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CULTURE | APRIL 2016

## Culture Report: Ipomoea SolarPower Series

By Kristopher Carlsson

*Let us reintroduce you to a well-mannered sweet potato vine.*



Have you ever met a person you didn't like? If we are honest we all have.



Sometimes people don't make a good first impression. But there are many



more ipomoea I have met that I end up disliking compared with people.



The attention to detail needed in propagation, the pinching, transplanting,



feeding, watering and PGRs — only to be left with a quart or gallon that just has one main branch. Grrr.

Today I introduce you to a new type of ipomoea, which was bred to be easy for the grower from stick to finish. This article will explore the culture for successful quart production of the SolarPower ipomoea series from [Ball FloraPlant](#).

### Hello There

Just like meeting a person for the first time you want to make a good first impression when rooting an ipomoea cutting. To get off on the right foot with SolarPower, start with correct propagation temperature. It is critical to maintain 70° F bottom heat with humidity of at least 80 percent. Avoid storing cuttings in the cooler for this crop by sticking them immediately when they arrive. Ipomoea cuttings can be damaged from cold storage temperatures in your cooler.

Ipomoea root very quickly, so no rooting hormone is needed and often it is possible to direct stick into smaller pots or packs. Ipomoea in general require very little mist for rooting and SolarPower is no different. After three to four days of mist, cuttings should be moved to propagation benches with bottom heat and no mist. Watch carefully for Pseudomonas throughout propagation stage and make appropriate fungicide applications if needed.

Propagation of ipomoea is so quick that feeding requirements are generally low at this

point in production. Foliar feeding can be helpful in propagation, but keep rates low at around 75- to 100-ppm nitrogen. Allow approximately three to four weeks for propagation of an ipomoea liner.

*Figure 2. Left: 'SolarPower Red', pinched. Right: 'SolarPower Red', no pinch.*

## Just Say No Pinch

We generally don't pinch new people we meet, and the same is true for SolarPower ipomoea. Traditionally ipomoea need at least one pinch and many times require a shear later in production to promote side branching. Genetically, SolarPower is different than other ipomoea, so we recommend no pinch. Figure 2 shows the amount of branching produced on SolarPower Red with no pinch compared to the same variety with a pinch. I think it is clear this series makes a great retail presentation with no pinch.

## Don't Leave Me in the Cold

You would not leave your new friend out in the rain. The same is true for ipomoea so please transplant it into a greenhouse with 65 to 70° F night temperatures and day temperatures of 70 to 75° F. Relative humidity is also an important factor to consider. Ipomoea thrive with a slightly higher relative humidity in finished production. Grouping ipomoea together with your other warm crops like New Guinea impatiens, lantana, angelonia, portulaca, scaevola and coleus will help it thrive.

*Figure 3. Substrate moisture level*

Our friends also don't like wet feet, and ipomoea will struggle if kept saturated. So keep your Solar Power ipomoea moist when you are finishing them, but not saturated. At Ball FloraPlant we refer to the 1 to 5 scale for soil moisture with 5 being saturated and 1 completely dry. See Figure 3 for the Ball Substrate Moisture Level table so you can use it when producing SolarPower ipomoea. Try to allow for dry cycles in between irrigations, going from a 4 to a 2, when growing SolarPower ipomoea. Once transplanted in the finished greenhouse, soil nutrition level should

be held at 175- to 225-ppm nitrogen.

## Control Yourself

Sometimes I try to hide my vigorous height as a person by slouching. There is no hiding a vigorous ipomoea — it sticks out like a sore thumb. PGRs are a must with most ipomoea genetics on the market, requiring multiple PGR applications from stick to finish. When pinched, SolarPower generally do not need a PGR application. However, with our recommendation of no pinch, we suggest a light spray of daminozide at 2,500 ppm to tone finished growth. This will help keep internodes tight and make a nice finished quart.

‘SolarPower Lime’ is the most vigorous in the series and in southern regions could require a second spray application of daminozide at 2,500 ppm to tone finished growth if growing conditions are very warm. See Figure 1, which shows the series line up with no pinch all sprayed with daminozide at 2,500 ppm spray two weeks after transplant.

To sum up, SolarPower ipomoea will make you like ipomoea again. The ease at which this product can be grown will surprise you if you follow important steps, so let’s quickly review:

1. Make a good first impression. Propagate them warm with 70° F bottom heat.
2. Don’t pinch your SolarPower ipomoea; they branch well all on their own.
3. No wet feet. Allow for dry cycles in between irrigations.
4. PGR can’t tame my personal height, but it plays a role in finished production using daminozide spray at 2,500 ppm, if option of no pinch in propagation is the choice.

### PDF: Culture Report: Ipomoea SolarPower Series

Kristopher Carlsson

Kristopher Carlsson is global product manager for Ball FloraPlant, stationed in Arroyo Grande, California. Please reference [www.ballfloraplant.com](http://www.ballfloraplant.com) for more information on SolarPower.

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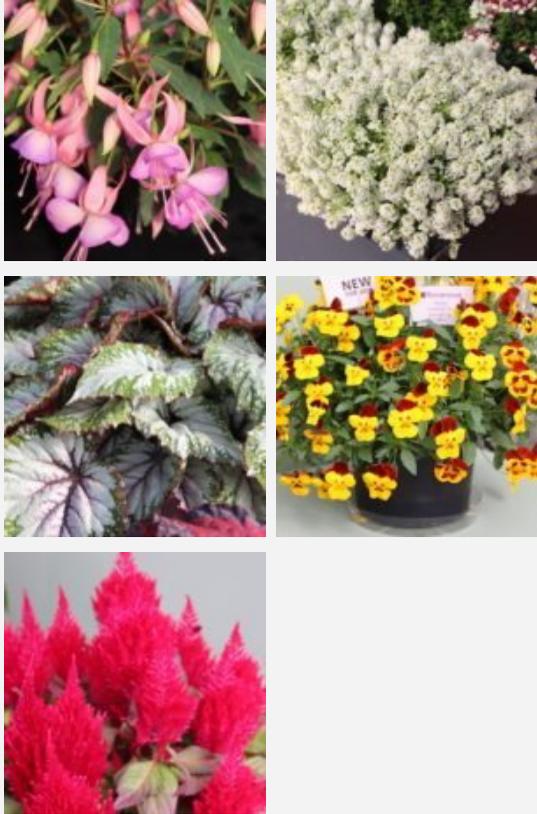
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This is an identical duplicate of the advertisement above, featuring the 'gpn' logo, the headline 'Your Guide to Success in the Cannabis Market', a central cannabis plant image, a '2018 QUICK TO CANNABIS PRODUCTION' book cover, a green 'View Now' button, and a red 'BUY NOW' button at the bottom.

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