Lobelia fulgens
Queen Victoria
Cardinal Flower

Culture guide

Uses:
Perennial for border and cottage garden, container plant, bedding, cut flower plants

Exposure:
Sun - Partial shade

Garden height:
30" / 75 cm

Crop time:
20-28 weeks

Sow time:
January-March for flowering in pots from July onwards, June-August for flowering in pots the following year, April-May for cut flower production outdoors

Sowing method:
1 seed per plug for short day conditions
3-5 seeds per plug for long day condition, because at long day the plants do not form a leaf rosette.

Germination:
Germinates in 14-20 days at 65-72 °F (18-22 °C). Light is required for germination.

Growing On:
Transplant plugs after 8-9 weeks. Grow on at 60-65 °F (15-18 °C). Vernalization is not required for flower initiation. After transplant, maintain temperatures of
60-65 °F (15-18 °C) for 7-8 weeks under long days.

Media:
Use a well-drained, growing substrate with 15-30 % clay, 1-1,5 kg/m³ complete balanced fertilizer, 0-3 kg/m³ slow release fertilizer (3-9 months), iron-chelate, micronutrients, pH: 6.0-7.0. Field: humus, sandy humus soils with a good drainage.
Standard fertilization: 60-80 g/m² of a slow release fertilizer.

Temperature:
Grow at 15-18 °C, later decrease the temperature to 10-15 °C, when the root development in pots is very good. Cultivation outdoors is possible, too.
In winter indoors frost free at 3-5 °C or outdoors. Outdoors fleece cover needed. L. fulgens are very sensitive to very strong frost temperatures. In spring the plants start to grow at 15-18 °C. Cold temperatures at 10-12 °C will increase the cultivation time. A chilling period (vernalization) for flower initiation is not required.

Fertilization:
Moderate-high fertilization levels are required. Fertilize the crop weekly with 150-200 ppm nitrogen (at 0 kg/m³ slow release fertilizer in substrate), using a complete balanced fertilizer. Avoid high ammonium and high nitrogen levels. Don't fertilize after mid September. In spring fertilize with 100-150 ppm nitrogen of a complete balanced fertilizer. Prevent magnesium deficiency by applying magnesium sulphate (0,05 %) 1-2 times and in case of iron deficiency apply iron-chelate for 1-2 times. Field: If necessary according to analysis, improve the soil with 60-80 g/m² of a slow release fertilizer per year, applied in several portions.