

Spilanthes Peek-A-Boo

(*Acmella oleracea*)

Germination

- Cover the seed lightly with coarse vermiculite.
- Temperature: 72 to 76°F (22 to 24°C)
- Light (10 f.c./100 Lux or more) is required for germination. Because of this, it is recommended germinating directly on bench, providing adequate heat and moisture.

Plug Production

Media

Use a well-drained, disease-free, soilless medium with a pH of 5.5 to 6.3 and a medium initial nutrient charge (EC 0.75 mmhos/cm with a 1:2 extraction).

Sowing

Cover the seed lightly with coarse vermiculite.

Temperature

Germination: 72 to 76°F (22 to 24°C)

Cotyledon stage: 65 to 72°F (18 to 22°C)

True leaves: 65 to 70°F (18 to 21°C)

Hold plugs: 62 to 65°F (16 to 18°C)

Light

Stage one: Light (10 f.c./100 Lux or more) is required for germination. Because of this, it is recommended germinating directly on bench, providing adequate heat and moisture.

After germination: 1,000 to 2,500 f.c. (10,000 to 30,000 Lux).

Seedling maturity: Up to 5,000 f.c. (54,000 Lux) if temperature can be controlled.

Humidity

Maintain 95% relative humidity until cotyledons emerge.

Soil Moisture

Keep soil moisture high until radicle emergence, then reduce moisture levels after the radicle penetrates the medium. Do not allow the seedlings to wilt.

Fertilizer

At radicle emergence, apply 50 to 75 ppm N from 15-0-15. As cotyledons expand, increase to 100 to 150 ppm N.

Growth Regulators

Not required.

Growing On to Finish

Media

Use a well-drained, disease-free, soilless medium with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5 and a medium initial nutrient charge.

Temperature

Nights: 62 to 65°F (16 to 18°C)

Days: 65 to 75°F (18 to 24°C)

Light

Keep light level from moderate to high.

Irrigation

Maintain even moisture. Do not allow plants to wilt.

Fertilizer

Feed plants weekly with 200 ppm N in a complete fertilizer.

Growth Regulators

A Bonzi spray at 15 to 30 ppm about two weeks after transplanting is effective at controlling internode stretch. Repeat the treatment one week later.

Pinching

Pinching is recommended about three weeks after transplanting (a week after the first PGR application). The second PGR application can be done one week after pinch.

Peek-A-Boo spilanthes has an unusual growth habit. The main stem grows up, arches over, and maintains dominance until the first flower buds are set. After the flower buds are set, the plant will start branching naturally. This gives the plant a one-sided habit. Pinching results in better branching and a more

uniformly shaped plant. Pinching will delay flowering about one week.

Crop Scheduling

Sow to transplant (400-cell plug tray): 4 to 5 weeks

Transplant to saleable 4-in. (10-cm) pot: 7 to 8 weeks

Container Size: 4 to 4.5-in. (10 to 11-cm) pot

Plants Per Pot/Basket: 1

Weeks From Transplant: 7 to 8 weeks

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

Plants Per Pot/Basket: 3

Weeks From Transplant: 7 to 8 weeks

Container Size: Gallon container (8-in./20-cm standard pot)

Plants Per Pot/Basket: 3

Weeks From Transplant: 7 to 8 weeks

If producing liners (72-tray), allow 5 to 6 weeks from sow to transplant, and reduce post-transplant crop time by two weeks.

Common Problems

Insects: Aphids, whitefly. Also watch for mites during the later stages of plant growth, i.e., at bud formation and flowering.

Diseases: No serious problems.

Green Thumb Tips

Plant in full sun to part shade. Use **Peek-A-Boo** spilanthes as a low-growing plant in mixed containers, or as a flowering groundcover in the garden. Space 10 to 12 in. (25 to 30 cm) in the garden. Feed regularly with an all-purpose fertilizer.

