

Cultural Details: **Schizanthus**

A traditional indoor pot plant, for sales generally in Spring. Two varieties, Star Parade and Hit Parade, are listed by Moles Seeds, the latter being slightly taller. The seed is relatively inexpensive, the culture straightforward, and the temperatures required are not too high.

Programming

Sow October to February, for sales March to June.

Propagation and Growing on

Sow the small seeds (1,500 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 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 10-14 days at 16-18°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times, without overwatering, and grow on at 12-17°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. Grow at 14-17°C until established, then move the plants on into the final container, an 11-13cm pot (smaller pot for the later sowings). Grow on in a bright, airy atmosphere with maximum temperature 8-10°C to prevent stretching of the crop, and make sure plants are adequately spaced.

Take care not to overwater in the early stages, to encourage good root development. However, once the plants begin to bud up, ensure that water is kept off the foliage to prevent rotting off of the leaves. Some feed can be applied once plants start to bud up, but not a high nitrogen feed as the foliage growth will be excessive.

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.

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