



'Little Dragons Eternal Flame' (left) and 'Little Dragons Azure Flame' (right) present strong, tidy plants with an extended flowering window.

Nemesia Little Dragons Series

Gardeners will fall in love with these gorgeous blooms paired with garden performance and delightful fragrance.

BY DAVE HILTON

Little Dragons are both frost and heat tolerant, making them a long extended product for both the retailer and consumer. The tidy plants hold their habit very well in the garden and have a strong flowering window of eight months. And if their gorgeous blooms and garden performance aren't enough, gardeners will love Little Dragon nemesisia's strongly vanilla-scented blooms. Showy colors paired with a delightful fragrance will bring life to any garden.

The very free-flowering, well-branched plants are economical and easy to produce. Little Dragons nemesisia are well suited for

early spring, spring and autumn sales. They make the perfect addition to pansy programs and can withstand temperatures in the mid-20° F range.

The two colors, Azure Flame and Eternal Flame, are perfectly matched in habit, timing, size and vigor and also are offered in the Little Dragons Princess Mix. Use these varieties for mixed 306 packs, quarts, 6-inch containers and mixed combinations.


PROPAGATION

Nemesia root fairly quickly and propagation time from unrooted cuttings to a liner ready for transplant is four to six weeks. Nemesia do root better with the buddy system (two cuttings per liner cell) and they can be easily rooted as the Princess Mix of Azure Flame and Eternal Flame together.

Choose a well-drained medium with an EC of 0.75 to 0.80 and a pH of 5.8 to 6.2. Soil temperature during the rooting stage should be maintained at 68 to 73° F until roots are visible. Begin reducing mist

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as soon as roots are visible and keep the media only moderately moist to avoid iron deficiencies, which lead to chlorotic foliage.

When roots are visible, begin fertilizing with 75- to 100-ppm nitrogen and gradually increase to 200-ppm nitrogen as the roots continue to develop. Avoid the need for plant growth regulators by keeping plants under high light and cool air temperatures.

The liners should be pinched one week prior to transplant to help bulk the young plants. This is especially important for smaller container sizes.

FINISHING MEDIA

Use a soilless medium with good aeration and drainage with a pH of 5.8 to 6.2 and a high starter charge. It is best to run plants on the dry side, so test media regularly for pH and salt levels.

TEMPERATURE

Maintain temperatures at 35 to 52° F nights and 65 to 75° F days. Warmer temperatures will promote rapid, soft growth and plant stretch. The cool night temperatures will dramatically improve overall crop quality and promote maximum branching.

LIGHT

Light levels should be kept high to avoid stem stretch. Little Dragons grow best at 5,000 to 7,000 foot-candles. Nemesia are daylength neutral and will flowering equally well throughout the year. Reduce light levels when temperatures are high to avoid foliage and flower burn.

WATERING

Keep plants moderately dry to control growth, but do not allow the media to dry completely or plants will get tip burn. Keep the foliage dry at night and have good air circulation around the plants after watering to avoid botrytis infections.

FERTILIZER

Maintain a constant liquid feed at 200-ppm nitrogen. Excessive phosphorous and ammoniacal nitrogen will promote additional, unwanted foliage growth. Additional chelated iron may be applied if new leaves appear chlorotic. Leach plants periodically with clear water to prevent salt damage.

PINCHING AND GROWTH REGULATORS

Plants should be pinched one week after transplant to improve overall branching. Larger containers may benefit from a secondary pinch, but this will delay flowering. Plants will flower six weeks after the last pinch. Cool temperatures, high light, keeping the plants dry and low feed will work as natural growth regulators. If needed, B-Nine can be used as an effective chemical growth regulator, although this will delay flowering.

SCHEDULING

Using two cuttings per liner and following the recommended pinching schedules, growers can expect to finish their Little Dragons nemesia with the following timings:

UNROOTED CUTTINGS:

- Quarts: eight to 10 weeks
- 6-inch: 10 to 12 weeks
- 10- to 12-inch: 12 to 14 weeks (three to five plants per pot)

ROOTED CUTTINGS:

- Quarts: five to seven weeks
- 6-inch: seven to nine weeks
- 10- to 12-inch: nine to 11 weeks (three to five plants per pot) gpn

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