

Pansies for Fall Planting

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Pansies offer a new crop for planting in the fall landscape to add color and beauty. Pansies planted each spring show the effects of the summer heat in early summer. The F1 hybrids are more resistant to heat than the open pollinated varieties. However, pansies are cold tolerant and can withstand very low temperatures. Their best blooming period is when temperatures are between 40°-60°F. They offer another choice of plant for early spring or late fall bloom.

Plants for fall sales are germinated June through July in a cool greenhouse for late September and October sales. Seeds germinate in 4-10 days at 65°F. They should be germinated in the dark in a disease-free medium.

Seedlings are usually ready to be transplanted in 2-4 weeks into cell packs or individual pots. To ensure quality plants, they must be grown in a shaded greenhouse. Plants are fertilized with a balanced fertilizer, 100-200 ppm every watering. Select those fertilizers with low ammonium form of nitrogen.

Be watchful for insect and disease problems. Aphids are the most troublesome insect and can be controlled with Orthene, Talstar, Mavrik or Diazinon sprays.

Damping-off caused by *Pythium* can be avoided by using a disease-free medium, avoid overwatering, and fungicide drenches of Captan, Truban or Banrot. Thielavopsis root rot is serious when high ammonium

or high soluble salts are in the growing medium. Avoid high ammonium fertilizers and leach plants on a weekly basis. Fungicide drenches such as Benomyl (Benlate) or Cleary 3336 can offer control.

Check with your seed supplier for pansy cultivars that have merit for fall sales and planting. Make 1990 a time to introduce your customers to pansies for early spring and late fall planting to add color to their landscapes. Select and create a space for display of new fall plants, such as pansies, kale, cabbage and bulbs, about your greenhouse. It can build sales for the following year.

Resource: Tennessee Flower Grower Newsletter, June 1989, Vol. 3, Number 6.