

An Exciting New Gerbera For Pot Plants

John G. Seeley, Barbara Stewart and Bryan Brayton
Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture
Cornell University

An attractive dwarf gerbera from seed has arrived on the market! For our commercial floriculture class in spring 1981, we grew 'HAPPIPOT' gerbera for spring sales. It is a dwarf pot plant type with flowers about 3¼ to 4 inches in diameter and stems varying in height, generally about 6 to 10 inches tall, and well balanced by the green foliage.

The seed packet was of mixed colors. We observed what we would call bright clear yellow, pale yellow, red, dark red, dark rose, orange, yellowish-orange, pink, peach or flesh; quite an assortment but all were attractive (see Figure 1). In our mix about ⅔ of the plants had yellow or pink flowers.

Seed were sown January 6 in a peat-lite germinating mix and seedlings were planted January 30 in 4-inch plastic pots with a mixture of equal parts of soil, perlite and sphagnum peat moss with a little 10-10-10, regular superphosphate, and ground limestone. Subsequent fertilization was with a 200 ppm N-200 ppm K solution as plants were watered. Because of the good growth, plants became leafy and were shifted to 5-inch pots to make it easier for the consumer to keep the plants properly watered.

You may wish to try some of these mini-gerbera in 4½- and 5-inch pots to see how they respond under your conditions.

Determination of flowering time would be easier with separate colors. We noted that, when grown with a 60°F (15-16°C) night temperature and 10-15°F higher day temperature, the yellow-flowered plants bloomed first (the earliest plant was May 1) and others over the next few weeks. Pink-flowered plants flowered close behind the yellow. The rose- and orange-flowered plants bloomed in early June. A few dark red bloomed a bit later.

In general one might conclude the blooming time under our spring conditions to be about 16-17 weeks from seed sowing. In trials in West Chicago (July, 1981 Grower Talks) plants from seed sown January 9 were in full flower in early May with flowering starting about 12 weeks after sowing. So their crop came a bit faster than ours. They also report that a September 17, 1980 sowing made good plants flowering January 20, 1981, a period of 18 weeks under northern winter conditions. These plants were on display in mid-May and still not tall, showing the dwarf characteristic of 'HAPPIPOT' gerbera as well as the continuous blooming quality.

The August 1981 Grower Talks mentions sowing seed September 28 for late January, early February sales.



Figure 1. 'HAPPIPOT' gerbera in 5-inch plastic pots from seed sown January 6. Photographed mid-May.

In Pennsylvania, R. T. German sowed seed November 11 and grown at 65° until transplanting, and then at 60°F night temperature. Several plants were in bloom the last week of March; mostly yellow and 2 reds and 1 pink were the first to show color.

In Ithaca, we grew a few plants with 50°F night temperature but growth was slower and about 3 weeks later in blooming time than at 60° so the January 6 planting grown cool gave a salable crop primarily in June.

'HAPPIPOT' is an interesting item as a potted plant for the home and could work well as a bedding plant from seed.

Appreciation is expressed to H. G. German Seeds, Inc. of Smethport, Pa., donor of the seeds for this project.


Merry Christmas

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