

Cultural Details: **Canna**

Canna indica is grown in the UK as an outdoor and conservatory container plant and 'dot' plant in formal bedding schemes, with fleshy foliage on upright stems topped with gladioli-like flowers. It grows rapidly once established. It is not frost-hardy, and should be lifted and placed in a frost-free glasshouse for the Winter.

The Tropical Series is of more compact habit, ideal for sales in Summer containers.

Canna is easy to raise, given warm enough temperatures.

Programming the Crop

Sow January to March to obtain large enough plants for sale in the Summer, and for planting out with Summer bedding schemes.

Propagation and Growing-on

Seeds should be soaked for 24 hours in warm water prior to sowing, prior to which they should be scarified (rubbed with fine sandpaper) to soften the seed coat. Sow the large seeds (5 per gram) individually into 7-8cm pots, or large cell trays. The compost can be thoroughly wetted with a suitable fungicide, according to the suppliers' guidelines, prior to sowing, (to prevent rotting of the seeds prior to germination) and allowed to drain. Germinate at a temperature of between 20 and 25°C, making sure the compost does not dry out. Germination can be a little erratic, but should occur in around 2-3 weeks.

Plants require a relatively heavy feed programme to keep up with their rapid growth habit. Keep in a bright location, and as warm as possible (over 20°C) to encourage rapid growth. Move the plants on into increasing pot sizes until the required plant size is reached, making sure they do not become pot-bound. Plants should flower in around 5 months from sowing.

Pest and Disease

Canna are relatively pest-free, but remove any dead or dying leaves to prevent attack by Botrytis. Monitor for signs of pests such as aphids, and spider mite (webbing and discolouration of leaves) and treat accordingly. Pay good attention to glasshouse hygiene, using only fresh trays, pots, compost, water and clean bench tops

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