

Cultural Details: Alyssum

Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*) is a fast-growing bedding plant for sales in May and June as an edging plant. Under very hot conditions, plants can go to seed and are either left, or sheared back, until regrowth occurs when temperatures cool in late Summer and Autumn.

Alyssum is straightforward to raise.

Variety Selection

In addition to the standard white varieties (of which Snow Crystals and Snowdrift are the highest quality), recent breeding work has produced a wide range of pink, purple and even pale yellow and apricot shades.

Nature Trailing Rosy Red has a looser habit suitable for use in hanging baskets.

Programming the Crop

Sow March-April for sales May-June.

Propagation and Growing-on

Sow the small seeds (3000 per gram) onto the surface of a free-draining, open, seed sowing compost, which should be thoroughly wetted with a suitable fungicide prior to sowing (to prevent damping-off diseases), and the trays allowed to drain. Cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination is very rapid at 15-20°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times.

As soon as they can be handled, prick out the seedlings in small clumps into 6- or 9-packs. It is possible to direct-sow at 4-6 seeds per station into these packs, following the instructions above for germination. Grow on at around 15 °C until they are nicely established, then the temperature can be dropped to around 10 °C.

Pest and Disease

Alyssum is susceptible to downy mildew – this causes light green marks on the foliage which turn yellow, and downy growth is visible in these areas. Use a suitable fungicide according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.