

Calibrachoa

Cha-Cha Series

Deep Blue

Diva Apricot

Frosty Lemon

Diva Hot Pink

Tangerine

The Cha-Cha series is the uniform, large-mounded calibrachoa you're looking for in big basket displays.

BY LAURA MASOR

Cha-Cha calibrachoa was launched for spring 2021 and quickly established itself as a colorful and novelty choice for large containers, hanging baskets and mixes. This full-sized series is 25% more vigorous than the Cabaret series from Ball FloraPlant, which has been a flagship for uniformity and timing to build calibrachoa basket programs. Now Cha-Cha, with its large, cascading blooms and trendy, novelty colors, offers a bigger display for premium containers or for municipal/commercial landscape combo basket components.

Not messy or wild, Cha-Cha features the uniform, controlled vigor you're looking for in big basket displays. It keeps this uniformity across all of the colors, which includes two color-shifting types. Cha-Cha also has an early flowering time, making it excellent for early season basket color.

Ball FloraPlant has added to its MixMasters multi-liner combo collection with the introduction of two new options. MixMasters Great Escape is a full-size mixture of 'Cha-Cha Diva Hot Pink', award-winning petunia Bee's Knees, and verbena 'Firehouse Burgundy'. MixMasters Diva La Vida pumps up the sass with a combination of 'Cha-Cha Deep Blue' and 'Cha-Cha Diva Hot Pink'.

These are ready-to-finish multi-liners that benefit from our trialing and selection process. The best MixMasters mixes start with color selection and end with following proper culture guidelines. All selected colors and components work well together with varieties that have been

trialed and approved for optimum growing performance in containers.

A variety of characteristics also figure into MixMasters, including unique textures, common water requirements and pollinator appeal.

When our resident "Mix Master" Becky Lacy sets out to create new recipes for the program, she also considers these factors:

- **Regionality:** Where will the combo grow best? Can it work nationally?
- **Timing.** The varieties must initiate flowering at the same time.
- **Vigor:** The recipe as a whole is taken into consideration, so that one or two components won't overgrow.
- **Seasonality:** Mixes are created with specific seasons in mind; some work best for early spring, while others work great in the heat of the summer.
- **Longevity at retail:** All MixMasters combos must provide continuous blooming on retail shelves and on into the consumer's garden after purchase.

As mentioned above, Cha-Cha is relatively easy to produce. Following are some propagation and finishing guidelines to build the best-looking baskets for retail.

PROPAGATION/FINISHING

No rooting hormone is required when sticking cuttings for Cha-Cha calibrachoa. They can be started in several tray sizes (50, 72, 84 or 105) with a soil pH of 5.4 to 5.8. Provide an average six to eight days with mist to encourage rooting. Provide one pinch during the propagation

stage, as Cha-Cha has a higher vigor. Average propagation time for this series is three to four weeks.

Some best practices we've found: Avoid wide fluctuations in soil moisture at this stage to ensure healthy growth. We recommend applying a preventative fungicide drench at 18-21 days after sticking.

After transplant, maintain light levels at 5,000-8,000 footcandles. Provide fertilization at a rate of 225-300 ppm.

Day Temperatures: 71-76° F
(21-24° C)

Night Temperatures: 50-58° F
(10-14° C)

Cooler air temperatures and high light will reduce or eliminate any need for plant growth regulators. But if PGR is necessary, use a B-Nine spray at 2,500-5,000 ppm, Bonzi drench 3-8 ppm, or Florel spray (300-500 ppm, applied one to three times for large baskets to maintain the plant's habit as needed. Cha-Cha can benefit from one to two pinches during finishing to also improve its habit and flowering. For optimized plant health at finishing, maintain soil pH at 5.2 to 5.8.

CROP TIME

Crop times for Cha-Cha will be shortest as the days lengthen in spring. Apply preventative broad-spectrum fungicide drench early (seven to 10 days after transplant) to minimize disease. For diminishing the chance of root rot, avoid saturating the media and avoid excessive feed levels.

We'll be debuting the expanded list of varieties at California Spring Trials at our Santa Paula location. [gpn](#)

Laura Masor is a breeder for Ball FloraPlant in Arroyo Grande, California. Visit www.ballfloraplant.com for full culture details.

CROP TIME: ROOTED LINER TO FINISH

Container Size	Plants Per Pot	Weeks
4- to 5-in. (10- to 13-cm) Pots, Quarts	1 ppp	6 to 9 weeks
6-in. (15-cm) Pots, Gallons	1-2 ppp	7 to 11 weeks
10- to 12-in. (25- to 30-cm) Tubs, Baskets	3-5 ppp	8 to 12 weeks