



Calandiva

A truly unique crop, this new plant is also easy to grow.

By Adalberto Rodríguez

Calandiva, an exclusive pot plant bred from *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*, can be easily grown like most standard kalanchoes. Its most striking features are the rose-shaped flowers and unique look. Calandiva produces a large, full flower head with multiple layers of petals and is very attractive, even when in bud. It flowers for at least six weeks and is available in 10 colors: orange, pink, purple, red, white, white with pink, pink purple, dark pink, soft pink and charming red.

Calandiva will be sold together with an attractive tag, sleeve or other POP materials that makes it easy to recognize.



ROOTING

The rooting period (or long-day period) takes about three weeks in the summer and 4-6 weeks in the winter (depending on variety, environmental conditions, desired plant size, etc.) for a 4-inch pot. We recommend a rooting temperature of 70-74° F.

GROWING ON

A whole range of pots — both clay and plastic — can be used for production, with a preference for plastic pots, as it makes handling easier for mechanized systems. Sizes can vary from 2-9 inches in diameter.

During the long-day period, pots can be placed close to each other, e.g., 85 4-inch pots per square yard. Spacing depends on variety, method of cultivation, desired plant habit, etc.

Temperature is one of the most important aspects of the culture. The optimum range lies between 64 and 68° F day and night.

Calandiva is a short-day plant, with a critical day length of 12 hours. In the winter it must receive light to prevent bud formation in the vegetative stage.

The frequency of irrigation depends on criteria like seasonal influences, growth activity of the plant, stage of development (long day

or short day), the roots, soil type, method of irrigation, pot size and microclimate.

As a general rule, you should not irrigate too much, which causes root rot problems, but too little water will cause salt build-up and root scorch. A general guideline is to keep the medium moist.

The pH level of the soil must be between 5.5 and 6.0. The soil used for Calandiva must be light, airy and drain properly; have the ability to hold water without drying too fast; and be suitable to the method of irrigation. To increase the air in the medium, you can use perlite, styropor grains (polystyrene), clay-grains or rice-hulls. Some of these additions will help retain water. You can also use rock wool or oasis.

The fertilization program is based on the main elements: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Besides nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, Calandiva also needs other elements such as calcium and magnesium. Supplemental applications of these fertilizers can be necessary. Also, trace elements, particularly iron and manganese, are necessary. GPN

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Why Calandiva?

This crop is really gaining popularity. I first saw it in bloom at the 2003 California Pack Trials and have since seen it at two grocery stores in the past two months. Even with increasing viewing frequency, I continue to be impressed by Calandiva. This, I can say without any doubt, is a one-of-a-kind kalanchoe.

Also, According to FloraStar's 2003 spring trials, Calandiva can produce up to 26 petals, and its compact habit makes it easy to work with on the bench. These two benefits combined with minimal pest activity, no need for pinching and a long flowering period, make Calandiva a winning crop. — **Carrie Burns**

