

Cultural Details: **Ionopsidium**

Ionopsidium acaule is a short-lived bedding plant for sales in flower in Spring and early Summer, and incorporation into mixed baskets. Very straightforward to grow, producing lilac, star-shaped flowers on neat plants, it is fast-growing, from sowing to flowering is around 6-8 weeks.

Programming the Crop

Sow March to early April, for sales in May and June.

Propagation and Growing-on

Sow the seeds (3,500 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 seeds with a thin layer of vermiculite, and cover the trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 7 days at 18-20°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times. Grow at around 15°C. As soon as the plants are large enough, pot up into the final container, either a 6-pack or a 9cm pot. Grow on as before at around 15°C .

Alternatively multi-sow the seeds into large-celled plug trays, and plant the plugs into mixed hanging baskets when ready.

Pest and Disease

This quick-growing plant is subject to few pest and disease problems. 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 and whitefly, spraying accordingly.

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