Lux).



Finishing key tips

Hula is a daylength neutral series and it's the earliest interspecific begonia to flower with timing similar to BabyWing.

Temperatures for finishing:

Day: 65 to 70F (18 to 21C)

Night: 60 to 65F (16 to 18C)

The target media pH should be 6.0 to 6.5 with an EC of 1.0 to 1.2 mmhos/cm. No need to apply additional fertilizer.

Growers can use plant growth regulators on Hula only when necessary. The series responds well to a tank mix of Daminozide (B-Nine/Alar) at a rate of 2,500 ppm, and Chlormequat (CCC) at 150 ppm and 300 ppm. We do not advise the use of Bonzi, as it could cause stunting in the plants.

Crop Scheduling

| Container | Plugs/Pot ppp | Crop Time (weeks) | Season |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|
| 306 Pack/1801 | 1 ppp | 5-8 | Spring |
| 4 in./4.5 in./Quart | 1 ppp | 5-8 | Spring |
| 10-in. HB/1 Gallon | 1-2 ppp | 5-8 | Spring |
| 12-in. HB/5 Gallon | 3-4 ppp | 8-10 | Spring |

Hula Begonia is available in four colors: Pink, Red, Blush and Bicolor Red White. Order your seed and plugs today from your preferred distributor and begin planning your early-season begonia sales. **GT**

Merel Vlaar is product development manager for PanAmerican Seed based in the company's Venhuizen

location in the Netherlands. Visit panamseed.com/culture for full GrowerFacts and research documents.