

crop culture report:

Impatiens Spellbound Series

Available in numerous colors, the versatile varieties in this series have a unique trailing ability that creates a colorful ground cover. The Spellbound series can add dimension to container gardens.

By Mark Sanford



Top: Impatiens 'Spellbound Salmon'. Middle: Impatiens 'Spellbound Pink'. Bottom: Impatiens 'Spellbound Rose'.

Raised from cuttings, the impatiens Spellbound series was bred to achieve trails of 2 ft. or more while retaining its bushy appearance from the top down. It produces masses of large flowers throughout the season from early spring to first frost. The series is the result of years of research by S&G Flowers' breeding team. Varieties are available in many colors, including Pink, Salmon, Rose, Blackberry Star, Bright Purple, Royal Purple, Dark Red, Lavender and more.

Spellbound varieties work well in hanging baskets and tall patio containers in single or mixed plantings. They can be mixed with other vigorous plants, and due to their trailing habit, they can be used as landscape groundcover. At close spacing of 8-10 inches, this variety will reach heights of 16-20 inches. At spacing of 16-24 inches, it will reach 10-12 inches tall. Varieties in this series have a unique trailing ability that will cover the ground with mats of color, with each plant covering an area of about 2-3 ft.

In sunny or semi-shaded areas, impatiens Spellbound varieties have resistance to weather variations. They can rebound from rain due to sturdy flowers and pliable branching. Impatiens in this series may flower profusely and continuously throughout summer months due to their non-seed-setting characteristics, which promote reflowering. Plants branch as well as they flower for quick fill in both containers and landscapes.

Rooting

Varieties in the Spellbound series should be easy to root; in about three weeks, rooted liners are ready to transplant. Unrooted cuttings should be stuck immediately upon arrival. Use disease-free, well-drained media with a 5.6-6.2 pH. Soil temperatures of 68-70° F should be maintained for best results. Mist should be applied to prevent cuttings from wilting. Maintain good air movement around plants to prevent Botrytis.

Once cuttings have started to root, remove from mist and lower air temperature to 65-70° F. Rooting of Spellbound varieties is relatively quick; usually the start of rooting can be seen in 3-4 days. At the point of rooting, start fertilizing with calcium-based fertilizer at a rate of 150-175 ppm. Light levels should gradually be increased to 4,000-8,000 foot-candles after removal from the propagation area.

Maintain 1.0-1.3 EC levels. Do not let plants wilt; this will decrease branching and flower size. Liners will be ready to transplant in about three weeks, depending on environmental conditions.

Growing On


Impatiens should be transplanted when roots start to wind at the cell bottom. This will prevent any delay after transplant. Use good-quality media with pH levels of 5.5-6.2 and 1.3-1.5 EC levels. After transplant, maintain consistent moisture levels with a 1.5-1.8 EC level. The series will produce the largest blooms and the best trailing habit with warm temperatures and moderate to high EC levels. Maintain these levels throughout the full crop time for best results.

Spellbound varieties require no pinching. Light levels should be kept as high as possible, 8,000-10,000 foot-candles, for best fill and flowering. During late spring and summer, they will tolerate high levels of light and heat as long as moisture levels are maintained. This series was bred to flower continuously, and stressing plants by withholding water or fertilizer will only slow pot fill and reduce flower size.

Finishing

Spellbound varieties are reasonably quick to finish. Gallon pots with two rooted cuttings may finish in about 5-6 weeks. Ten-inch hanging baskets with three plants can be ready for shipment in about 8-10 weeks from rooted cuttings. Four-inch pots with one rooted cutting should finish in 4-5 weeks. Spacing will be required in order to achieve the best performance. Plants will grow vertical if spacing is too tight.

PGRs are not recommended for Spellbound varieties. If growth needs to be slowed, apply 350-500 ppm of Florel (ethephon) after transplant when roots are well developed. Flowers will appear in about 7-10 days after application. The addition of water gel and slow-release fertilizers to the media is recommended for best shelf life at retail.

Spellbound varieties, like any impatiens, should be scouted for thrips regularly. Use preventative insecticides accordingly. A regular rotation of classes is recommended. This series has not demonstrated susceptibility to root or stem diseases. Fungicide applications, such as soil drenches and foliar sprays, have not shown any signs of phytotoxicity. 

Mark Sanford is product manager for vegetative lines with S&G Flowers. He can be reached at mark.sanford@syngenta.com or (630) 969-6300.