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Culture Tips for Infinity New Guinea Impatiens



These New Guineas have better finishing times and features that consumers demand.

By Nicole Jackson

New Guinea impatiens burst onto the gardening scene 30 years ago and already have become etched in the gardener's mind as the perfect shade plants.

Now comes Infinity, a new series from renowned breeder Ludwig Kientzler. The Kientzler name has been synonymous with quality and innovation since 1904. Ludwig Kientzler carefully bred Infinity to be grower friendly with consistent vigorous habit and finishing times across the series and also to have the features consumers demand: large flowers, dark green to purple foliage and a variety of color choices.

More vigorous than most other series, these New Guineas fill containers and baskets quickly. Their vigorous habit makes them an easy choice for 10-inch, 12-inch or even larger baskets, plus their production performance in 4-inch, 5-inch or even gallon pots is exceptional. Although when using smaller pots, it is best to space the pots to allow the best development possible. Rigorous trials and selection process under outdoor conditions have shown this series to be especially durable and attractive, even in the heat and rain. For consumers, Infinity is great in shade combination planters, pots, hanging baskets and in the landscape.

There are 17 colors in the series — Blushing Lilac, Cherry Red (shown above left), Dark Pink, Dark Salmon Glow, Lavender, Light Salmon, Light Purple, Lilac, Orange, Orange Frost, Pink, Pink Frost, Pink Kiss, Red, Salmon, Scarlet (center) and White (right) — all new for 2004.

GROWING ON

Infinity performs best in fast draining medium with sufficient peat moss and perlite. Plant 3-5 liners per 8- to 10-inch pot and one liner per 4- to 6-inch pot. Keep pH at 5.8-6.2 and EC at 0.5-0.7. Light Levels should be moderate to high. Maximum light intensity is recommended in early to mid-spring for optimal growth. Light shade should be used in late spring, but light intensity should be between 3,000-5,000 foot-candles. High light promotes growth, increases leaf variegation and intensifies leaf color of the cultivars with dark leaves.

Normal day temperatures should be 65-75° F and normal night temperatures 60-70° F. Night temperatures above 70° F may cause a delay in flowering.

New Guinea impatiens transpire a large amount of water, but do not respond well to continually water-logged medium. After transplanting, it is best to keep the medium just moist, as over watering during this time will cause problems. Although they will tolerate slight wilting, leaf and flower burn will occur if the plants are over stressed. We recommend avoiding wilting but allowing plants to dry between watering.

Finishing time for 8- to 10-inch pots is 11-13 weeks and 8-9 weeks for 4- to 6-inch pots.

FERTILIZERS, PESTS AND DISEASES

Infinities prefer 100-100-100 ppm N-P-K for the first four weeks or when the roots

have hit the side of the pots. Then 200-100-200 ppm N-P-K for the rest of the crop cycle. Soluble salts can cause severe root damage above 2.0 millimhos during production. New Guinea impatiens need only moderate levels of micro-nutrients. Excess minor nutrients will cause dieback of the growing tip, leaf margin necrosis and total plant collapse. Poor nutrition may result in yellowing of leaves, leaf drop and small flowers.

As for pests, watch for thrips, spider mites and cyclamen mites.

Maintain moderate humidity levels but good air movement to prevent Botrytis and Myrothecium. Watering plants early in the day and venting in the afternoon will help control Botrytis. New Guinea impatiens may become infected with root rot caused by Rhizoctonia, Pythium and Phytophthora. This can occur especially when plants are over-watered. Drench with a broad-spectrum fungicide at liner planting to reduce these disease problems. Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus (INSV) can be a problem; however, this virus is easily contained if thrips, the necessary vectoring agent, are controlled. GPN

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