

Dianthus Pink Kisses

(*Dianthus cultivars*)

Propagation

- Choose a well-drained medium with an EC of 0.75 to 0.80 mmhos and a pH of 5.8 to 6.2.
- Stick cuttings within 12 to 24 hours of arrival. Cuttings can be stored overnight, if necessary, at 40 to 45°F (4 to 7°C).
- Soil temperature should be maintained at 66 to 70°F (19 to 21°C) until roots are visible.
- A rooting hormone should be applied to promote early, uniform rooting.
- Mist cycling may need to be applied for up to 24 hours per day for 3 to 5 days, depending on local conditions. Frequency and run time should be reduced during the dark period, but unrooted cuttings must not be allowed to wilt.
- Reduce mist frequency after 3 to 5 days. Mist should be removed entirely on Dianthus after 9 to 12 days.
- Begin fertilization with 75 to 100 ppm N when roots become visible. Increase to 150 ppm N as roots develop.
- Once roots are visible, the media should be kept moderately wet but never saturated.
- Dianthus Pink Kisses can be pinched in propagation once flower buds are formed.
- A PGR in propagation is optional, but will help to keep nodes closely spaced.
- Dianthus Pink Kisses rooted cuttings should be ready for transplanting 24 to 28 days after sticking.

Growing On to Finish

Media

- Use media with good aeration, drainage and water-holding capacity.
- A pH of 5.8 to 6.2 is optimum.

Temperature

- After transplanting, allow plants to become established for 7 to 10 days, at a night temperature of 59 to 64°F (15 to 18°C). Once plants are well-established and rooted in, pinch and begin growing at recommended very cool temperature.
- **Nights:** 33 to 50°F (1 to 10°C).
- **Days:** 59 to 76°F (15 to 24°C); avoid temperatures above 80°F (26°C).
- Dianthus Pink Kisses can be grown in cool greenhouses and outdoors. See regional suggested schedules below.

Transplanting

Rooted cuttings should be transplanted at or slightly above the soil line of the final container. In some situations, especially outdoor overwinter production, a preventative fungicidal soil drench may be appropriate.

Light

Dianthus Pink Kisses will perform best under moderate to high light levels of 5,000 to 9,000 f.c. (50,000 to 90,000 Lux).

Watering

The media should be allowed to dry regularly between watering and never be saturated. However, plants should not be allowed to wilt at any time.

Fertilizer

Use a balanced high nitrate fertilizer at a rate of 200 to 250 ppm N.

Pinching

- Dianthus Pink Kisses can be pinched once, as soon as they are well rooted, to maximize branching and create a full plant covered in flowers.
- Plants can be sheered back to promote branching and schedule flowering.

Controlling Growth

- High light intensity and cool temperatures are needed for optimal habit.
- Dianthus Pink Kisses are very responsive to plant growth regulators. When grown outdoors or in very cold conditions, PGR applications are not required. When grown in greenhouses at warmer conditions with nights above 50°F (10°C) and days above 70°F (21°C), PGR may become necessary. B-9/ Cycocel 1,000/500 ppm spray, or Bonzi at 2 to 4 ppm spray are appropriate.
- These recommendations for plant growth regulators should be used only as general guidelines. Growers must trial all chemicals under their particular conditions.

Common Problems

Insects: Thrips, aphids

Diseases: Fusarium, Pythium, Bacterial leaf spot

Suggested planting dates from liners for growers in 4-in. quarts and pots

Growers in the South may reduce crop time by 2 to 3 weeks, depending on growing temperatures

Pinch plants when flower bud is formed: Early Spring Sales

North Cold Greenhouse: Mid-September

Outdoors: Keep greenhouse cold. Heat setpoints in the upper 30s (1 to 4°C) to lower 40s °F (4 to 7°C). Only allow houses to heat up when the sun shines. Avoid freezing to shorten crop time.

Pinch plants when flower bud is formed: Mid-Spring Sales

North Cold Greenhouse: Mid-October

Outdoors: Keep greenhouse cold. Heat setpoints in the upper 30s (1 to 4°C) to lower 40s °F (4 to 7°C). Only allow houses to heat up when the sun shines. Avoid freezing to shorten crop time.

Pinch plants when flower bud is formed: Early Summer Sales

North Cold Greenhouse: Late January

Outdoors: Keep greenhouse cold. Heat setpoints in the upper 30s (1 to 4°C) to lower 40s °F (4 to 7°C). Only allow houses to heat up when the sun shines. Avoid freezing to shorten crop time.

