

<b>Cultural Information for:</b>	Vinca Vitalia	Annual
<b>Common Name:</b>	Vinca	
<b>Botanical Name:</b>	Catharanthus roseus	
<b>Seed Count:</b>	14,000/ounce	500/gram
<b>Optimum Germination Temperature:</b>	78-80°F / 26-27°C	
<b>Optimum Growing Temperature:</b>	75-80°F / 24-27°C	

### Plug Culture – 6 weeks (288 / 12 x 24 tray)

**Stage One** (days 1-7) Select a sterile, soilless media and new plug trays to ensure a disease-free start with a pH between 5.5 and 5.8 and EC < 0.75 mmhos (2:1 dilution). Lightly cover the seed with #2 coarse-grade vermiculite and maintain uniform moisture and a temperature of 78-80°F/26-27°C. Vinca seed tends to germinate more uniformly in total darkness.

**Stage Two** (days 8-14) Remove the seedlings from the germination area and place them in warm, bright and well-ventilated greenhouse. Reduce the humidity to 75% and the temperature to 72-75°F/22-24°C. Apply a light feed of 50-75 ppm Nitrogen using a well-balanced calcium-nitrate-based fertilizer as the first true leaves start to appear. Supplemental lighting is beneficial in promoting strong healthy plugs; especially in the north. Once full seedling stand is achieved apply a protective fungicide for pythium, rhizoctonia and thielaviopsis.

**Stage Three** (days 15-30) As plants develop additional leaves, maintain warm temperatures, and fertilize with 100-150 ppm N or as needed to maintain EC levels between 0.7 and 0.8 mmhos (2:1 dilution). Allowing the plugs to dry slightly between irrigations will promote a healthy and strong root system. It is best to water early in the morning to allow the foliage to dry before sundown. If height control is needed, apply B-Nine (daminozide) at 2,500 ppm or A-Rest (ancymidol) at 5-10 ppm. Bonzi foliar sprays may cause leaf spotting of the lower foliage, especially at high temperatures.

**Stage Four** (days 31-42) When the plugs have 3-4 true leaves they are ready to transplant. Reduce fertilizer and irrigations to prepare the plugs for transplanting or shipping. Do not reduce the temperature too much as vinca responds negatively to temperatures below 65°F/18°C.

### Transplanting to flower – 5-6 weeks

**Transplanting:** Select a well-drained soilless media with a pH between 5.5 and 5.8 and a low nutrient charge. Carefully dislodge the plants from the plug tray in order to avoid root and stem damage. Also, be careful not to bury the plants too deeply as this encourages rhizoctonia.

**Fertilizer:** Wait 7-10 days after transplanting, until the roots reach the container sides and bottom before applying fertilizer. Vinca does best with continuous feed at 100-150 ppm N, using a well-balanced fertilizer that is low in phosphorus. EC level should not exceed 1.0 mmhos. At lower nitrogen rates commercial fertilizers may not supply sufficient boron. To avoid a boron deficiency, target 0.25 ppm B. High pH causes iron deficiency, but applying ammonium nitrate is not recommended. Periodic applications of magnesium using MgSO4 at 16 oz. /100 gallons - 120 grams/100 liters promotes a deep green color.

**Temperature:** Vinca does best grown warm with high light. Ideal temperatures are 75-80°F/24-27°C, during the day and 68-72°F/20-22°C, at night. Avoid growing vinca at lower temperatures, (less than 65°F/18°C), as this promotes leaf rolling and leaf chlorosis. Lower temperatures (< 60°F / 15°C) promote flower spotting.

**Diseases:** Vinca has very few pest problems but can be seriously affected by disease. Thielaviopsis (black root rot) and *Pythium* are major greenhouse problems that are best controlled by practicing good sanitation. Fungicidal drenches can be applied as a preventive measure. However, good cultural practices, (growing the crop warm, providing good air movement, optimum media pH and allowing the media to dry slightly between irrigations), is the best defense.

**Growth Regulators:** Moisture stress, moderate fertilizer rates and high light levels are the best tools for controlling height. If necessary, foliar applications of A-Rest® (ancymidol) at 5-10 ppm, B-Nine® (daminozide) at 2,500 ppm or Bonzi® (paclobutrazol) at 10-15 ppm work well. Do not apply growth retardants above 80°F/27°C as foliar damage may occur, especially with Bonzi.

**Marketing:** Vinca Vitalia is a uniform series that produces strong upright and bushy plants. Ideal for pots, packs and combination planters. Vinca Vitalia is available in a wide range of colors.

### **Crop Timing:**

Container Size	Total Crop Time
Cell Packs	11 – 12 weeks
4 inch / 10 cm.	12 – 13 weeks

*“All information given is intended for general guidance only and may have to be adjusted to meet individual needs. Cultural details are based on North America conditions and Sakata cannot be held responsible for any crop damage related to the information given herein. Application of recommended growth regulators and chemicals are subject to local and state regulations. Always follow manufacturer's label instructions.”*