

# Grasses

## Warm Annual



### ZONE HARDINESS

**9 – 11:** Graceful Grasses® Baby Tut®, King Tut® and Prince Tut™ *Cyperus*; 'Fireworks,' Purple Fountain Grass, Red Riding Hood, 'Sky Rocket' and Vertigo® *Pennisetum*

### NUTRITION

**pH:** 5.8 – 6.5

**EC:** (2:1 extraction method) 0.9 – 1.5

Moderate fertilization is recommended. 100ppm – 200 ppm N

### TEMPERATURE

**Forcing/Growing on:** 65 Night – 75 F Day (*Pennisetum* likes it warm, so closer to 72 – 75 F Day/Night)

**Holding:** 60 Night – 65 F Day (Baby Tut can take 50 – 55 degrees)

### WATERING

Water in the planted containers at time of transplant, then grow on the evenly moist side to encourage root development and discourage root rot, but do not allow plants to wilt. Keep the soil evenly moist. Dry down will cause the tips to burn on all these varieties. When this happens, the only cure is a trim, which can dramatically increase the overall crop time.

### TIMING

**Pennisetum Supernova® 28 Liner to Trade Gallon/True Gallon/Combination:** 7 – 8 weeks with one plug per container. A typical planting date for spring forcing would be Week 8 for finishing in Weeks 18 – 20. Summer growing can be planned with a six-week grow time. Supernova 28s are strongly recommended for combination planting if planting in a separate small pot prior is not an option.

**Pennisetum 50 Liner to Trade Gallon or Gallon:** For spring growing, allow 8 – 10 weeks with one plug per container. A typical planting date for spring forcing would be Week 8 for finishing in Week 18. In the summer, eight weeks will be sufficient.

**Pennisetum 50 Liner to Quart:** For spring growing, allow 7 – 9 weeks with one plug per container. A typical planting date for spring forcing would be Week 11 for finishing in Week 20. In the summer, seven weeks will be sufficient.

**Cyperus 84 Liner to Trade Gallon/Gallon:** 6 – 7 weeks

**Cyperus 84 Liner to Quart:** 5 – 6 weeks

**Cyperus 84 Liner to Combinations:** 6 – 7 weeks; 6 weeks on 11" or smaller; 7 weeks on 12" or larger.

One week of crop time can be removed from production in the summer.

### PLANTING

Liners should always be planted even to the soil line of the plug. This grouping of grasses should NEVER appear to be dormant or even semi-dormant at the time of arrival. If you think they have a dormant look to them, contact your broker immediately with photos. This could be an indication of cold damage. Liners should be planted immediately upon receipt. If holding of the liners is absolutely needed, no lower than 60 degrees should be used.

### LIGHT/LIGHTING

During growing, plants should be given as much light as possible. Plants should be spaced so they do not shade each other. It is normal for *Pennisetum* to have a lighter color in the darker growing months, as opposed to a darker coloration that is observed in late spring and summer.

### TRIMMING/PINCHING

Trimming should be avoided on grasses except upon receiving and transplanting. Once trimmed, they will always have the old trimmed leaves in place and this will adversely affect the look on the retail bench. Grow these in the proper environment and trimming should not be needed. If trimming is necessary, they can be cut halfway back in the spring for refushing for summer or fall sales. This will increase the expected finish time quite a bit. Moving these plants to the recommended cooler holding area with good air movement is important in finishing and holding a quality crop.





## GROWTH REGULATORS

Use the proper growing environments to ensure proper growth. Baby Tut is very responsive to Sumagic® (uniconazole) or Bonzi® (paclobutrazol), and care should be taken to keep this grass away from areas where overspray or contaminated water is present. For King Tut, a 10ppm Sumagic spray two to three weeks after transplant, followed by another application 10 – 14 days later or a 1ppm – 2ppm Bonzi drench is ideal. Without this treatment, great retail appeal can be tough to achieve, as greenhouse-grown plants/plumes tend to bend and break easily in the shipping and receiving process. Using Sumagic and Bonzi help strengthen the stem and really help prolong the shelf life of this popular ornamental grass. To control growth on *Pennisetum*, use a 5ppm – 10ppm Sumagic spray. Prince Tut is a compact variety and does not require PGRs.

## PEST and DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Bird Cherry Oat Aphids can be a problem on ornamental grasses. Scout also for Spider Mites, Spittlebugs, Thrips, and Whiteflies. Watch for Crown and Stem Rots, as well as Leaf Spots and Rust. We recommend implementing a good IPM program, as well as early releases of Biological Control to help control insect and disease problems.

Weeding may be needed on occasion.

## OUTDOOR GROWING SCHEDULE

Warm grasses should be grown outdoors only after the danger of frost has past (mid- to late May in Michigan). The foliage can be damaged from a very light frost. This recommendation is based on average spring weather and should be adjusted for unseasonably severe or unseasonably mild conditions.

## OTHER TIPS

If a larger size is desired, follow the same culture as above but plant using three plants per pot of Supernova 28s, or Standard 50s or 84s and 104s, or plant up crops using the previous season's 1 gallon containers.

When using ornamental grasses in upright combinations, it may be beneficial to plant liners in quarts and plant these into the combo at a later date so the finished date of the combination is better matched with the finish time of the grass. When done in this way, King Tut can be drenched with PGRs, while slower growing grasses such as Red Riding Hood or 'Fireworks' can be allowed to grow bigger.

## GRACEFUL GRASSES® 'Fireworks' comparison at 9 weeks old



Grown from a 50 Liner

Grown from a Supernova 28 Liner