

Ipomoea SolarPower Series



Figure 1. SolarPower ipomoea series grown with no pinch and daminozide at 2,500 ppm spray two weeks after transplant.

Let us reintroduce you to a well-mannered sweet potato vine.

BY KRISTOPHER CARLSSON

Have you ever met a person you didn't like? If we are honest we all have. Sometimes people don't make a good first impression. But there are many more ipomoea I have met that I end up disliking compared with people. The attention to detail needed in propagation, the pinching, transplanting, feeding, watering and PGRs — only to be left with a quart or gallon that just has one main branch. Grrr.

Today I introduce you to a new type of ipomoea, which was bred to be easy for the grower from stick to finish. This article will explore the culture for successful quart production of the SolarPower ipomoea series from Ball FloraPlant.

HELLO THERE

Just like meeting a person for the first time you want to make a good first impression when rooting an ipomoea cutting. To get off on the right foot with SolarPower, start with correct propagation temperature. It is critical to maintain 70° F bottom heat with humidity of at least 80 percent. Avoid storing cuttings in the cooler for this crop by sticking them immediately when they arrive. Ipomoea cuttings can be damaged from cold storage temperatures in your cooler.

Ipomoea root very quickly, so no rooting hormone is needed and often it is possible to direct stick into smaller pots or packs. Ipomoea in general require very little mist for rooting and

SolarPower is no different. After three to four days of mist, cuttings should be moved to propagation benches with bottom heat and no mist. Watch carefully for *Pseudomonas* throughout propagation stage and make appropriate fungicide applications if needed.

Propagation of ipomoea is so quick that feeding requirements are generally low at this point in production. Foliar feeding can be helpful in propagation, but keep rates low at around 75- to 100-ppm nitrogen. Allow approximately three to four weeks for propagation of an ipomoea liner.

JUST SAY NO PINCH

We generally don't pinch new people we meet, and the same is true for SolarPower ipomoea. Traditionally ipomoea need at least one pinch and many times require a shear later in production to promote side branching. Genetically, SolarPower is different than other ipomoea, so we recommend no pinch. Figure 2 shows the amount of branching produced on SolarPower Red with no pinch compared to the same variety with a pinch. I think it is clear this series makes a great retail presentation with no pinch.

DON'T LEAVE ME IN THE COLD

You would not leave your new friend out in the rain. The same is true for ipomoea so please transplant it into a greenhouse with 65 to 70° F night temperatures and day temperatures of 70 to 75° F. Relative humidity is also an important factor to consider. Ipomoea thrive with a slightly higher relative humidity in finished production. Grouping ipomoea together with your other warm crops like New Guinea impatiens, lantana, angelonia, portulaca, scaevola and coleus will help it thrive.

Our friends also don't like wet feet, and ipomoea will struggle if kept saturated. So keep your Solar Power ipomoea moist when you are finishing them, but not saturated. At Ball FloraPlant

gpn

Culture Connection

e-newsletter

LEARN ABOUT:

-New Varieties

-Plant Trials

-Crop Culture

-Breakthrough Genetics



Jasmina Dolce

Managing Editor

Go to

www.gpnmag.com

for more information

DIVISION OF FarmTek

Growers supply

1.800.476.9715 GrowersSupply.com/ADGPN

WE MANUFACTURE • WE INSTALL

WE SAVE YOU MONEY

GROW ALL YEAR, IMPROVE CROP YIELDS AND QUALITY

One-Stop Shop

In-House Design, Financing & More

Factory Direct

For Your Greenhouse Solutions

Greenhouse Experts

Consultation, Classes, Webinars & More

GET 0% FINANCING FOR 84 MONTHS OR GET A BIG CASH DISCOUNT*

*RESTRICTIONS APPLY



Figure 2. Left: ‘SolarPower Red’, pinched. Right: ‘SolarPower Red’, no pinch.

we refer to the 1 to 5 scale for soil moisture with 5 being saturated and 1 completely dry. See Figure 3 for the Ball Substrate Moisture Level table so you can use it when producing SolarPower ipomoea. Try to allow for dry cycles in between irrigations, going from a 4 to a 2, when growing SolarPower ipomoea. Once transplanted in the finished greenhouse, soil nutrition level should be held at 175- to 225-ppm nitrogen.

CONTROL YOURSELF

Sometimes I try to hide my vigorous height as a person by slouching. There is no hiding a vigorous ipomoea — it sticks out like a sore thumb. PGRs are a must with most ipomoea genetics on the market, requiring multiple PGR applications from stick to finish. When pinched, SolarPower generally do not need a PGR

Figure 3. Substrate moisture level

	Level 1 Dry	Level 2 Medium Dry	Level 3 Medium	Level 4 Medium Wet	Level 5 Saturated
Substrate color	Very light brown or gray	Light brown	Brown to dark brown	Dark brown	Brown-black, glistening with water
Substrate feel when squeezed in hand	No moisture is detected in substrate	Substrate squeaks when squeezed	A small drop of water can be squeezed from the substrate	Water can be easily squeezed from the substrate	Water runs freely out of the substrate
Substrate structure	Substrate is dusty and freely scatters when blown	Substrate will barely stick together under pressure	Substrate will clump together but cracks under its own weight	Substrate easily clumps together and stays as one clump	Substrate has a semi-liquid consistency

application. However, with our recommendation of no pinch, we suggest a light spray of daminozide at 2,500 ppm to tone finished growth. This will help keep internodes tight and make a nice finished quart.

‘SolarPower Lime’ is the most vigorous in the series and in southern regions could require a second spray application of daminozide at 2,500 ppm to tone finished growth if growing conditions are very warm. See Figure 1, which shows the series line up with no pinch all sprayed with daminozide at 2,500 ppm spray two weeks after transplant.

To sum up, SolarPower ipomoea will make you like ipomoea again. The ease at which this product can be grown will surprise you if you

follow important steps, so let’s quickly review:

1. Make a good first impression. Propagate them warm with 70° F bottom heat.

2. Don’t pinch your SolarPower ipomoea; they branch well all on their own.

3. No wet feet. Allow for dry cycles in between irrigations.

4. PGR can’t tame my personal height, but it plays a role in finished production using daminozide spray at 2,500 ppm, if option of no pinch in propagation is the choice. gpn

Kristopher Carlsson is global product manager for Ball FloraPlant, stationed in Arroyo Grande, California. Please reference www.ballfloraplant.com for more information on SolarPower.

GREENHOUSE PRODUCT NEWS 37