



Flower & Nursery Report

for commercial growers
summer 1985

CONTENTS

Lachenalia as a Pot Plant.....	1
Tolerance and Postemergence	
Grass Control in Ornamental	
Ground Covers.....	2
Pore Space in Potting Media.....	5

ATTENTION

Due to the slow response for subscriptions as requested in the last issue of the Flower and Nursery Report, further publication was withheld until new funding could be obtained. With newly available support funds, the flower and Nursery report will again be a free publication. All persons who sent in their subscription checks will have the money refunded shortly. Thank you for your patience.

LACHENALIA AS A POT PLANT

Lyle E. Pyeatt*

Lachenalia is a tender bulb of easy culture. A genus of about four dozen species, it is little known in the United States except by bulb fanciers. Natives of South Africa, they resemble and are related to hyacinths.

The various cultivars of L. aloide (L. tricolor) and L. bulbiferum (L. pendula) and their hybrids are the largest flowered and the showiest so they offer the most for Commercial container culture. Their bulbs are 1 inch or more in diameter with two or three fleshy, star-shaped leaves, similar to those of tulip, that are often spotted purple. The leafless, 12 inch stems have spikes or racemes of tubular, pendulous, 1 to 1-1/2 inch flowers. The two species, their cultivars and hybrids produce yellow, orange or red

flowers that may be tinged or tipped with red, claret or green. Well grown plants will flower for a month or longer if the retail customer displays them in a cool room in bright light.

Bulbs planted in August or September will flower December to March depending on the cultivar and cultural conditions. Lachenalia should be grown in a cool greenhouse with a night temperature of about 45 degrees F. Plants will respond with abnormally stretched leaves and stems if temperatures are too warm or light intensity is low. Such observations suggest that forcing procedures, like those used on lilies, may not be feasible, but this needs to be tested experimentally.

Six to ten bulbs, depending on size, can be placed in a 5 inch pot. They are planted

planted with the tops of the bulbs barely covered with soil. Newly potted bulbs are watered in and placed in a cool, darkened place while roots are forming. When leaves appear they are benched and grown on to flowering size.

If bulbs are retained for propagation purposes, moisture should be gradually reduced after flowering when the leaves begin to turn yellow and wither. When dried off, the bulbs can be stored in their containers in a cool, dry place until time for replanting.

Lachenalias are easily propagated from the small bublets that are produced in numbers around the base of the old bulb. Such offsets will reach flowering size in one or two years.

Since the botanical classification of this group appears to be in disorder, it is best to rely on wholesaler catalog descriptions when ordering bulbs. Commercial sources for lachenalia bulbs are largely to be found in the Netherlands.

1/Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor Santa Clara County.