

Variety Info

- Champion series is bred for 6" production.
- Royal series is bred for 6" or 4½" production.
- Little Champ is bred for quick production time for 3 to 4½" pots.
- No pinching is necessary because Exacum is a self-branching plant.

Handling Upon Receipt

- Unpack at once and place in greenhouse. If coming off of refrigerated truck, allow plugs to come up to air temperature in a service area before moving to greenhouse.
- Check plugs for dryness and water as needed.
- Plant immediately or within 2 days. Plant growth can be stunted with premature flowering if plugs are left too long in the plug tray.

Planting

- Handle plants carefully during planting to avoid injury to leaves and stems, which can increase the incidence of Stem Canker Botrytis.
- Plant just deep enough to cover the root ball.
- Plants can also be planted ½" to 1" deeper to prevent stem wobble that can occur during warmer, summer production. *If planting deep, it's critical to drench a day or two after transplant with a preventative fungicide. Stem Canker Botrytis can be aggravated by deep planting.*

Root Medium

- Most well drained, commercial soilless root media should be satisfactory.
- Soilless root media pH should be 5.8 to 6.2.

Irrigation

- Water quality (e.g., alkalinity, nutrient content, etc.) should be known to evaluate the potential effects on pH and plant nutrient availability.

- Overwatering and high nutrient levels, besides promoting disease, can cause leaf cupping and delayed flowering. To accelerate winter flowering of Exacum, lower fertilizer levels and make sure plants dry between irrigation.
 - Starting around October, allow the root medium to dry out between irrigations. If the root medium remains constantly moist during winter months, a root medium with more aeration is needed
- Irrigate early in the morning, so foliage is dry by late afternoon.
- Avoid forceful overhead irrigation that may injure leaves and stem and increase the incidence of Stem Canker Botrytis.
- Regulating the amount of water received also controls height quite well. If small plants are desired, they should be allowed to dry more between irrigations. Slightly wilted plants will recover nicely after irrigation, but severely wilted plants will likely exhibit leaf scorch.

Fertilization

- Exacum requires moderate levels of nutrients, much less fertilizer and soil moisture than Pot Mums, Lilies or Poinsettias.
- Exacum also respond poorly if fed with high levels of fertilizer, especially ammonia-nitrogen.
- For January through April flowerings, use constant fertilization with 250 ppm nitrogen. Use 20-10-20 alternated with a high calcium fertilizer such as 15-0-15 or 17-5-17. Excess nitrogen fertilization in this time period results in more foliage with fewer flowers. Additionally, plants with softer growth are more susceptible to Stem Canker Botrytis.
- For May through September flowerings, plants are growing much faster and need extra nutrients. Increase the constant fertilization rate to 350 ppm nitrogen or continue to use 250 ppm nitrogen along with controlled-released fertilizers such as 14-14-14 or

19-6-12 (3-4 month release) added to the media at the rate of 5 to 6 pounds per cubic yard (½ tsp per 6" pot) to provide extra nutrients.

Light

- Plants should be grown under full sunlight in fall, winter and spring in most regions.
- In summer, 30% to 50% shade should be applied to provide 3000 to 5000 footcandles to help keep day temperature below 90°F to prevent flower burn and color fade.
- Flower bud initiation is not affected by daylength, but more uniform and earlier flowering occurs under long-day conditions. Therefore, photoperiodic lighting is beneficial for January through April flowerings
 - Extending the daylength with 10 to 15 footcandles light for 4 to 6 hours beginning at dusk can decrease production time by 2 weeks.
 - HID supplemental light can also be used and will enhance plant quality.
 - Note: night-break lighting is not as effective as extended-day lighting.

Temperature

- Exacum grow best with 60 to 65°F night temperature and 75 to 80°F day temperature.
- The shorter days and cooler temperatures, which occur in winter and early spring or late fall, increase production time and result in larger plants than in the summer.
- In the warm, long days of summer Exacum initiates flowers quickly and may not size up as well as in winter. In case of premature budding of small Exacum, larger plants can be produced by removing the earliest flowers and increasing fertilizer.

It is important to fertilize plants regularly and avoid moisture stress or small, early flowering plants will develop.

Spacing

- 4": 8" x 8" to 9" x 9"
- 6": 12" x 12"

Height Control

- If growth regulators are needed for height control, B-Nine can be used at 2500 ppm early in the production cycle. One application two to four weeks after potting will tone plants.
- Regulating the amount of water received also controls height quite well. If small plants are desired, they should be allowed to dry more between irrigations.
- A second application may be needed under low-light conditions. Be aware that more than two B-Nine applications can significantly delay flowering. *Avoid B-Nine sprays later than 4 weeks after planting.*
- Since late B-Nine applications can delay flowering, a 30 ppm Bonzi spray (or 1 to 2 ppm Bonzi drench) can be used late in the crop to control height if needed.

Pests

- Exacum can be attacked by thrips especially when starting to flower. It's important to control thrips since Exacum is extremely susceptible to Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus, which is transmitted by thrips.
- Broad mite can cause leaf distortion and flower abortion.
- Do not use Pylon on Exacum since growing tips can be burned.

Disease

- The main disease on Exacum is Stem Canker Botrytis. This disease can happen anytime of year, but it is more prevalent during winter and spring production. Symptoms appear as a gray lesion at the soil line or small gray lesions at the branches. In either case, that area of the plant becomes soft and dies.
- Use a preventative drench after planting.
- Apply a second drench 4 weeks later.
- Botrytis is aggravated by excess fertilization, too much water, or water left on the plant and leaves in late evening and overnight.

Before using any pesticides be sure they are registered for use. Follow label directions. The label is the law.

Crop Planning

Champion and Royal Series · (Little Champ will flower one week faster)
Weeks to finish under average conditions · Northern regions add 1 week in Winter
South Florida subtract 1 week Year Round

Plug Size	Plugs per pot	Spring 3/1 to 5/20	Summer 5/21 to 9/15	Fall 9/16 to 11/30	Winter 12/1 to 2/28
36S	1 per 4½" or 6"	12-13	10	11-12	14
128	1 per 4½" or 6"	13-14	11	12-13	15
288	1 per 4½" or 6"	14-15	12	13-14	16

Marketing Finished Plants

- Market plants when 1 to 2 flowers are open per stem.
- Exacum should be placed next to a window or some artificial light source to provide at least 50 to 100 footcandles for long-lasting quality. Low-light conditions will cause flowers to fade.
- Ship/store plants at 50 to 60°F since temperatures less than 50°F will cause black spots on the foliage.
- Exacum may also be placed outside on a patio or in a semi-shaded area. Flowers continue to develop for 3 to 4 weeks or more.



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