

Petunia Vegetative ColorRush

(*Petunia x hybrida*)

Propagation

- Choose a well-drained medium with an EC of 0.75 to 0.80 mmhos and a pH of 5.4 to 5.8.
- 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) until roots are visible.
- Begin fertilization with 75 to 100 ppm N when roots become visible. Increase to 150 to 200 ppm N as roots develop.
- Once roots are visible, the media should be kept moderately wet and never saturated. This is critical to prevent iron deficiency and the associated chlorotic foliage that can develop.
- Through trialing in the Midwest, California and Florida, we found the best PGR to control growth in propagation was a 5 ppm Bonzi spray 8 days after stick or 5,000 ppm B-Nine spray, also 8 days after stick. High light and cool temperatures also help to tone liners early.
- Avoid stretch by moving crop to cooler air temperature during the last weeks of propagation.
- A pinch in propagation is not necessary.
- ColorRush Petunias should be ready for transplant 3 weeks after sticking.

Growing On to Finish

Media

- Use a well-drained, disease-free, soilless medium.
- Maintain a media pH of 5.4 to 5.8

Temperature

- Nights: 53 to 61°F (11 to 16°C)
- Days: 59 to 76°F (15 to 24°C)

Light

- ColorRush Petunias should be grown under moderate light levels; 5,000 to 8,000 f.c. (50,000 to 80,000 Lux) is the ideal range.
- Low light levels promote stem stretch and reduced plant quality.

Watering

- The medium should be allowed to dry between watering. However, periods of sustained wilting should be avoided. Petunias are susceptible to Botrytis and root diseases—avoid high humidity, constantly saturated media and wet foliage.

Fertilizer

- ColorRush Petunias have a high feed requirement.
- Use constant feed with a balanced fertilizer at 225

to 300 ppm N with additional iron as needed.

- A full complement of minor elements should be provided to the plant.
- Regular leaching with clear water will help to reduce buildup of excess salts in media.

Pinching

ColorRush Petunias are free-branching and do not require pinching. Pinching will delay flowering approximately 2 weeks.

Media pH Management

- Plants must be monitored regularly for early visual signs of upward pH drift (interveinal yellowing on youngest leaves). Regular soil pH tests are an excellent way to identify movements in pH before they create visual symptoms, which can be difficult to correct.
- Periodic application of acidic feed or drench applications of a chelated iron product can be used to maintain appropriate pH levels.
- An effective method of lowering pH is a soil drench of iron sulfate. The foliage must be rinsed immediately after treatment, since the iron sulfate solution can result in phytotoxicity to flowers and foliage.

Controlling Growth

- Use high light levels and cool temperatures to control growth.
- To control growth and improve flowering and habit, growers should use a 5 ppm Bonzi drench application 2 weeks after transplant. Additionally, a 5,000 ppm B-Nine spray 2 weeks after transplant benefited the control of finished growth.
- Mature plants that are approaching shipping size can be drenched with Bonzi (1 to 3 ppm) to significantly slow vegetative growth while allowing flowering to continue.
- Use of PGRs can delay flowering 1 to 2 weeks. Avoid spraying once flower buds appear.
- In general, more frequent applications of any growth regulator at a lower concentration will produce the best results.

Common Problems

Insects: Aphids, thrips, whitefly, leafminers, fungus gnats.

Diseases: Botrytis, Rhizoctonia, Pythium.

Because Petunias are susceptible to several viruses, it is vital to begin with cuttings supplied from clean stock. All ColorRush Petunia cuttings are derived from

culture and virus-indexed stock from the **Ball Certified Plants®** program. Always start with clean flats and pots and apply a broad-spectrum preventative fungicide drench following transplant.

Problems: Plant collapse

Causes: Wet media for an extended period (Pythium); Rhizoctonia due to planting too deep

Problems: Delayed flowering

Causes: Day length too short; Late application of growth regulators

?Problems: Excessive vegetative growth

Causes: High ammonia concentration in the soil; Over-fertilization under low light conditions; Low light levels and over-watering; wet media

?Problems: Poor branching

Causes: Low fertilization; lack of nitrogen

?Problems: Stretched plants

Causes: Low light levels

?Problems: Chlorosis

Causes: Iron deficiency; High pH; Nitrogen deficiency

?ColorRush Petunia Crop Schedule & Uses
(Crop Schedule In Weeks)

Unrooted cuttings

4-in. (10-cm) Pots 1 PPP*: 9-11

6-in. (15-cm) Pots 1 to 2 PPP*: 10-12

10 to 12-in. (25 to 30-cm) Pots 4 to 5 PPP*: 11-14

Rooted cuttings

4-in. (10-cm) Pots 1 PPP*: 6-8

6-in. (15-cm) Pots 1 to 2 PPP*: 7-9

10 to 12-in. (25 to 30-cm) Pots 4 to 5 PPP*: 8-11

*PPP: 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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