CALENDULA

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The Calendula is a crop which may add variety to the retail grower's offering. The best quality cut flowers are obtained when plants are grown at 40-45°F night temperatures although they are often grown at 50°F. At higher temperatures flowers tend to form fewer petals and become single. Seeds germinate best at 70°F in continuous darkness and should emerge in about ten days. An approximate time schedule is as follows:

Plant seed:	To flower:
Early August (Aug. 5)	November
Late August (Aug. 20)	December
Early September (Sept. 1)	January
Late September (Sept. 20)	March
Early January (Jan. 1)	Early June
Early March (March 1)	Late June

Prior to planting, soil should be tested and amendments added as needed. The pH should be 6.0-6.5. This crop can be grown at lower nutrient levels than many crops, so avoid excessive fertilization. Since these are grown at low temperatures, nitrate fertilizers should be used. A 15-0-15 or 15-0-22 (see bulletin 72-21, Greenhouse Crop Nutrition) fertilizer may be applied at full strength (600 ppm N) every fourth to sixth watering.

The seedling plants should be spaced 8"x12" in the planting bed. A terminal flower will be produced. This should be pinched out, as it will be short. Pinching will stimulate lateral shoot development. To develop maximum size blooms, each stem should be disbudded. Eight to ten flowers may be produced per square foot. Although stems are relatively stiff, one layer of support wires will assist in producing stiff stems.

Select varieties appropriate for greenhouse culture. Some are: Ball Improved Long Orange, Ball Gold Improved, Lemon Queen and Masterpiece.

Flowers last longer if cut when they are two-thirds open. Wilting of cut flowers may be a problem if the crop is grown warm and growth is soft.

Common pests are red spider, whitefly, leaf roller and cabbage loopers. Stem rot and mildew are the most serious diseases.

Consult your Extension agent for latest control measures.