Calliope is an “interspecific hybrid” series, developed by crossing normal zonal (upright) geraniums with ivy geraniums. Well-grown Calliope baskets and containers have excellent self-through at retail because of their controlled mounding habit, vibrant colors and superb outdoor performance. While the flowers are semi-double — similar to most other zonals — Calliope takes color to another level in geraniums.

Syngenta Flowers has introduced three new Calliope geranium colors in Spring 2012 — Hot Pink, Lavender Rose and Burgundy. These new varieties join Scarlet Fire and the original Dark Red.

**Propagation Tips**

Open the boxes upon arrival and stick the unrooted cuttings (URCs) as soon as possible. Generally, geraniums should be at the top of the sticking priority list. If cuttings can’t be stuck immediately, place the URCs in a cooler at 40 to 45°F with a minimum of 70 percent relative humidity. Avoid dehydrating the cuttings. Calliope is also available in callused cuttings (CCs) which should be handled similarly to URCs. Callused cuttings will reduce rooting time and are a good option for direct-sticking into the final container.

Cuttings of all Calliope varieties root relatively quickly — in about four weeks — and rooting hormones are generally not needed. The new Calliope varieties are not as vigorous as Dark Red, but growers should transplant on time and use appropriate plant growth regulators (PGRs) to control growth. PGRs should be applied shortly after root formation, about two weeks after sticking, to prevent unwanted stretch during propagation. Cycocel plant growth regulator (1,000 ppm) or a tank mix of Cycocel and B-Nine plant growth regulator (1,000 ppm + 1,500-2,500 ppm, respectively) sprays are commonly used and should be sufficient to control growth. The new Hot Pink and Lavender Rose varieties will require less PGRs than Dark Red and Burgundy. A Florel plant growth regulator spray can be applied at 250 to 350 ppm roughly three weeks after sticking to improve branching and to help abort premature flower buds. Do not apply Florel if the rooted cuttings (RCs) are to be placed in boxes and shipped.

A preventive fungicide spray a few days after sticking will help prevent Botrytis infections. Common chemicals include Heritage, Daconil, Decree, Spectro and Chipco 26019 fungicides, along with several others. A follow-up spray can be given about five to seven days after the first application depending upon disease pressure. Do not use Medallion or Palladium fungicides on geraniums as phytotoxicity can occur. Plants should be given a fungicide drench after roots develop to prevent Pythium “black leg.” A drench with Subdue MAXX fungicide at the low end of the label rate works well to control Pythium root rot.

If shipments are delayed or cuttings are heated during shipping, a spray of Fascination plant growth regulator at 2.5 ppm per day after sticking will help to reduce bottom-leaf yellowing. Do not apply “sprenches” of Fascination and try to keep the solution from running into the rooting media, otherwise rooting will be delayed.

**Finishing Tips**

After transplant, Calliope needs relatively high light intensities (greater than 4,500 footcandles) for best flowering. Avoid growing...
NoFly WP Bio Insecticide

NoFly WP Bio Insecticide takes care of aphids, thrips, whiteflies, mealy bugs and fungus gnats in the greenhouse. This patented, beneficial fungus is an aggressive predator that kills pests within 5 days. NoFly WP is compatible with many chemical and biological pesticides making it an excellent tool for your IPM program.

Actino-Iron Soil Additive

Adding Actino-Iron to growing media replaces preventative fungicide and iron chelate applications. Action-Iron contains Streptomyces lydicus WYEC 108, a patented bacteria that protects roots from diseases such as Pythium, Phytophthora and Fusarium. Actino-Iron also contains naturally complexed iron that keeps even troublesome plants, such as petunias and calibrachoa, green throughout the season.

Actinovate SP Bio Fungicide

When diseases Actinovate to your growing media, treat preventative fungicide and iron chelate applications. Actinovate SP contains a high concentration of Streptomyces lydicus WYEC 108, a beneficial bacteria that fights harmful fungal plant pathogens. Simply spray for diseases like Powdery Mildew and Downy Mildew or apply as a soil drench for Phytophthora, Fusarium, Pythium, Rhizoctonia and other harmful root rot fungi.

Success Is An Option

The right products can mean the difference between a good grower and a GREAT grower.

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