

Songbird & Swan Aquilegia Forcing Program

Recommended Varieties

Songbird Blue Bird	Swan Burgundy & White
Songbird Bunting	Swan Lavender
Songbird Dove	Swan Rose & White
Songbird Nightingale	Swan Violet & White
Songbird Robin	Swan Yellow

Germination & Plug Stage

Step 1

- Sow seeds into a 392-tray
- Cover seeds with vermiculite
- Germinate in 392-tray at 70 to 75°F (21 to 24°C)
- Seed germinates in 10 to 14 days
- Grow on at 65 to 68°F (18 to 20°C)
- Fertilize weekly with 100 ppm N in a complete fertilizer
- Long days (14 hrs.) will shorten the crop time
- Total time in the 392-tray is 6 to 8 weeks

Step 2

- Transplant 392-plugs into a 50-tray or other large liner tray
- Grow on at 65 to 68°F (18 to 20°C)
- Long days (14 hrs.) are required
- Fertilize weekly with 200 ppm N in a complete fertilizer
- Maintain pH at 5.8 to 6.4 with EC levels of 1.0 to 2.0
- Plants need 12 to 15 leaves in order to initiate flower buds
- Total time in the 50-tray is 8 to 10 weeks; do not let plants become rootbound

Natural Forcing (for mid-March through mid-May flowering)

- Sow mid-September to late October into a 392-tray
- 8 to 10 weeks after transplanting into 50-trays, transplant into final containers (5.5 to 6.5-in./14 to 16-cm pots)

- Reduce day temperatures to 55 to 60°F (13 to 15°C) and night temperatures to 50°F (10°C)
- Plants will begin to flower 10 to 12 weeks after transplanting into final containers
- Total crop time from sowing is approximately 24 to 28 weeks

Controlled Temperature Forcing Option (recommended for July through November flowering)

- Sow February to May into a 392-tray
 - 8 weeks after transplanting into 50-trays, place the 50-tray plugs in a lighted cooler (14-hr. days) for 4 weeks at 41°F (5°C) to induce flower initiation. Water as needed.
 - After 4 weeks, remove the 50-tray plugs from the cooler and transplant into final container (5.5 to 6.5-in./14 to 16-cm pots)
 - Plants will begin to flower 4 to 6 weeks after transplanting into final containers
 - For flowering after October 1, plants should receive long days from incandescent lights using extended days (14 hrs.) or night interruption (10 p.m. to 2 a.m.). Continue lighting until flowering begins.
 - Total crop time from sowing is approximately 22 to 26 weeks.
- Note:** The crop time for the 50-tray is shorter when sowing at this time of year.

Fertilizers

- Fertilize weekly with 200 to 250 ppm N in a complete fertilizer
- Avoid ammonium-based N
- Maintain pH at 5.8 to 6.4 with EC levels of 1.0 to 2.0

Growth Regulators

In trials in northern Illinois, a B-Nine spray at 2,500 to 3,000 ppm one time in the 392-tray and one time in the 50-tray has been shown to be effective in controlling leaf petiole stretch in the plug stage. If necessary, an additional spray of B-Nine at 5,000 ppm can be used in the final container.

PanAmerican Seed