

Geranium (Zonal) Designer

Media

- Use a light, well-drained medium with a pH of 6.0 to 6.5.

Temperature

- First period of about 4 weeks, 18°C.
- The temperature may go down to about 16°C after about 4 - 5 weeks.
- Designer will take cool growing at 12-15°C
- Be cautious for overwintered crops of Geranium Designer, not to allow the temperature to drop below 12-15°C.
- Mentioned temperatures depend very much on which week you start and light intensities.

Light

- Zonal geraniums require moderate or high light levels.
- Low light intensities can cause stretch.
- Do not put hanging baskets over Zonal Geraniums, as this will reduce light levels and increase the likelihood of a *Botrytis* infection.

Watering

- Keep the soil evenly moist.
- Water thoroughly, leaching regularly to prevent salt build up.
- On cloudy, dark days, reduce watering to help control *Botrytis* and stretch.

Fertiliser

- Use a balanced liquid feed.
- Maintain a pH range of 6.0 to 6.5.
- Be sure to monitor soil salts and flush pots with clear water periodically to prevent the build-up of excessive salt levels.

Pot size

11 – 15cm

Pinching

- Pinching is not needed for Designer.
- A soft pinch will encourage better branching and more flowers in larger pots, but will delay finish at least 3 weeks.

Controlling growth

- Please make sure to check recommendations for plant growth regulators with your sales rep.

Disease control

- Geranium areas should always be thoroughly sanitized prior to beginning your growing season and between crops.
- Keep benches and floors free of plant debris, and avoid any unnecessary handling of plants.
- Geraniums should be grown drier in the first few weeks to encourage root growth and prevent *Pythium* problems.
- Control *Botrytis* with good air movement, adequate spacing and late afternoon venting of the greenhouse to reduce humidity. Regular applications of a labeled fungicide are highly recommended. Under very humid/wet conditions, no fungicide alone can prevent the spread of *Botrytis*.
- Avoid geranium rust problems with preventative applications of labeled fungicides.

Common problems

Insects: Thrips, Whitefly, Leaf Miners, Aphids, Caterpillars.

The Designer geraniums are derived from culture and virus-indexed stock plants.

Crop time

Between 8 – 12 weeks from a Paper 84 plug for Spring planted plugs.

Overwintered crops from a week 42 potting will take a little more time, finishing late March/early April. The advantage here is to produce an early established flowering plant ahead of that of a Spring potted plug.

Ball Colegrave cultural information is issued as a guide to growers, based on our own trials experience. It is not intended as a blueprint for growing. Any chemicals referred to should be used only in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Culture Information

Problems	Causes
Plant collapse	<i>Botrytis, Pythium, Rhizoctonia</i> Saturated soil for extended periods of time (<i>Pythium</i>)
Excess vegetative growth, few flowers	Excessive ammonia in fertiliser. Over fertilisation under low light conditions Low light levels and over watering; wet media
Foliage necrosis	Drying out between watering Low pH High salts
Cupped foliage	Low pH
Poor branching, thin plants	Low fertilisation in early stages of crop Low light levels

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