

Cultural Information for: Begonia semperflorens Annual
Common Name: Wax Begonia
Botanical Name: Begonia semperflorens
Seed Count: 1,900,000/oz 70,000/gr.
Optimum Germination Temperature: 72-77°F / 22-25°C
Optimum Growing Temperature: 70-72°F / 21-22°C
Optimum pH: 5.5 – 6.0
EC – Plug: 0.26 – 0.75 mmhos/cm (1:2) / 0.76 – 2.0 mmhos/cm (SME)
EC – Finishing: 0.76 – 1.25 mmhos/cm (1:2) / 2.1 – 3.5 (SME)

Plug Culture – 8 weeks (288 / 12 x 24 tray)

Stage 1 (days 1-10) Sow pelleted seed into trays filled with a sterile and well-drained media. Optimum pH is 5.5 to 6.0. Do not cover the seed as begonias require light to germinate. Provide 20-100-foot candles / 200-1,100 lux in the germination chamber. Maintain a temperature of 72-77°F/22-25°C and enough moisture to melt the pellet. The media should be wet to saturated with 100% relative air humidity.

Stage 2 (days 11-21) The cotyledons are now visible, and roots are beginning to form. Maintain the media moist but not saturated to promote healthy root development and penetration. Reduce air humidity to 70-80% and maintain the air temperature at 72-77°F/22-25°C. Begin feeding at 50-75 ppm nitrogen from a well-balanced calcium nitrate-based formulation. Avoid using ammonium nitrate which may inhibit root growth during germination and plug development. Supplemental lighting at 300-foot candles / 3,200 lux, to supply 50 W/m² following germination greatly reduces crop time. Strong sunlight (>2,000-foot candles / 21,000 lux) will cause high leaf temperature and leaf edge burn. Highly alkaline water (> 300 HCO₃) damages seedlings by causing burn.

Stage 3 (days 22-48) The first true leaves are developed, and roots are beginning to penetrate the media. Allow the media to dry slightly between irrigations as begonia roots require high levels of oxygen. Reduce air temperature to 65–68°F/18-20°C. Increase the fertilizer rate to 100-150 Nitrogen once or twice per week to maintain rapid growth. Begonias are light accumulators and flowering is directly related to the quantity and quality of light received. Increase the light level to 3,500 – 4,500-foot candles / 38,000 – 48,000 lux for bulking. It is important to maintain the air humidity at 70-80% (relative humidity) to minimize leaf burning during stages 2 and 3.

Stage 4 (days -49-56) At the end of stage 4 the plugs should have 2-3 sets of true leaves and the roots should hold the plug media together. Optimum air temperature is 62-68°F/17-20°C to help tone the plugs. Avoid temperatures below 59°F/15°C and maintain the EC level at 0.26 - 0.75 mmhos.

Transplanting to flower – 3 to 6 weeks

Media: Select a sterile and well-drained media with a pH between 5.5 - 5.8 and low in salts.

Temperature: Optimum growing temperature is 70-72°F/ 21-22°C during the day and 62-68°F/17-20°C at night. Once established the night temperature may be reduced to 59°F/15°C.

Fertilizer: Apply 100-150 ppm of nitrogen from a well-balanced calcium nitrate-based formulation. The use of cal/mag formulations like 15-5-15 work well to supply adequate amounts of magnesium. Tall and stretched plants with few flowers indicate too much or too little phosphorous. Stunted, chlorotic plants with marginal leaf burn indicate a lack of calcium and magnesium. To maintain optimum pH, one may alternate with an ammonium-based fertilizer like 20-10-20.

Note: Water early in the day if using overhead irrigation to avoid leaf edge burn when leaf temperatures are high.

Lighting: Provide 3,500 – 4,500-foot candles / 38,000 – 48,000 lux. Supplemental lighting, up to 300-foot candles /3,200 lux to 50 W/m², will hasten development and flowering.

Pests: Aphids and thrips

Diseases: Blight, botrytis, pythium, rhizoctonia, Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV).

Crop Scheduling:

Container	Time from transplanting	Total crop time
Cell packs	3-4 weeks	11-12 weeks
4 inch / 10 cm. pots	4-5 weeks	12-13 weeks
6 inch / 15 cm. pots	5-6 weeks	13-14 weeks

Series Specifications:

Series	Leaf color	Garden Height
Ambassador	Green	12 inches/30 cm.
Senator iQ	Bronze	12 inches/30 cm.
Emperor	Green	14 inches/35 cm.

“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 American 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. Testing a few plants prior to treating the entire crop is best.”