

crop culture report:

Lantana Florida Mound Series

Most growers recognize lantana because of its traditional trailing types, but the Florida Mound series has created many new opportunities for growers. Read on to learn more about this new mounding lantana.

By Paul Gaydos



Top: 'Florida Mound Fuchsia'. Middle: 'Florida Mound Orange'. Bottom: 'Florida Mound Red'. (Photos: GroLink)

The release of the lantana Florida Mound series, bred by Rick Brown at Riverview Flower Farm, Riverview, Fla., has created many new and exciting opportunities for lantana growers. What comes to mind for most growers when asked about lantana is the traditional trailing types primarily used as landscape ground cover. These are the varieties most widely used by growers today, but this might change with the new mounding-type lantana.

The Florida Mound varieties have dark-green foliage with compact, uniform, mounding growth habits, making them suitable for the landscape as well as 1-gal. and 4-inch pot production. These varieties are bred to be non-evasive to neighboring plants and will flower all summer long.

Versatile Varieties

Florida Mound varieties are very versatile and will tolerate temperatures above 100° F and most soil types as well as salt and drought conditions. Lantana is one of only a handful of plants that can survive in moderate drought conditions. The flowers are self-cleaning, continuous and abundant.

There are three Florida Mound varieties available: Red, Orange and Fuchsia. They are available year round from GroLink/Athena Brazil as unrooted or rooted cuttings. Lantana cuttings can be very tricky to successfully ship to the grower and must be handled properly by the supplier during stock build-up, harvest, cooling and shipping.

Propagation

Upon receipt of unrooted cuttings, growers must stick them immediately. Once cuttings are stuck in a moist media, put them under mist for 10 seconds every 10 minutes from day 1 to 5. Days 6-10, mist 10 seconds every 15-20 minutes. On day 11, feed with 20-10-20 at 100 ppm and then mist for 10 seconds every 30 minutes until day 20 when plants are some-

what rooted. Syringe occasionally until plants are well rooted; the amount will depend on weather conditions.

Try to keep soil temperatures between 70 and 74° F. The rooted cutting should be ready to transplant in four weeks when sticking one unrooted cutting per 105 cell. Some growers prefer to stick three lantana cuttings in a 50 cell, ready to transplant in five weeks, then transplant into a 1-gal. pot to save time and get more turns in their finished production.

Growing On

Growing temperatures should always be above 66° F with light levels at 5,000 foot-candles or greater for best results. A single pinch is needed about 10 days after transplant of the rooted cutting. Feed with 20-10-20 at 250 ppm constant with an occasional irrigation of clear water. Keep the pH between 5.8 and 6.2 with a 1.5-2.0 EC level.

No growth regulators are needed or recommended for use on Florida Mound. Florel (ethephon) may help to promote branching but will also delay flowering, which is why I do not recommend this treatment on lantana. A normal preventative insect/disease spray program is recommended, but there are no specific problems associated with growing lantana Florida Mound.

Finishing

Florida Mound varieties are hardy in Zones 8-11. The plant will die back with temperatures of 28° F or below, but it is root hardy and will throw up new growth

when the weather improves. Florida Mound will, in time, reach a maximum size of 3x3 ft. These plants will flower in clusters with each flower cluster being 1-2 inches in diameter, and they are a magnet for butterflies and humming birds. **GPN**

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Finishing Time By Plant Size

	4-Inch Pot (1 plant per pot)	6-Inch Pot (1 plant per pot)	1-Gal. Container (3 plants per pot)
Unrooted	9-10 weeks	11-12 weeks	9-10 weeks
Rooted	5-6 weeks	7-8 weeks	5 weeks

Figure 1. Length of time to reach mature size of lantana Florida Mound series by container size and rooted versus unrooted cuttings.