GrowerFacts

Osteospermum White Lightening

(*Osteospermum ecklonis*)

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.
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- Stick cuttings within 12 to 24 hours of arrival. Cuttings can be stored overnight, if necessary, at 45 to 50?F (7 to 10?C).
- Soil temperature should be maintained at 68 to 73?F (20 to 23?C) for up to 14 days.
- Once roots begin to form, reduce temperature to 64 to 68?F (18 to 20?C) to avoid unnecessary stretch.
- A rooting hormone can be applied to promote early, uniform rooting.
- Mist 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.
- 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. This will help prevent iron deficiency and the associated chlorotic foliage which can develop.
- White Lightning Osteospermum should not be pinched but flower buds can be removed if needed.
- White Lightning Osteospermum rooted cuttings should be ready for transplanting 28 to 32 days after sticking.

Growing On to Finish

Media

- Use media with good aeration, drainage and water-holding capacity.
- Like most Osteospermum, White Lightning prefers a medium that will dry regularly between waterings.
- A pH of 5.8 to 6.2 is optimum.

Temperature

- After transplanting, allow plants to become established for 7 to 14 days, depending on pot size, at a night temperature of 59 to 64°F (15 to 18°C). Once plants are well-established and rooted in, begin growing at recommended cool temperature.
- **Nights:** 44 to 55°F (7 to 13°C).
- **Days:** 59 to 75°F (15 to 24°C); avoid temperatures above 80°F (26°C).

Transplanting

Rooted cuttings should be transplanted at or slightly above the soil line of the final container. This will greatly reduce problems with various root and stem rots. In some situations a preventative fungicidal soil drench may be appropriate.

Light

White Lightning Osteospermum 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 waterings and never saturated. However, plants should not be allowed to wilt at any time.
- Leach regularly to avoid the buildup of high soluble salt levels.

Fertilizer

Use a balanced fertilizer at a rate of 225 to 300 ppm N. When grown excessively hungry, plants will become woody and will not branch properly.

Pinching

A pinch is optional; however, disbudding may be necessary for better branching.

Controlling Growth

- High light intensity and cool temperatures are needed for optimal habit.
- White Lightning Osteospermum are responsive to Cycocel and Bonzi. Apply Cycocel as a spray (750 to 1,000 ppm). Drench applications of Cycocel (1,000 to 1,500 ppm) have also demonstrated control. Bonzi (15 to 30 ppm) applied as a spray is also effective in reducing elongation. Begin PGR applications as new growth develops after pinching. More frequent applications will be required for smaller container sizes or if grown under warm conditions. White Lightning is also responsive to B-Nine (2,500 to 4,000 ppm) alone as a spray or tank mix with Cycocel. Apply B-Nine early in the crop cycle before buds are visible to avoid bloom delay or a reduction in bloom size.
- 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, whitefly, aphids, fungus gnats.

Diseases: Botrytis (gray mold), Thielaviopsis, Pythium, Rhizoctonia, Powdery Mildew.
All White Lightning Osteospermum cuttings are derived from culture and virus-indexed stock from the **Ball Certified Plants®** program.

Problems: Plant collapse

Causes: Plants grown in saturated media for extended periods of time (Pythium, Thielaviopsis); Stem canker (Botrytis); Rooted cuttings transplanted too deeply

Problems: Excessive vegetative growth and lack of flowers

Causes: Excessive ammonium-based fertilizer; Over-fertilization under low light conditions; Low light and overwatering, saturated media

Problems: Yellowing of young foliage

Causes: Saturated media

Problems: Foliage necrosis

Causes: High soluble salts in media; Excessive water stress

Problems: Poor branching and thin plants

Causes: Low fertilization during early stages of growth; Low light conditions

White Lightning Osteospermum Crop Schedule & Uses
(Crop Schedule In Weeks)

Unrooted cuttings
4-in. (10-cm) Pot 1 PP*: 11-15
6-in. (15-cm) Pots 1 to 2 PP*: 11-15
10 to 12-in. (25 to 30-cm) Pots 3 PP*: 11-15

Rooted cuttings
4-in. (10-cm) Pot 1 PP*: 8-11
6-in. (15-cm) Pots 1 to 2 PP*: 8-11
10 to 12-in. (25 to 30-cm) Pots 3 PP*: 8-11

*PP: Plants per pot or basket

NOTE: Growers should use the information presented here as a starting point. Crop times will vary depending on the climate, location, time of year and greenhouse environmental conditions. Chemical and PGR recommendations are only guidelines. It is the responsibility of the applicator to read and follow all the current label directions for the specific chemical being used in accordance with all regulations.

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Ball Horticultural Company
622 Town Road, West Chicago, Illinois, USA, 60185-2698
630 879-BALL www.ballseed.com