

MOLES SEEDS

Begonia (Semperflorens)

Cultural Leaflet: ZZ050

Begonia semperflorens has waxy foliage and flowers, and is a popular bedding plant, with tolerance of hot and cool weather. It will flower until the first frosts of Autumn.

Retail Sales

Sell in 6 packs and 8-10cm pots. They are versatile, tolerant of rainy weather, long flowering season so ideal for bedding, baskets and containers.

Variety Selection

Moles Seeds has a large range of green and dark-foliaged semperflorens begonias, for sales of flowering plants in the pack.

Double-flowered types such as Queen make good pot bedding items. Queen does well in all weather conditions and produces a mass of fully double, rose-like flowers.

Begonia Dragon Wings makes a spectacular container plant, but does require at least five, generally six, months to reach a good flowering size. Glossy green foliage sets off the large, single blooms.

Or, as the name suggests, the Big Series is a large quick growing series that is early to flower. The big showy flowers are produced above glossy bronze and green leaves. Ideal for use in large containers or landscaping.

Programming the Crop

Sow semperflorens types January-March for bedding sales May-June (note, Dragon Wing takes up to six months to produce so ideally sow December - early January and use supplementary lighting).

Propagation and Growing-on

Annual. Sow the very fine seeds (70,000 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.

Seed can be mixed with a little silver sand to make even sowing easier. Cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Pelleted seed is available for sowing into plug trays; this allows easier sowing and placement of the seed – full details in the catalogue. Light will improve germination (10 hours at 10 ftc (108 lux) is sufficient). Germination takes 2-3 weeks at 22-24°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times.

After around 5 weeks the temperature can be reduced to around 18-20°C. Growth is very slow in the early stages, and supplementary lighting rigs are advisable to provide 'assimilation lighting' for more rapid early growth.

After six weeks, semperflorens can be pricked out straight into a 6-pack tray for bedding plant sales, or into large plugs first to use less glasshouse space. Supplementary light quickens development of the small seedlings. Grow on at around 18-20°C, hardening off the plants prior to sale at around 10-15°C for a couple of weeks. Liquid feed regularly with a relatively weak liquid feed, from seedling to finished plant.

Total production time around 14-16 weeks depending on lighting and sowing time

Growth regulators can be used (according to the manufacturers' guidelines) on Begonias to ensure a compact habit where required for pack production.

Pest and Disease

Maintain good air movement through the crop, and water in the morning rather than the evening to keep the foliage dry and lessen attack by Botrytis. Pay good attention to glasshouse hygiene, using only fresh trays, pots, compost, water and clean bench tops to avoid damping-off diseases, and check for the presence of pests such as aphids, whitefly, spider mites and thrips, spraying accordingly. Powdery Mildew may affect the crop – monitor for white patches on leaves. Do not over-water the crop.

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

(06/19)

