

Crossandra Tropic

(*Crossandra infundibuliformis*)

Germination

Use a well-drained, disease-free seedling medium with a pH of 5.8 to 6.2 and EC about 0.75 mmhos/cm (1:2 extraction).

A medium covering of coarse vermiculite is strongly recommended. This will help maintain high humidity around the germinating seed. Germination takes 7 to 10 days.

Plug Production

Plug Tray Size

Use 392/406-cell or larger plug trays.

Media

Use a well-drained, disease-free seedling medium with a pH of 5.8 to 6.2 and EC about 0.75 mmhos/cm (1:2 extraction).

Sowing

A medium covering of coarse vermiculite is strongly recommended. This will help maintain high humidity around the germinating seed. Germination takes 7 to 10 days.

Temperature

Germination: 78° to 82°F (25° to 28°C)
Cotyledon emergence: 70° to 72°F (21° to 22°C)
True leaf expansion: 70° to 72°F (21° to 22°C)

If germination temperature is lower than 78°F (25°C), germination will occur over a period of two to four weeks. This will result in plugs with variable size and vigor.

Plugs should be held at 70° to 72°F (21° to 22°C) from maturity until transplant. Reduced temperatures are recommended to tone the plugs. Foliage may turn purple at lower temperatures as phosphorous becomes unavailable.

Light

Light is not required for germination.

After germination, maintain light levels between 1,000 and 1,500 f.c.

Humidity

Maintain 95% relative humidity until cotyledons emerge. After germination, avoid excess moisture in the growing medium, as damping off (*Pythium*) can be a problem. Allow soil to dry thoroughly between waterings, but avoid wilting.

Fertilizer

When cotyledons expand, begin fertilizing with 50 to 75 ppm N, alternating 14-0-14 with 20-10-20 every other fertilization. As true leaves develop, increase fertilizer to 100 to 150 ppm. Maintain medium EC between 0.75 and 1.0 mmhos/cm (1:2 extraction). Maintain pH at 5.8 to 6.5.

Growth Regulators

Growth regulators are generally not needed. However, B-Nine can be used if necessary.

Growing On to Finish

Container Size

Crossandra is best suited to 4 in. to 6-in. (10 to 15-cm) pots. Use 1 plug per 4-in. (10-cm) pot, and 3 plugs per 6-in. (15-cm) pot.

Media

Use a well-drained, disease-free soilless medium with a medium initial nutrient charge and a pH of 5.8 to 6.5.

Temperature

Crossandra thrives under high temperatures, high light and high humidity. Maintain minimum night temperatures of 68° to 75°F (20° to 24°C) and minimum day temperatures of 75° to 80°F (24° to 26°C).

If temperatures drop below 45°F (7°C), the foliage will turn black and fall off.

Light

Maintain light levels at 2,500 to 3,500 f.c.

Humidity

Maintain high humidity.

Water

Allow plants to dry thoroughly between waterings, but avoid wilting.

Fertilizer

Fertilize every irrigation at 150 to 200 ppm N with 15-0-15 or 15-5-15. Apply 20-10-20 as needed to promote leaf expansion. Maintain medium EC around 1.0 mmhos/cm (using 1:2 extraction).

Growth Regulators

Generally not needed. However, B-Nine can be used if necessary

Common Problems

Insects: Aphids, mites, whitefly.

Diseases: Pythium root rot: Soft, brown, mushy roots. Drench with Subdue, Banrot, Truban or similar compound.

Rhizoctonia: Tan, brown or black lesions on the stem at the soil line in conjunction with good root development. Drench the soil with Chipco 26019, Cleary's 3336, Banrot or Terraclor.

Note: Chemical recommendations are only guidelines. Follow national and state regulations.

