

Lobelia erinus

Plant type:	Annual
Uses:	Outdoor baskets and containers and as garden plant
Plant height:	15 - 25cm
Sowing:	Sow December – March with February sowings being the best for early Summer sales. 19 – 22°C. Do not cover with Vermiculite. Germination 1– 2 weeks. Keep moist.

Approximate crop timing (mid-season)

Sowing to transplanting	3 – 5 weeks
Sowing to flowering	12 – 14 weeks
Seedlings to flowering	9 – 10 weeks
Ball 470 to flowering	6 – 7 weeks
Ball 350 to flowering	5 – 6 weeks
Ball 142 to flowering	3 - 4 weeks (ideal to ‘bump up’ pot sales when demand is strong mid-season)

Growing on:

Temperature	For initial establishment 19 – 22°C. Then temperatures can be lowered to 15 – 19°C. Low temperatures and high light will produce good quality harder and more compact plants.
pH	5.5 - 6.5
Feeding	Plants are light to moderate feeders. A balanced fertiliser with approx. 100ppm nitrogen when watering would be sufficient. Too high nitrogen levels will delay flowering and cause soft growth.
Growth regulation	Plants grown cool should not need chemical growth regulation. Low light levels and warm temperatures can cause stretched plants. Responsive to Daminozide.
Advice	If broadcast sowing, sow thinly and transplant 5 – 6 seedlings together as soon as they are large enough to handle. For machine plug sowing use of pelleted seed would be recommended. Usually 10 – 15 seeds are sown per cell.
Common diseases	Plants are susceptible to damping off, often caused by Alternaria. Using treated seed will reduce the risk of diseases. Our Improved Quality Seed are tested for Alternaria and a non-fungicidal treatment given to remove or greatly reduce any Alternaria present. Our plugs are grown using this IQS seed. Crowded seedlings especially grown under high humidity and low light levels are susceptible to various water mould diseases (Pythium, Rhizoctonia) and Botrytis. Increased air circulation and reduced overhead watering and an appropriate protective fungicide programme can limit problems.
Common pests	Leaf Miners, Whitefly, Aphids. Thrips can also attack Lobelia and plants can become infected with Tomato Spot Wilt Virus carried by Thrips.

Ball Colegrave cultural information is issued as a guide to growers, based on our own trials experience. It is not intended as a blueprint for growing. Any chemicals referred to should be used only in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.