

SNAPDRAGONS AND MISC. CROPS

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1) Seed germination

a) Some growers use straight vermiculite and stress the need for fertilization of seedlings.

b) One grower uses a 3-2-2 mix of loam, peat, leaf mold in a bench.

c) Many growers use a 1/4 inch layer of vermiculite over soil and sow the seed on the vermiculite.

d) Bezdek gets seed 6 weeks before sowing and stores at 38-42°F. Use 1/2 peat, 1/2 sandy loam with vermiculite layer. Sterilize the whole works. Give full sun except a little shade in summer. Don't use glass on the flat.

e) For summer varieties, use a germinating temperature of 62°F. Avoid higher temperatures.

f) Flat liners for subirrigating seed flats are

helpful. Use commercial liners, plastic sheeting, or aluminum foil.

2. Planting direct or potting?

a) Most growers bench seedlings directly in the bench with no troubles.

b) Often growing seedlings in 2-inch pots for 4 weeks will help out in a close cropping schedule.

c) One grower had snaps for 8 weeks in 2-inch pots. The plants were fertilized and growing well but everyone agreed the plants would be too big, and have a serious check when benched. One grower believed that a new seeding grown single stem would be just as good.

3) Single stem vs pinch

A grower had all single stem crops but most use single stem and pinched crops to fit their schedule.

Snapdragons Con't.

-4-

4) Cooling greenhouses

For summer crops especially, lower greenhouse temperatures are desirable. Full use of side and roof vents plus removal of side sash will give best cooling. One North Carolina grower removes two vertical lines of glass at each end of his greenhouses to improve ventilation.

For forced air ventilation, terrifically large fans would be needed. Evaporative cooling systems work best with low humidity and therefore, are not too successful in this area.

5) Weight grading

Grades are a key factor in good selling. It can be used in effective retail selling.

A grower reported that graded snapdragons bring greater income and he will continue. Often the top grades do not bring the most money.

Ten of sixteen wholesale markets handling the graded snaps report returns and prices on a grade basis.

Different markets want different grades and the sales slips enable the grower to ship the desired grade.

The grade produced can be obtained by varying the spacing in the bench.

6) Shattering

Not too serious but plant breeders are aiming for non-shattering varieties.

7) Lights for snaps

Lighting seedlings will cut down the time from seeding to benching, especially in winter.

Lighting an entire crop will save a couple weeks in winter for a pinched crop; single stem culture will make a similar saving.

8) Diseases

Not serious. Seed treatment of snaps is not necessary. If damping off, use a soil drench of Semesan or Zerlate.

Botrytis is not serious, except on seed crops. Parzate is better than Fermate. Proper watering and ventilation will prevent botrytis.

9) Low temperature conditioning

No good for snaps because the flowers just don't store well. The older flowers start to dry up after storage unless cut very tight before going into storage.

10) Prepackaging

A polyethylene bag is being used in the Detroit and Chicago areas.

Plastic sheet wraps (types of Cellophane) have been used by quite a few growers, some with success and some without. It was pointed out that plastics vary greatly in composition and this may account for some of the differences in results.

11) Soils

Peat, up to 25%, is excellent in snapdragon soils but be sure to "feed" right after planting or within the next couple days. Humus is not as good as peat. Peat lasts well and evens out the moisture supply. For nutrient levels, maintain the following Spurway levels:

Nitrate	35-50
Phosphorus	4-6
Potassium	25-30
Calcium	over 100
T. S. S.	low
pH	4.5-6.5

Some difference in opinion as to whether N levels should be varied. Andreassen recommended even nutrient levels but need less fertilizer with seasons. Some growers felt that dropping the N level after bud set was advisable. This was especially true where higher levels of nitrogen were used.

It was pointed out that plants in ground beds have greater feeding volume and therefore, lower nutrient levels would probably be O. K.

Organic fertilizers and manures can be troublesome.

12) Insects

Not many insect problems on snaps. For cyclamen mites, a regular schedule of Parathion has prevented serious losses. You may try Dimite which has been good on delphinium. No extensive experience with it on snaps. Similarly, Endrin may be O. K. and can be used on a trial basis.