

## LANTANA

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The lantana (*Lantana camara*) is native to tropical America and may grow wild in the southern U.S. It is grown as an annual for use in hanging baskets. The more upright forms are appropriate for flower beds.

Lantanas are free flowering on new growth. They have a disadvantage in that rain may cause older varieties to shed their flowers. Through breeding, hybridists have been able to develop free flowering in more compact, low-growing plants which do not shatter as readily. These are the plants offered in the greenhouse trade for sale today.

Lantanas are propagated from cuttings. Cuttings taken in January and grown in a warm greenhouse (60-65°) will provide four-inch plants for May sales. The last pinch should be given in March. The pinch may be used as cuttings for smaller plants.

Soil preference for lantana is not critical, but a porous, well-drained soil is best. A mixture of 3 parts soil; 2 peat moss; 1 sand or perlite to which agricultural limestone and superphosphate have been added (according to a soil test) can be used. Prepared soil mixes including peat-lites can also be used.

A continual fertilization program should be used during the growing period for maximum plant growth.

Many growers hold over dormant stock and force them in January. The stock plants should be cut back and fertilized according to growth. New growth should be pinched back at least once to keep the plants compact. It will take plants six to eight weeks to flower after a soft pinch.

### Problems

Overwatering or underwatering will cause leaves to be small, and may cause defoliation. Flowers will shatter and drop.

Insects, especially white fly, are a problem. If any white flies are in the greenhouse, they will search out lantanas. Aphids occasionally occur. Systemic insecticides and regular sprays will help keep this problem to a minimum. Labelled insecticides include Dithio, Vapona, Malathion, Dibrom, Resmethrin, Disyston and Oxydemetronmethyl.

Mites, cyclamen and two spotted may be a problem, especially during dry weather. Control with Kelthane, Vapona, Dithio, Vendex, Malathion, Dibrom Tedion, Disyston, Demeton or Oxydemeton methyl.

The lantana can add a new dimension to your plant selection. Try growing them in hanging containers, topiary, and as bedding plants.