

Pieris  
japonica



## Crop Cultivation Sheet

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**ICL** Specialty  
Fertilizers



# Pieris japonica

## General information for cultivation:

Pieris japonica is a visually attractive crop, mainly cultivated for retail actions, garden centers, DIY stores, etc. The main sales period is the autumn, because of the flowers and visually attractive leaf colors the plant develops in lower temperatures. Spring is becoming an increasingly popular time for sales, mainly around Easter and Mother's Day. Total cultivation time from cuttings to sellable plants is 1.5 – 2 years.

STAGE 1: Cuttings and young plants	STAGE 2: Vegetation	STAGE 3: Finishing
<p>Cuttings should be made in June. January – March is also possible if you are looking to sell in spring the next year. The top and second layer cuttings must be separated during culture for uniformity.</p>	<p>Use P10.5 for application in mix boxes for retail actions during the autumn. C2 (and larger) is preferred for sales in garden centers. Cut any early flowers after potting.</p>	<p>Select strong plants for growth in larger pots. It is important to prune the plants early in the season to promote branching.</p>

## Cultivation cards:

### Growing medium and water

- Like other Ericaceae, Pieris requires low pH for best development (soil pH: 4.2 – 4.5).
- Ensure constant moisture in the growing media (no excesses).
- Ericaceae have sensitive roots, so a substrate with easy rewetting and dewatering properties is important for good root development.
- Use high quality water and ensure low bicarbonate levels ( $\text{HCO}_3^-$ ). Rainwater is the preferred choice.

### Starting phase

- After potting, the goal is to support root development. Control the EC levels in the pots (maximum 0.5 mS during this stage).
- For winter pottings we recommend to use Osmocote Exact only. Don't use water soluble compound starter fertilizers.
- Don't use auxin powders during the cutting phase, because you risk damaging the callus tip.

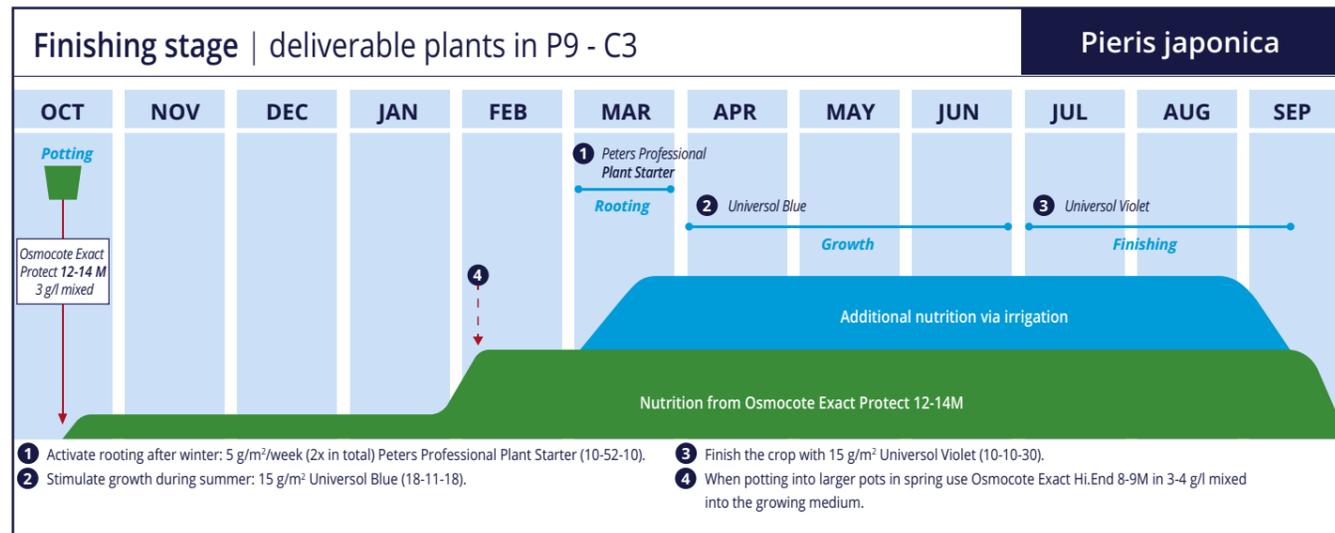
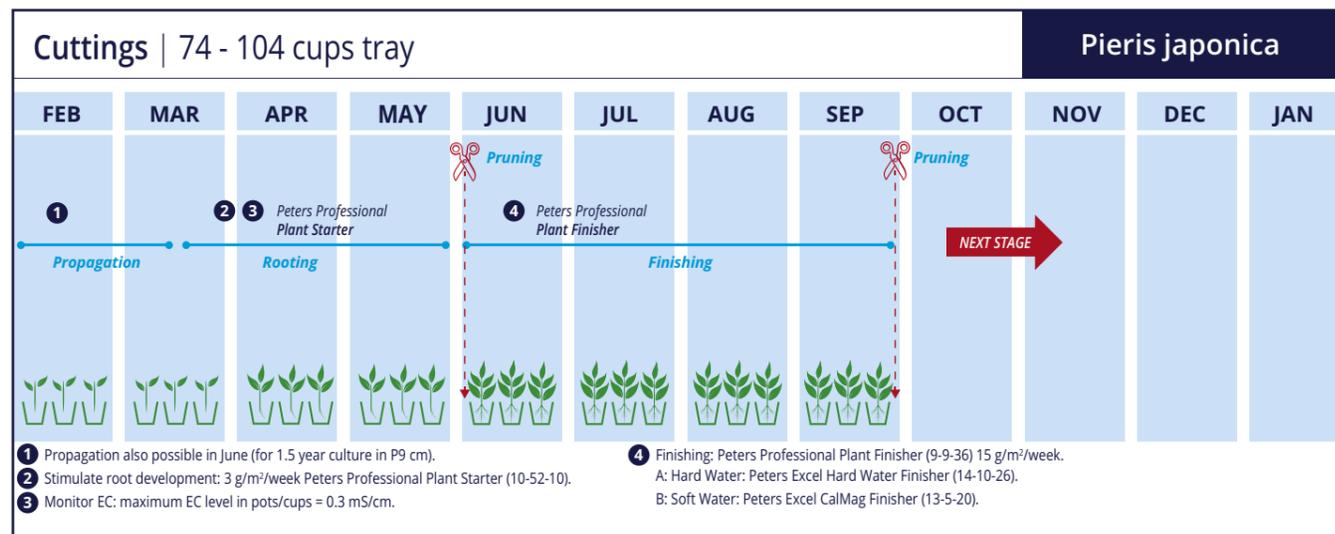
### Growing phase

- The aim is compact growth. Plant design must be made during the cutting / young plant stage.
- It is important to prune in time and to focus on root development. During the growth phase we recommend a nutrition schedule with an N:K ratio of 1:1.
- Please note: when pruning it is a 'must' to keep the EC level low (maximum 0.3 mS), to reduce the risk of plant stress.
- Avoid stress caused by excesses in temperature and humidity.

### Finishing phase

- Compactness of plants is important for your customers, mainly in retail.
- High quality Pieris is usually grown in greenhouses. For good quality plants it is important to:
  - use natural irradiation during winter, but keep plants in the shade during summertime.
  - always make sure there is air-movement and an active greenhouse climate. This results in strong plants and attractive coloring in autumn.

# Recommendations for Cultivation



For a tailored advice for your situation, please contact your ICL Specialty Fertilizers advisor. As circumstances can differ and as application of products is beyond our control, ICL Specialty Fertilizers cannot be held responsible for any negative results. Before a new rate, product or application method is used, a small-scale trial is recommended.

# Cultivation notes from our specialists



## Tips & Tricks

Pieris japonica

- Pieris is a slow-growing crop. Roots develop very slowly and the challenge is always that the crop's branches and leaves form quicker than the roots.
- Humidity and evaporation always pose a risk, mainly during April and May. Try to avoid peaks in greenhouse humidity: irrigate in the mornings and control the relative humidity during the spring.
- Ensure balanced irradiation inside the greenhouse during the culture:
  - October – March: clean the cover of your greenhouse to benefit from the sunlight during wintertime.
  - April – September: cover the greenhouse with Redusol to keep the heat out and to diffuse irradiation and avoid leaf burn.



## Crop Protection

Pieris japonica

*Pieris is very sensitive to several pathogens and diseases:*

### Sciara

Can occur during the cutting period. The quicker roots are developed, the less problems. Make sure you cut at the right time and take increasing daylength into account.

### Aphids

Can occur everytime young shoots develop.

### Root rot and stem-base rot (Colletotrichum, Phytophthora):

Take preventive actions during the entire culture (apply chemical protection products, but also avoid wet circumstances).

### Leaf spots (Phoma, Colletotrichum):

Good nutrition and indoor cultures can protect the crop.



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