

# PANSY

## WonderFall Series

THESE TRAILING PANSIES BOAST LARGE BLOOMS AND FLORIFEROUS GROWTH IN A WIDE RANGE OF COLORS.

By **Matthew Blanchard**

In recent years, advances in pansy breeding have brought to market a new class of pansies with trailing growth habits. These pansies have great sell-through at retail in spring and fall because of their unique spilling habit, floriferous growth and continuous flowering. The WonderFall pansy series from Syngenta is an example of a new trailing pansy with large blooms, specialty flower colors and a vigorous, well-branched habit. WonderFall pansies are suitable not only for premium pots and

baskets, but also landscape beds. In the landscape, WonderFall covers 75 percent more ground area compared to traditional pansies and 10 percent more ground area than other trailing varieties, requiring less planting density.

### Plug Culture

Production time for WonderFall pansy is four to five weeks for 288-cell trays and five to six weeks for 128-cell trays. For optimum germination,

maintain media temperature at 65 to 68° F and relative humidity at 95 to 100 percent until radicle emergence (about two to five days). On day six, or once cotyledons emerge, reduce humidity to 40 to 70 percent, alternate media moisture between medium and moist, lower night temperature to 60 to 65° F, and increase light levels to 1,500 to 2,500 foot candles.

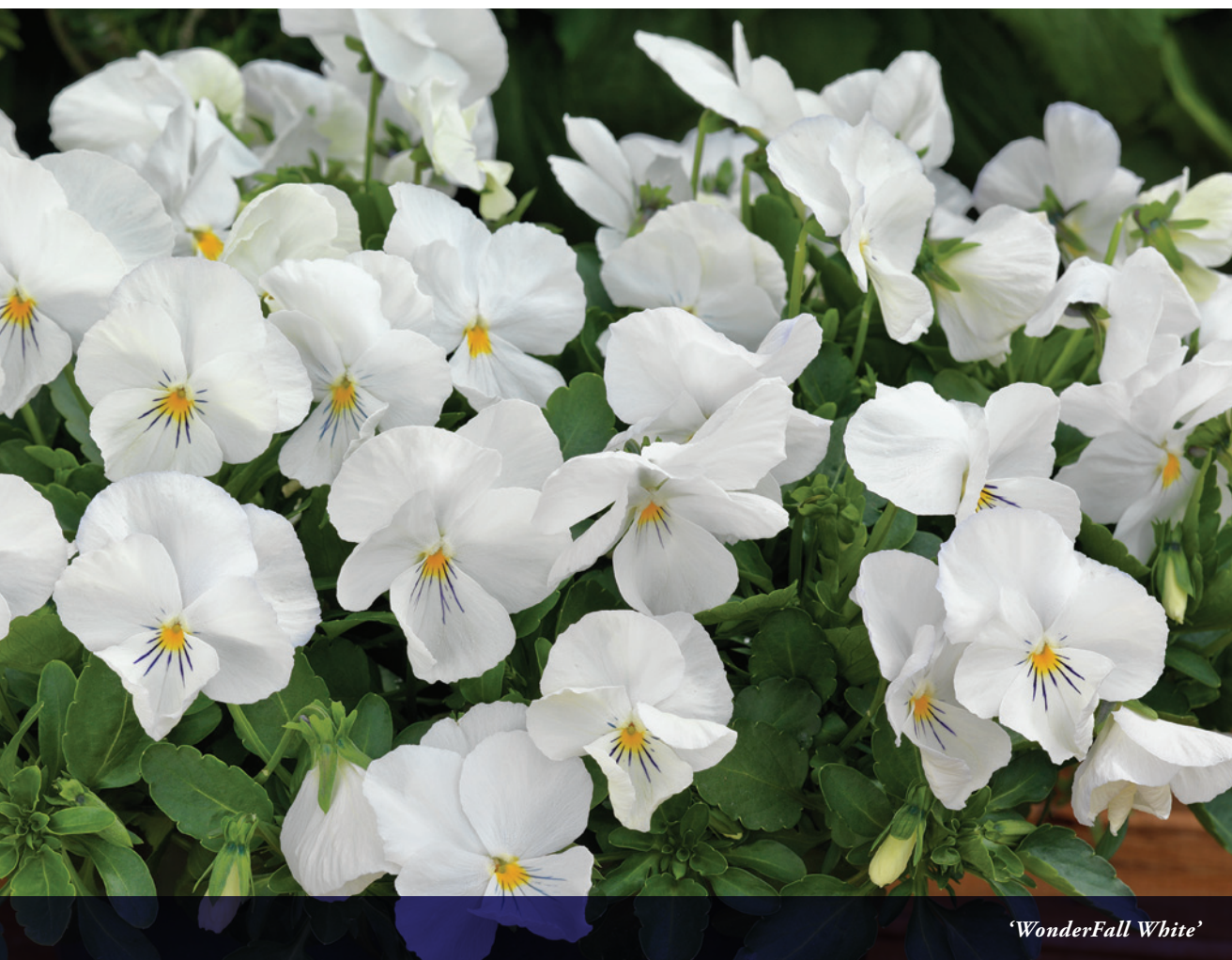
After cotyledons expand, begin fertilizing with 50- to 75-ppm nitrogen from a nitrate-based fertilizer with a target media EC of 0.5 to 0.75 (2:1 dilution method). Use fertilizers with low phosphorous to avoid soft, stretchy shoot growth. Throughout plug production and finishing, maintain a media pH of 5.5 to 5.8. At approximately two weeks after sowing, increase fertilizer rate to 75- to 125-ppm nitrogen and media EC to 0.75 to 1.0.

During plug bulking, maintain day temperatures at 62 to 68° F and night temperatures at 55-62° F, and provide light levels of 4,000 to 5,500 foot candles. To reduce stretch, spray B-Nine plant growth regulator (PGR) at 2,500 to 3,500 ppm or A-Rest PGR at 2 to 5 ppm or a tank mix of B-Nine and A-Rest. Apply a preventive drench of Medalion WDG fungicide to control Thielaviopsis root rot, especially if growing at cool temperatures. Plugs should be transplanted on time to avoid premature flowering during finishing and to realize the maximum branching potential of WonderFall.

### Finishing

WonderFall trailing pansies are best finished in premium containers or baskets for retail sales and in quarts for the landscape trade. For 288-cell plugs, use one plug per quart pot, one to two plugs per 6-inch pot, three plugs per 10-inch basket, and four to five plugs per 12-inch basket. Additional seedlings per container will promote stretching and reduce finish quality.

The crop is best grown at 60 to 70° F day and 50 to 65° F night temperatures. Provide light levels of



*'WonderFall White'*



4,000-6,000 foot candles to produce high-quality plants. Fertilize with a nitrate-based fertilizer at 125- to 150-ppm nitrogen, 8- to 12-ppm phosphorous. During cool weather production, ammonium-based feeds may encourage root rot problems. High nitrogen concentrations may promote stretching.

During fall production at an average daily temperature of 65° F, crop time from transplant of 288-cell trays is five to six weeks for finishing in quarts, six to seven weeks for 10-inch hanging baskets, and seven to eight weeks for 12- to 15-inch hanging baskets. For spring production at cooler temperatures, timing is one to two weeks longer. Crop time is about one week faster under long days compared to short days.

WonderFall is more vigorous than traditional pansies, and growth regulation is recommended when grown under warm temperatures. However, under cool spring temperatures (40 to 55° F), minimal or no PGRs may be needed. The following foliar spray applications are effective at suppressing stem extension. Rates and frequency will vary depending on location and time of year.


- Bonzi PGR at 5-10 ppm (foliar spray);
- B-Nine at 3,500-5,000 ppm (foliar spray);
- a tank mix of B-Nine at 1,500 to 2,500 ppm and Cycocel PGR at 500 to 750 ppm (foliar spray);
- a tank mix of B-Nine at 1,500 to 2,500 ppm and A-Rest at 4-8 ppm (foliar spray); or
- For fall production under warm temperatures



*'WonderFall Blue with Blotch'*

or to hold the crop, a Bonzi drench at 0.1-0.25 ppm can also be applied.

Now available in five new colors for 2013, including Blue with Blotch, Purple, White, Yellow and Yellow with Blotch, the WonderFall series is more diverse than ever. These core colors complement the original six varieties, creating one of the widest color ranges in any trailing

pansy series. WonderFall offers consumers the colors they want and will help drive mass appeal at retail. As of this year, WonderFall is available as primed and raw seed. 

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