

*'Estrella Salmon Star'**'Estrella Voodoo Star'**'Estrella Dark Purple'*

# Verbena Estrella Series

Combining vibrant colors with excellent growing characteristics, Estrella is a versatile series suitable for baskets, mixed containers and the landscape.

By Marc Englert

A vegetatively propagated series, Estrella uses Westflowers genetics bred by Westhoff in Germany. The series boasts rich, vibrant colors on large flower clusters, without the common white flower center. With a well-branching and mounding plant habit, Estrella blooms flowers close to foliage unlike many other series that appear more leggy. Flower clusters are ball shaped and also have flower petals in the center, which makes for a great show. Verbena Estrella reaches a height of 6 to 12 inches. A versatile and exciting series, it can be used for pots, baskets, window boxes, mixed containers and landscaping.

Eight stunning colors are currently available in the Estrella series: Merlot, Peach, Violet, Voodoo Red, Voodoo Star; as well as Dark Purple and Salmon Star, both new introductions for 2012; and White, which is an improvement for 2012.

## Rooting and Transplant

Start with healthy, clean cuttings from a reliable URC supplier. For best results, stick cuttings as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after arrival to your nursery. If cuttings cannot be stuck the same day of arrival, store immediately in refrigeration.

Use a well-drained soil mix with pH levels between 5.8 and 6.2 and temperature between 68 and 72° F. Mist for the first five days as needed; be careful not to drench liners. If using soil mixes containing perlite add extra iron chelate to avoid possible iron deficiencies.

Transplant rooted liners in a well-drained soil mix with a pH of 6.0. Add extra iron chelate.

## Pinching

Estrella varieties may be pinched one to two times. Pinch at least above two or three pairs of leaves.

## Temperature and Lighting

Maintain temperature at 60 to 65° F throughout the rooting stage. Lower temperature to 57° F after rooting. Ensure area is well ventilated.

Cool mornings and negative DIF will promote

compact growth and improve overall plant quality.

During rooting at propagation, avoid direct sunlight and high light levels. Increase levels to high light once cuttings are rooted.

## Water Supply and Fertilizer

Uniform water management is important; avoid plants standing in water or overwatering. The key is to grow on the dry side, yet avoiding to fully dry out the soil mix. Verbena is sensitive to both drying out and being too wet; manage water and humidity to reduce occurrences of diseases like Botrytis. To help prevent foliar diseases, water early in the day.

In the first half of crop time, fertilize with 23-6-10. In the second half, apply 18-11-18.

## Plant Growth Regulation


After pinching, treat plants with 700-ppm Cycocel (chlormequat chloride). Ten to 14 days later, apply 1,000-ppm Cycocel to keep new shoots short. Depending on the weather, apply 2,500-ppm B-Nine (daminozide) one to two times. Towards the end of the crop (when buds are visible), apply Bonzi (paclobutrazol) at 35 ppm. Avoid drenching crop with the solution.

## Crop Time

Producing liner (URC to finished liner): four to five weeks.

From rooted liner to finished plant: six to eight weeks for 4-inch pots with one plant per pot, 10 to 12 weeks for 1-gallon pots with one plant per pot, and 12 to 14 weeks for 10-inch hanging baskets with three to four plants per pot.

## Insect/Disease Control

Treat Estrella against and keep your eye on: white fly, red spider, aphids, leaf miners and fungal diseases (powdery mildew). Avoid low temperatures, low light levels and overwatering. 

**Marc Englert of FLOREP, representing Westflowers in North America, can be reached at [marc@florex.com](mailto:marc@florex.com).**