

Cultural Details: **Phlox (Annual)**

Recently much breeding work has gone into this summer bedding plant, which should rekindle interest in this traditional subject. Straight forward to produce.

Variety Selection

Beauty Mixed is the standard variety for bedding plant production. For a higher quality product choose Fantasy or Dolly Mixed. Various other varieties are available with double and starred blooms, and a recent introduction, Grammy Pink and White, has won a Fleuroselect Gold Medal for its excellent garden performance – an excellent pot bedding item for Spring and Summer sales.

Programming

Sow in February-early April for selling May-June.

Propagation and Growing on

Sow the seeds (500-1,000 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. Cover the seeds lightly with vermiculite, and cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 2 weeks at 15 to a maximum of 18°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times, without overwatering, and grow on at 15-18°C.

After about 5 weeks, move the plants into the sales container, generally a 6- or 9-pack containing a standard bedding plant compost. Grow on at 15-18°C, reducing the temperature gradually to around 10°C prior to sale.

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 and whitefly, spraying accordingly.

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