



By Paul Pilon

Phygelius hybrid Tye Dye series

THE LAVISH DISPLAYS OF COLOR AND COMPACT SIZE MAKE THIS CAPE FUSCHIA A SHOW-STOPPING BORDER OR ACCENT PERENNIAL.



'Yellow Submarine' has deep yellow trumpet blooms set against attractive foliage. (Photos: Green Leaf Plants)

If you have been looking for an easy-to-grow, colorful and not-found-everywhere perennial, look no further. Let me introduce you to the Tye Dye series of Phygelius. This series features four colorful cultivars: 'Magic Mandarin' (peachy, orange-colored flowers), 'Radiant Red' (dark, rosy-red blooms with yellow throats), 'Rosy Cheeks' (deep pink flowers with yellow throats) and 'Yellow Submarine' (deep yellow trumpet blooms).

The Tye Dye series offers plenty of attributes including its compact size, well-branched growth habit and tons of tubular flowers set against attractive foliage. The height for all cultivars in the series is 10 to 14 inches when in full bloom. Its size is advantageous to growers who ship perennials, as well as for landscapers looking for show-stopping border and accent perennials. The lavish displays of color can be enjoyed at locations with partial shade to full sun throughout USDA Hardiness Zones 6b to 10. It blooms from late spring/early summer and keeps its flower power going throughout the summer months.

The abundant clusters of tubular flowers are quite effective at drawing the attention of passersby as well as hummingbirds. Besides its presence in the landscape, Phygelius Tye Dye cultivars make great patio pots and are quite effective at livening up mixed containers as well. This compact series of cape fuchsia commands attention and would be a worthy candidate in your perennial program.

Propagation

The Phygelius Tye Dye series is vegetatively propagated by unrooted cuttings. Although the series is patented (USPPAF), unrooted cuttings can be obtained from Green Leaf

Plants (there will be a royalty with the purchased cuttings.) Do not attempt to self propagate from your own plants as unlicensed propagation is currently prohibited.

The unrooted cuttings are ideal for sticking into 72- or 128-cell liner trays containing moistened propagation mix that has good drainage and water holding characteristics. Rooting compounds are not necessary. Place the cuttings under a high misting regime for the first couple of days of propagation. Many growers have found it beneficial to apply a broad-spectrum fungicide drench and preventative controls for fungus gnat larvae (beneficial nematodes *Steinernema feltiae* are a great option) after sticking.

After the first couple of days, reduce the mist to moderately low amounts being delivered. When possible, it is usually best to propagate under high humidity levels (90 percent relative humidity) with minimal misting. Once rooting begins, continue to decrease the amount of misting provided. Avoid providing too much mist or diseases and plant losses will likely result. At six to eight days after sticking, it is beneficial to apply water-soluble fertilizers using 75- to 100-ppm nitrogen at each irrigation beginning. Remove the cuttings from the mist once they are rooted. Phygelius are usually rooted in less than three weeks with soil temperatures ranging from 66 to 72° F. Liners take approximately five to seven weeks from sticking to become fully rooted and ready for transplanting.

To promote branching, it is recommended to pinch the liners one to two weeks after they are removed from the mist. It is important to not allow the liner trays to become overgrown; keep the trays sheared regularly if they cannot be transplanted after they are well rooted.



'Rosy Cheeks' has a well-branched growth habit and deep pink flowers with yellow throats.

Production

Due to its compact plant habit, the Tye Dye series is best suited for production in small container sizes- one-gallon or smaller-sized pots. When transplanting, plant them even with the soil line of the liner they were produced in. They perform best when planted into growing mixes with both good water holding characteristics and, more importantly, adequate aeration. Phygelius requires average amounts of irrigation. Avoid keeping them overly wet, but do not allow them to become severely wilted either. When irrigation is necessary, water them thoroughly then allow the soil to dry moderately between irrigations.

Maintain the growing mix throughout the production cycle with a pH between 6.0 and 6.5. Cape fuchsia requires moderate amounts of nutrients.

Growers using water soluble fertilizers either feed with a constant liquid fertilization program using rates of 100- to 125-ppm nitrogen with every irrigation or apply 250 ppm of nitrogen as needed. Reduce or stop feeding them altogether when it is hot (particularly night temperatures) and humid; these conditions combined with high fertility often result in burnt or scorched plants. Monitor nutrient levels during production and avoid high salts as root injury and root rots may result.

Insects and Diseases

There are only a few problems associated with insect feeding or plant pathogens growers may observe during production. The primary insect pests of Phygelius are aphids, spider mites and Western flower thrips. Growers may also observe Botrytis, bacterial leaf spots, Fusarium wilt and root rots on occasion. These pests and pathogens do not require preventative strategies and can generally be managed upon early detection. Growers should note that Phygelius are sensitive to certain types of chemical applications; avoid using Florel and fungicides containing metals as crop injury is likely to result.

Temperature and Scheduling

One of the biggest factors affecting crop timing is the size of the container in which they are grown. Although they branch freely by themselves, most growers find it beneficial to pinch them during production to obtain more fullness and flowers per plant. Ideally, as mentioned above, the Tye Dye series should be pinched in the liner trays several weeks prior to transplanting. After transplanting, it

is also beneficial to pinch the plants, once for quart-sized containers or one to two times in gallon-sized pots. Depending on temperature and humidity levels, the plants will produce a new flush of blooms two to four weeks after they have been pinched or sheared. They can be trimmed numerous times throughout the growing season to produce a fresh set of flowers if necessary.

Compared to many perennials, Phygelius are easy to grow and do not have complicated requirements for flowering. They do not require cold or have any specific day-length requirements for flowering. Blooming plants can be easily produced provided they are grown with warm temperatures (60 to 65° F night and 65 to 75° F day is sufficient) and high light quality. General scheduling recommendations are six to eight weeks to finish when transplanting pinched liners with one additional pinch at three to four weeks after transplanting. If an additional pinch is performed, allow an additional three to four weeks to the production time.

Availability

Phygelius hybrid Tye Dye series is from Amerinova and is currently exclusive to Green Leaf Plants.

Unrooted cuttings and liners are currently available from Green Leaf Plants (www.glplants.com). 

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