



classiccaladiumsllc.com

## CALADIUM CULTURE

Heart to Heart™

### NUTRITION

pH: 5.5-6.5

EC: (2:1 extraction method) 0.4-0.6

Caladiums enjoy their food. Feed regularly (once/week) with a balanced fertilizer blend of a 1:0.1:1 N:P:K ratio at 200 ppm nitrogen. Alternatively, CRF with 90-120 day release curve works well.

### TEMPERATURE

**Rooting and Sprouting:** 70-75°F **Growing on:** 70-85°F **Holding:** 65-70°F

### WATERING

Maintain moist soil levels at all times. Avoid dry soil, even as a method of holding plants or controlling growth. Dry conditions signal dormancy for caladiums. Ensure water temperatures are 60°F or warmer. Cold water can greatly delay or cause uneven plant development. Water pH above 6.5 can lead to leaf spotting and burning similar to overfeeding.

### TIMING

Size Tubers/ Per Pot	March – April Finish	May – June Finish
4"-5" 2 x #2 or 1 x #1	8-10 weeks	5-6 weeks
6"/1GL Royale™ 4 x #2 or 2 x #1 or 1 x Jumbo		
8" 4 X #1 or 2 x Jumbo		
10" – 12" basket 8 X #2 or 4 x #1 or 2 x jumbo		

### PLANTING

A soil mix with a high percentage of peat included is recommended. Plant tubers 1-2" below the soil line of the container. Water in thoroughly. The soil can be covered with clear plastic to aid in sprouting if desired to maintain high humidity levels of 90-100%. Maintain soil temperatures above 70°F. Soil temperatures of 80-85°F will speed sprouting, "spiking", of the tubers. Remove plastic if used as soon as shoots appear. Tubers should be planted with the "eyes" facing up (top of tuber). The top "eye side" of the tuber is covered with dried wiry roots and skin. The underside, bottom, of the tubers are smoother in appearance. To facilitate determining tuber top from bottom and enhance pot habit, Classic Caladiums offers [de-eyeing](#) and [painting](#) the tops of the tuber services.

### LIGHT/LIGHTING

Moderate light levels are fine for all varieties: 2,500-4,500 foot-candles. Light is not necessary during the forcing/sprouting period, which is generally 2-3 weeks. As soon as Caladiums show spikes of 1-2 inches they should be spaced appropriately on benches. All caladium varieties are happy in shaded landscapes but please note, many Classic Caladium varieties are tolerant of full sun conditions (see variety descriptions)

## GROWTH REGULATORS

If proper growing practices are applied, plant growth regulators are not required. Even so as a practical matter, they generally benefit from PGR's. Caladiums are responsive to PGR's but are variety specific in their response therefore trials should be done at individual growing sites before widespread use is practiced. Recommendations for paclobutrazol (Piccolo®, Bonzi® or Paczol®) or flurprimidol (Topflor®) as soaks or drenches are available. A mixture of B-9 (2,500 ppm) and Bonzi (15 ppm) applied as a spray (early in the crop cycle) or drench (beginning 2-3 weeks prior to finish) really works well to manage height and tone pots in preparation for the process of shipping and maximizes shelf life at retail. Growing under proper light conditions, with adequate spacing and recommended temperatures, will produce the highest quality plants and reduce the need for PGR's.

## PEST and DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Caladiums generally experience low pest and pathogen issues. A Subdue® drench after caladiums sprout is a good preventative for Pythium root rot and is recommended. Occasionally aphids and spider mites can be problems. A good broad-spectrum insecticide/miticide such as Avid® can be used to manage these. Fungus Gnats and Shore flies can be an issue due to the moist warm growing conditions. There are a number of pesticides that can be used to control these.

## OUTDOOR GROWING SCHEDULE

Caladiums, being tropical perennials, are sensitive to cool conditions. They should not be planted outdoors until soil temperatures are consistently above 65°F. Landscape and patio plantings can usually begin in Florida the end of March. The soil is usually warm enough in June to plant in northern states such as Michigan, Illinois and Ohio.

## OTHER TIPS

- Inspect tubers upon delivery. They should be firm not spongy. Sponginess usually indicates cold damage which will result in irregular performance and in some cases death.
- Grow at recommended temperatures. Remember caladiums are tropical perennials, and therefore require consistently warm conditions to perform properly.
- Maintain moist but not soggy potting medium or soil conditions. Drying/wilting can severely damage the plant and may induce dormancy.
- Later planted crops will finish much faster than earlier planted crops.