

Cultural Details: **Salpiglossis**

With spectacular veined, petunia-like flowers over slightly sticky foliage, Salpiglossis is not a plant for exposed areas, but in a sheltered location, or better still as an indoor landscaping plant, it makes a bold display.

Programming

Sow February to March, for sale in May and June. Sowing to flowering takes around 16 weeks.

Propagation and Growing on

Sow the very small seeds 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. Ideally, sow into plug trays to minimise root disturbance. Cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 7-10 days at 18-22 °C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times, without overwatering, and grow on at 18-20°C.

When large enough to handle, after around 3-4 weeks, move the plants into a large-celled plug tray, using a standard potting compost. Commence a moderate liquid feed programme as soon as plants are established in the tray, and maintain throughout the crop. Grow at 15-18°C until established, then move the plants on into the final container, a 10cm pot. Grow on in a bright, airy atmosphere with maximum temperature 15 to prevent stretching of the crop.

Growth Regulators

Growth regulators can be used (according to the manufacturers' guidelines), to ensure a compact habit.

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. Check for the presence of pests such as aphids and whitefly, spraying accordingly. Salpiglossis can suffer root rots if overwatered, so water with care, and do not over-pot the plants (i.e. put too small a plant in too large a pot).

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