

*'Perfectunia Bordeaux'**'Perfectunia White', 'Perfectunia Bordeaux' and 'Perfectunia Bright Pink'*

Petunia Perfectunia Series

These unique Perfectunias make growing petunias easy and profitable

By Jessica DeGraaf

In a world of too many petunias, it is difficult to bring something to the market that is truly different. The Perfectunia series bred by Westhoff Plants in Germany makes growing petunias easy and profitable.

Perfectunias provide extremely early flowering in trials in all regions of the United States. Under short days the plant is very compact in habit and has flowers measuring around 3 inches in diameter with a pleasing, ruffled edge. There are currently nine colors in the series for 2011. They include Blue, Bordeaux, Bright Pink, Coral, Neon Pink, Purple, Red, Rose and White.

Little or no plant growth regulation is required to grow a “perfect petunia” with a compact, ball-shaped form. This is cost effective, environmentally friendly and allows even the less experienced grower to be successful. The plant will grow to about 18 inches wide and 4 inches tall from a single cutting. In terms of the popular “thriller, spiller, filler” vernacular, Perfectunias are more fillers than spillers.

This series has great heat tolerance and summer blooming has been excellent in all trials. They are a preferred series for mixed containers and baskets where they do not overtake other genera in combination and do not stretch under warmer conditions like many other petunias due to its genetically short internodes.

Media and pH

Perfectunias require a well-drained, soilless media with a pH of 5.3-5.8 and an EC range of 0.75-1.0 (using a 1:2 extraction method). Ensure that the newly transplanted liner is even with the media level of the new container. This will reduce the potential for wilt and stress to occur on the new liner.

Liners should be kept moist upon transplant, but they should not be oversaturated. Once liners

*'Perfectunia Coral'*

have sufficiently rooted out, begin to allow the media to dry down between irrigations.

Temperature and Day Length

To promote optimum growth, provide high light levels, moderate to cool temperatures and negative DIF. Maintain day temperatures of 60-70° F and night temperatures of 55-65° F. Flowering is directly related to temperature and day length.

The Perfectunia series will take longer to flower when grown under cooler temperatures and short day conditions. Perfectunias respond extremely well to high light levels. Maintain light levels of 5,000 foot-candles to promote best growth and flowering, while maintaining moderate temperature levels. Note that temperatures greater than 75° F can cause stretching. Under short day conditions in early spring, the use of night break lighting from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. is beneficial and reduces time to flower.

Fertilizer

The Perfectunia series requires a moderate amount of fertilizer. A constant application of a balanced ammonium- and nitrate-based form fertilizer with low phosphorous promotes optimum growth. Rates of 175-225 ppm are most effective and produce good growth and lush green foliage.

Maintain pH levels of 5.5-6.0. If pH rises above 6.0, iron uptake is reduced, causing the plant to show interveinal chlorosis on new growth. To combat this issue, apply EDDHA iron to fertilizer applications as needed.

Growth Regulation

Perfectunias are naturally compact and require very little pinching or PGR application. A pinch may be applied one to two weeks after transplant to promote basal branching. If needed, an application of Bonzi (paclobutrazol) can be applied as a drench at 0.5-1.0 ppm when plants have reached mature size.

'Perfectunia Blue', 'Perfectunia Bordeaux' and 'Perfectunia White' can be more upright and vigorous than the other Perfectunia colors. These colors may require an additional pinch or PGR to control growth.


Pests and Diseases

If good cultural practices and IPM techniques are applied, the Perfectunia series should not have issues with pests and diseases.

Crop Timing

4-inch pot: 7-9 weeks (early spring); 6-8 weeks (spring-summer)

6-inch pot: 8-11 weeks (early spring); 8-10 weeks (spring-summer)

8-inch pot (2-3 plants per pot): 9-13 weeks (early spring); 9-11 weeks (spring-summer) 

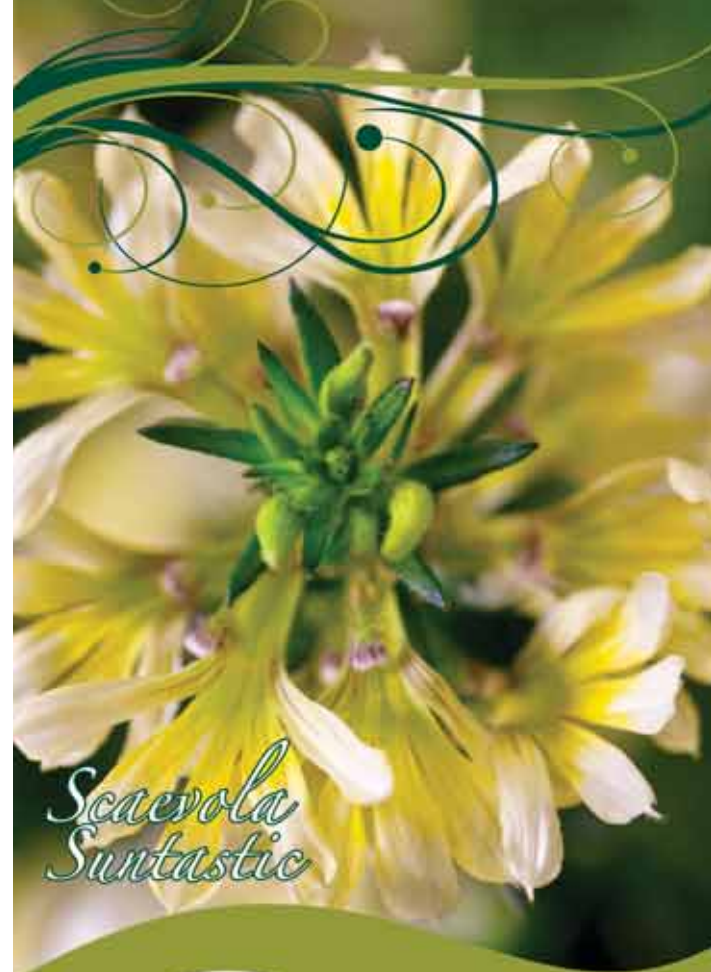
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'Perfectunia Blue'



'Perfectunia Red'



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