

Cultural Details: **Mimulus**

A fast growing plant for use primarily in baskets and containers, and as a relatively short-lived bedding plant. Tolerant of damp areas. Perennial types are also available.

**Variety Selection**

Choose any of the numerous hybrid varieties listed, depending on preference for flower colour etc. Many feature blotched and spotted flowers.

The perennial Highland Series is a good addition to the early flowering Alpine Sales Programme.

**Programming the Crop**

The annual types are very quick into flower – around six to eight weeks after sowing, so sow February and March for sales in May and June. They are quite cold tolerant, so can be sold in flower before the more tender subjects - Impatiens, Begonias etc.

The perennial types should be sown in May-June for sales in flower the following April-May.

**Propagation and Growing-on**

Sow the very small seeds (21,000 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 double-sow into plug trays, to avoid root disturbance when pricking out. Pelleted seed is available for sowing into plug trays; this allows easier sowing and placement of the seed – full details in the catalogue. Cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 7 days at 15-18°C, and the seedlings are ready for pricking out very soon afterwards. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times, and grow on at around 15 °C.

Transfer into the final container, 6- or 9-packs containing a standard bedding compost (annual types) or 8cm pots (perennials). Grow on at 10-15 °C until ready for sale – higher temperatures will cause the crop to stretch. Temperature can be reduced prior to sale to harden off the plants – they are tolerant of quite low temperatures.

Overwinter the perennial types on the dry side, under protection, such as a well-ventilated polytunnel or glasshouse.

## **Growth Regulators**

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

## **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. Annual Mimulus does not generally suffer much from pest and disease, as it grows so quickly. For the perennial types, 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.

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