Cultural Information for: Ageratum Blue Horizon  Annual

Common Name:  Ageratum or Floss Flower  
Botanical Name:  Ageratum houstonianum  
Seed Count:  19,800/ounce  700/gram  
Optimum Germination Temperature:  77 °F / 25 °C  
Optimum Growing Temperature:  65 °F / 18 °C  

Plug Stage - 5 weeks (288 / 12 x 24 tray)

Stage One (days 1-7)  Single sow pelleted seed into a well drained peat mixture with a pH of 5.8-6.2 and a low nutrient charge (EC <0.5 mmhos/1.2 slurry).  Ageratum requires light to germinate so lightly cover with coarse vermiculite and maintain sufficient moisture to melt the pellet.  Optimum germination temperature is 78-82 °F/25-28 °C.

Stage Two (days 8-20)  After seed emergence move plug trays to a greenhouse with high light and good air circulation.  Reduce air temperature to 60-70 °F/16-21 °C and apply a light feed of 50-75 ppm N using a well balanced calcium nitrate based formulation.

Stage Three (days 21-30)  Increase fertilizer level to 100-150 ppm N.  Optimum EC is 0.7-1.0 mmhos (1.2 slurry).  Allow the plants to dry slightly in between watering to reduce stretch and promote a strong, well-toned plant.  Growth regulation is not recommended for cut flower production.  For ornamental use in containers where height control is desirable, apply B-Nine (daminozide)) at 2,500 ppm/0.25%

Stage Four (days 31-35)  The plugs are approaching transplant stage.  Reduce fertilizer to tone the plants and prepare them for transplanting.  Do not delay transplanting.

Cut Flower Culture:

Media:  Select a well drained sterile cut flower bed in full sun with a pH of 5.8-6.2 and a low nutrient charge.

Watering:  Initially, keep the plants well moistened and then water as needed.  Growing too dry may result in red-edged or yellow leaves.

Fertilizer:  Well balanced calcium nitrate based formulations work well to build strong and healthy plants.  Optimum EC is 0.7-1.0 mmhos.  Excess nitrogen promotes overgrowth, invites disease and reduces vase life.

Lighting:  Optimum light level is up to 7,000 foot candles/75,000 lux.  Whitewashing the glass may be necessary May-September to reduce light intensity.  Extending the photoperiod in winter to 16 hours is recommended to ensure sufficient stem length and improve flower quality.

Temperature:  Optimum temperature is 60-70 °F/16-21 °C.  For winter production maintain 60°F/15°C maximum.  Temperature is more important than day length for winter flowering.  Under low light conditions do not grow too warm, (above 60°F/15°C), or else the stem quality will be reduced and tissue too soft.

Insects:  Aphids, White Fly, Thrips, Mites

Single Stemmed Culture:  Space plants 4 x 4 inches/10 x 10 cm. apart in beds and provide support netting.  Raise netting as the plants grow.  Do not pinch the plants.

Multiple Stemmed Culture:  Space plants 8 x 8 inches/20 x 20 cm. apart and pinch the growing tip to induce side branching.  This will result in a heavy crop of high quality cut flowers.

Harvesting:  For summer production allow 12 weeks from sowing and 15 weeks for winter production.  The first flower is usually removed to create a flush of flowers.  The flowers should be well-colored before cutting.

Container Culture:

Pots:  For green sales in 4 inch/10 cm. pots place one plant per pot and plan on 4 weeks from transplant to shipping.  Larger containers in color require 6-7 weeks from transplant.

Media:  Select a well drained sterile mixture with a pH of 5.8-6.2 and a low nutrient charge.

Growth regulation:  B-Nine is effective at 2,500 ppm/0.25%

Culture watch points:  Avoid using Kelthane or Ortocides on the crop.  Ronilan damage seedlings.

Do not apply plant growth regulators during bud formation.