

crop culture report:

# Maché Ranunculus

This ranunculus boasts uniformity and earliness.

By Jeannine Bogard

Popular in the Southern and Western regions of North America, due to their mild winters, ranunculus is a frost-hardy plant that puts on a spectacular, long-lasting show of garden color wherever the springs are long and cool.

Regardless of regional seasonality, as a potted crop or container planting, the Maché series offers growers and retailers a unique item to conquer the last of the winter doldrums or jump start spring sales.

Maché demonstrates the best of modern day attributes. 'Maché Yellow' is the most uniform single color of ranunculus on the market in terms of height, flowering and foliage. Dark green, well-proportioned, deeply lobed foliage is full and bushy and will easily fill in a 6-inch container.

With the highest ranunculus seed quality standards on the market, growers will experience savings due to higher seedling yields. Plug growers will notice the uniform strong seedlings that have a minimum of 80 percent transplantable seedlings.

Achieve faster bench turns with Maché, as it reaches 50-percent bloom 10-14 days earlier than the competition. Superior flower quality and high bud counts ensure that you will see the Maché advantage.

## GERMINATION

A higher germination can be obtained by using a combination of temperatures. Initially, germinate at 39-46° F for the first 6-8 days. The next step requires increasing the temperatures to 41-64° F for 10-14 days. If controlled cool temperatures cannot be easily obtained, then germinate at a constant 50° F.

After removal from the chamber, the young seedlings need to be kept under short days to encourage vegetative growth. Supplemental light-

ing during natural day length will encourage growth. Long days will promote premature flowering.

Ranunculus should be initially sown on a saturated media, preferably in the dark. After radicle emergence maintain a media that is moist to the touch, but not saturated. Do not allow the media to dry down.

When produced in 288 plug trays seedlings should be ready for transplant approximately 7-8 weeks after sowing.

## GROWING ON

Ranunculus' growth and development is accelerated at temperatures below 60° F. At temperatures above 70° F, photosynthesis is disrupted, and the crop will stop actively growing.

High-quality ranunculus is best obtained with cool night temperatures and short-day conditions.

Low temperatures and high light levels will result in large flowers with an intense color. Bloom stems will increase in height as the days get longer in early spring. Flower initiation is inhibited as temperatures increase over 65° F.

Ranunculus benefits from a bulking up program prior to flower initiation. A moderate to heavy feeder, it is recommended to irrigate with a constant liquid feed of calcium, potassium and phosphorus based fertilizers at an EC rate of 1.0-1.5.

An average daily temperature of 60-65° F in combination with short days is optimum for vegetative growth. Extremely low temperatures will delay flowering and slow growth. The bulking phase continues until 12 true leaves are produced. Ranunculus responds extremely well to DIF.

## FLOWERING

Ranunculus flowers with the lengthening days of early spring. The critical day length to initiate



Top: Maché Mix. Right: 'Maché Yellow'. (Photos courtesy of Goldsmith Seeds)



flowering is 13 hours. It is important to keep the young plants under short-day conditions to avoid premature flowering and tuber formation. Sowing no later than October will ensure that plants will bulk up under naturally short days. Avoid placing young plants or seedlings in areas with extended day treatments.

For late winter sales in mild winter regions, ranunculus is traditionally sown in August/September for January/February sales. Be aware that flower stem length will be shorter for this time period. For traditional early spring sales, seeds

can be sown in September/October for finishing in March/April. 

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## Why Maché?

Ranunculus is one of my favorite crops. I'm always so surprised at how many consumers don't know what it is and have never even seen it. My sister used it in her wedding, and the guests were just in awe of the beautiful flowers. Maybe because in a consumer's eyes, it bears a resemblance to a rose, and you know how consumers just gush over roses.

Given that this is such a beautiful flower with so much consumer interest, it's hard to believe that more breeding work has not been done on this crop. In fact, did you know that 'Maché Yellow' is the only good, true solid color on the market? No matter, there are so many possibilities with ranunculus — cut flowers, potted crops, mixed containers, etc. — that the mixed colors actually work. Still, I can't wait for Goldsmith to come out with other single colors. — **Carrie Burns**

