

Cultural Details: **Mesembryanthemum**

A traditional bedding subject, producing masses of bright coloured daisy-like flowers over fleshy foliage, early in the Summer bedding season, and with a relatively short flowering life. It can tolerate cool temperatures, so can be sold before Impatiens, Begonias etc, and is straightforward to produce.

**Variety Selection**

In addition to the standard Magic Carpet Mixture, Moles Seeds offers the separate colours Dark Pink, Apricot, Lemon Yellow and White.

**Programming the Crop**

Sow in January and February for sale from April to June, as green plants with a label, and in flower.

**Propagation and Growing-on**

Sow the small seeds (4,000 per gram) onto the surface of a free-draining, open-structured, 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. Sow either into trays, or multi-sow into plug trays, to avoid root disturbance when pricking out. Cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 7-10 days at 15-20°C (not warmer – higher temperatures depress germination). Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times, and grow on at 15-20°C.

After around 5 weeks, the seedlings should be ready for transfer into the final container, 6- or 9-packs containing a standard bedding compost. Grow on at 10-15°C until ready for sale; temperature can be reduced prior to sale to harden off the plants – they are tolerant of quite low temperatures.

**Pest and Disease**

Pay good attention to glasshouse hygiene, using only fresh trays, pots, compost, water and clean bench tops to avoid damping-off diseases. Monitor for insect pests such as aphids and treat accordingly. Mesembryanthemum does not generally suffer much from pest and disease.

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