

Section 10

Cineraria

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Cineraria, *Senecio x hybridus* Regel, is a very showy, flowering potted plant. A wide range of daisy-type flowers in bright colors with varying color patterns (Figure 10-1) are available in both grandiflora and multiflora types. The grandiflora types have fewer, larger flowers on larger plants, while the multiflora types have greater numbers of smaller flowers on generally smaller plants.

Cineraria are seed propagated at 65 to 68°F, with germination occurring in 10 to 14 days. Light is required for germination. Seedlings are transplanted to cell packs in flats or 2- to 3-inch pots as soon as they can be easily handled. After four to five weeks, plants are transplanted to 6-inch, three-quarter or azalea pots. Cineraria should be grown in full sunlight. The minimum suggested light level is 1,000 footcandles of sunlight, particularly during flower induction. Supplemental lighting from fluorescent or high pressure sodium lamps during low-sunlight periods will hasten flowering.

Cineraria require a cold treatment of 50 to 55°F for six weeks for flower initiation. Long days have been used to replace the cold treatment, however plant quality was not as good. Plants are finished at 50 to 65°F. Lower forcing temperatures result in higher plant quality but increased forcing time.

Cineraria require low fertility. Constant fertilization at 100 ppm N and K plus phosphorus is usually adequate. Ammonium nitrogen should be avoided to reduce the possibility of ammonium toxicity and excessively large foliage. Root media pH is important in cineraria production because plants are very susceptible to iron chlorosis. Magnesium deficiency characterized by lower foliar interveinal chlorosis can also be a problem. Regular application of Epsom salts will prevent magnesium deficiency.

Chemical height control is not generally required for cinerarias. B-Nine at a 2,000 to 5,000 ppm foliar spray applied two weeks after the cold period has been shown to provide height control, but it should not be applied after the flowers show color.

Aphids, whiteflies, spider mites, thrips, and caterpillars are major insect pests in cineraria production. Root rots are a serious disease problem in cineraria production. Monthly fungicide drenches are

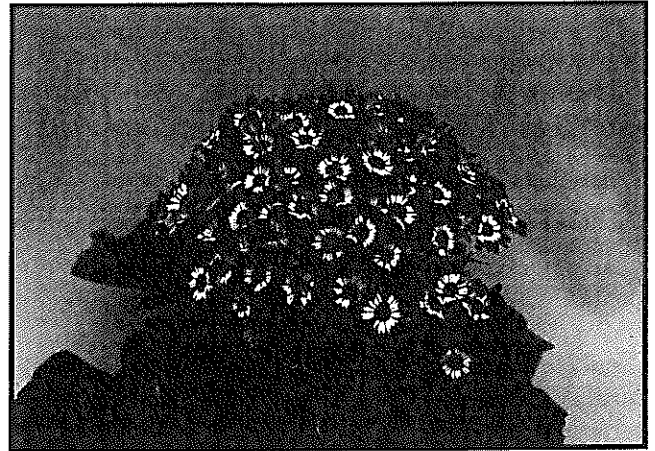


Figure 10-1. The “cool” bicolored daisy-type flowers present a bright visual feast for the eyes.

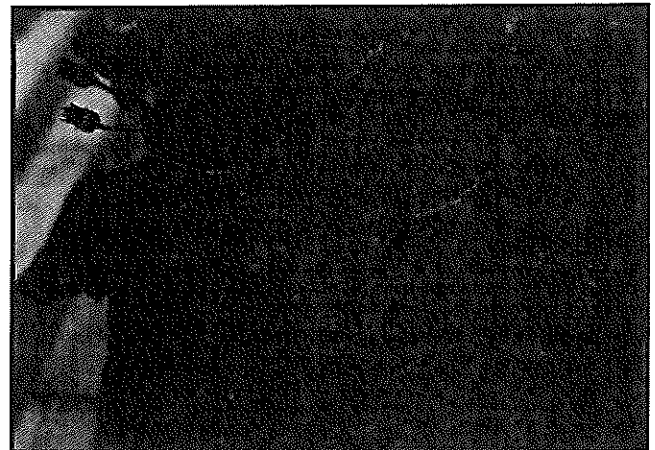
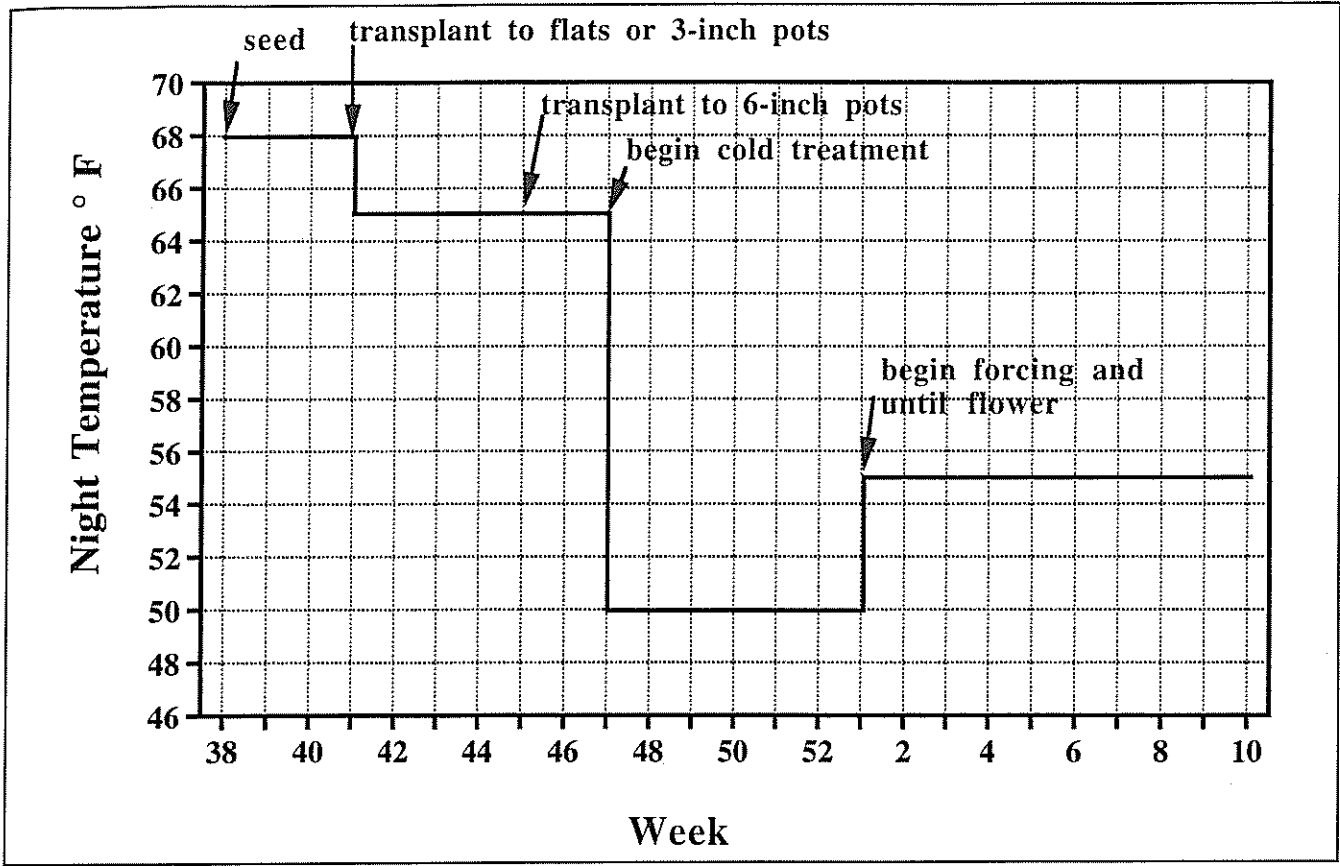


Figure 10-2. Tomato spotted wilt virus can cause significant problems on cineraria. Note the “ring-spot” type symptoms.

generally applied during production. Tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV) (Figure 10-2), impatiens necrotic spot virus (INSV), mosaic, and streak viruses can all cause serious crop losses.

Watering during greenhouse production and postproduction care is an important concern for cinerarias. The large leaves create high transpiration rates when plants are exposed to high temperature and bright light. Wilting causes leaf damage and decreased postproduction life, while overwatering increases root rot problems. The watering requirement is the major concern during postproduction care. Cool temperatures (65°F) and adequate light (200 to 300 footcandles) can increase post-greenhouse life.

An example schedule for the production of cineraria in a 6-inch pot.



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