GrowerFacts

Hibiscus Mahogany Splendor

(*Hibiscus acetosella*)

Germination

Media
Use a well-drained, disease-free, soilless medium with a pH of 5.8 to 6.2 and a medium initial nutrient charge (EC 0.75 mmhos/cm with a 1:2 extraction).

Sowing
Plug Tray Size: Sow one seed per cell in 200 or larger. EU: 128-84 cell plug tray. Cover heavily with plug media or vermiculite to prevent seedlings from tipping over.

Germination takes 2 to 3 days.

Germination temperature: 71 to 76°F (21 to 24°C). Germination can also be done under cooler temperature like 65°F (18°C) with one day longer in germination chamber.

Light: Light is not required for germination.

Media Moisture: Keep the media medium wet (level 4) during germination.

Relative Humidity: Maintain 95 to 97% relative humidity until cotyledons emerge.

Plug Production

Media
Use a well-drained, disease-free, soilless medium with a pH of 5.8 to 6.2 and a medium initial nutrient charge (EC 0.75 mmhos/cm with a 1:2 extraction).

Sowing
Plug Tray Size: Sow one seed per cell in 200 or larger. EU: 128-84 cell plug tray. Cover heavily with plug media or vermiculite to prevent seedlings from tipping over.

Stage 1 – Germination takes 2 to 3 days.

Germination temperature: 71 to 76°F (21 to 24°C). Germination can also be done under cooler temperature like 65°F (18°C) with one day longer in germination chamber.

Light: Light is not required for germination.

Media Moisture: Keep the media medium wet (level 4) during germination.

Relative Humidity: Maintain 95 to 97% relative humidity until cotyledons emerge.

Stage 2
Soil temperature: 68 to 73°F (20 to 23°C)

Light: Up to 2500 f.c. (26,900 Lux)

Media Moisture: Keep the media medium wet (level 4) to medium (level 3) during stage 2.

Fertilizer: Apply fertilizer at rate 1 (less than 100ppm N/less than 0.7 mS/cm EC) with a nitrate form fertilizer with low phosphorous.

Stage 3
Soil temperature: 68 to 73°F (20 to 22°C)

Light: Up to 5000 f.c. (54,000 Lux).

Media Moisture: Keep media medium wet to medium (level 4 to 3). Do not allow the seedlings to wilt.

Fertilizer: Increase the fertilizer rate to 2 (100 to 175 ppm N/ 0.7 to 1.2 mS/cm EC).

Growth Regulators: Treat plugs with tank mix of B-Nine/Alar 2500ppm (3.9 g/l 64% formulation or 2.9 g/l 85% formulation) and CCC 300 ppm (0.4 ml/l 75% formulation or 0.7 ml/l 46% formulation) foliar spray.

Northwestern Europe: Treat plugs with tank mix of Alar/B-Nine 1250ppm (2.0 g/l 64% formulation or 1.7 g/l 85% formulation) and Cycocel 300 ppm (0.4 ml/l 75% formulation or 0.7 ml/l 46% formulation) foliar spray.

Stage 4
Soil temperature: 65 to 70°F (18 to 21°C)

Light: 5,000 f.c. (54,000 Lux)

Media Moisture: Moisture level can be reduced to medium dry (level 3).

Fertilizer: Same as stage 3.

Growing On to Finish

Media
Use a well-drained, disease-free, soilless medium with a pH of 5.8 to 6.2 and an EC of 0.75 mmhos/cm

Temperature
Nights: 62 to 67°F (17 to 19°C)

Days: 65 to 70°F (18 to 21°C)

Light
Keep light levels as high as possible.

Photoperiod
It is a foliage plant. But plant could flower when grown under 12 hours day length or shorter. When day length is longer than 12 hours, flower initiation will be significantly delayed or will never occur.

Irrigation
Keep media uniform moisture. Plants can tolerate saturated moisture.

Fertilizer
Starting a week after transplant, apply fertilizer at rate 3 (175 to 225ppm N/1.2 to 1.5 mS/cm) using predominantly nitrate-form fertilizer with low phosphorus and high potassium. Maintain the media EC at 1.50 to 2.00 mS/cm and pH at 5.8 to 6.2.

Growth Regulators
PGR plus pinch (see below) will make a bushy, compact plant with dark purple foliage.

A tank mix of B-Nine/Alar 2500ppm (3.9 g/l 64% formulation, 2.9 g/l 85% formulation) and Cycocel 750-1000 (1.0-1.3 ml/l 75% formulation, 6.4-8.5 ml/l 11.8% formulation) dependent on temperature can be applied every other week starting at 2 weeks after transplant.
In Northwest Europe, the Cycocel rate should start with 350ppm (0.5 ml/l 75% formulation, 3.0 ml/l 11.8% formulation), and increase as plant mature but do not go higher than 750 ppm (1.0 ml/l 75% formulation, 6.4 ml/l 11.8% formulation).

Bonzi spray can be used as a substitute for the tank mix B-Nine / Cycocel. Start with 5-10 ppm (1.3-2.5 ml/l 0.4% formulation) dependent on temperature. Repeat as needed and the rate can go up to 10-15ppm (2.5-3.8 ml/l 0.4% formulation).

For growers in warmer climates, a Bonzi drench at 1ppm (0.25 ml/l 0.4% formulation) also works very well.

Pinching
A soft pinch will promote development of branches. The pinch can be done when plants have developed 6-7 leaf stage to leave 5-6 leaves, which is about 2 weeks after transplant. Do not pinch too hard as it may result in open center habit.

Crop Scheduling
Sow to transplant (200 cell plug tray): 2 to 3 weeks

Transplant to finish:
Container Size: 4.5-in. quart (10-12 cm) pot

Plants Per Pot/Basket: 1

Weeks From Transplant: 5-6

Total weeks: 9-10

Container Size: 6-in. (15-cm) pot

Plants Per Pot/Basket: 1

Weeks From Transplant: 6-7

Total weeks: 9-11

Container Size: Gallon or 8-in. (19-cm) pot

Plants Per Pot/Basket: 1

Weeks From Transplant: 6-8

Total weeks: 10-11

Common Problems
Watch for thrips.

Garden and Landscape Information
Location: Full sun. Mahogany Splendor Hibiscus can be planted in soil near ponds or in water gardens. It will also tolerate dry conditions once it is established.

Height: 36 to 60 in. (91 to 152 cm)

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Spread: 24 to 30 in. (61 to 76 cm)

Spacing: 24 to 36 in. (61 to 91 cm)

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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