



Primula

Primula obconica

Weeks of dense, jewel-toned colour on a neat little plant. The coolest room in the house is the one that makes it last longest.

Longevity

Deadhead often and it flowers for weeks longer

INDIRECT LIGHT

COOL ROOM

LONG LASTING

DAY TO DAY

Light	Bright but indirect — a north or east window, or set back from a sunny one. Direct midday sun scorches the soft leaves.
Water	Water thoroughly whenever the surface feels dry, then let it drain. It wilts dramatically and fast if it dries out, and repeated wilting ends the flowering. Do not leave it standing in a full saucer.
Food	Not really necessary for the few weeks it flowers. If you want to, a balanced houseplant food at half strength twice a month.
Temperature	13–21°C / 55–70°F, and individual flowers last noticeably longer at the cool end. A warm living room burns through the whole display in a week or two.
Humidity	Moderate. Avoid dry hot air near radiators and vents. Do not mist the flowers — wet petals go brown and mouldy.

WHEN THE FLOWERS FINISH

Primula is a seasonal plant, at its best for the weeks it is in flower, so enjoy it fully rather than nursing it along — it will not flower again indoors. Keeping it in the coolest room you have and pinching off spent blooms is what stretches the display furthest. It is not winter-hardy in Canada, so it cannot move out to the garden afterwards.

IF SOMETHING LOOKS WRONG

Sudden total wilt	The pot dried out. A thorough soak usually revives it once, but repeated wilting shortens the display.
Grey fuzz on dying flowers	Botrytis from wet petals, crowded foliage and still air. Pick off spent blooms promptly.

GROWER REFERENCE

Production and finishing figures. If you are keeping this plant on a windowsill, everything you need is on page one — this page is for the trade.

Media pH	5.5–5.8 (Syngenta <i>P. obconica</i> culture). Acaulis/vulgaris types run higher, 5.8–6.2 in plugs.
Media EC	0.5–0.75 mS/cm at plug, ~1.0 growing on. Extraction method not stated in the source — confirm against your own baseline.
Substrate	Fine, well-drained, disease-free peat-based substrate for a shallow-rooted crop. Optional light vermiculite cover at sowing.
Fertilizer	Plug 50 ppm N from a calcium-based 14-4-14. Growing on 100–150 ppm N, same formulation, constant liquid feed. Avoid high ammoniacal N and salt spikes on this shallow root system.
Light	Germination 10–100 f.c. improves evenness. Plug bulking max 3,000 f.c. / 30,000 lux. Flowering: 16-hour long days at ~875 f.c. are most efficient; 8-hour short days strongly delay or prevent flowering. DLI target not established.
Temperature	Germination 22–24°C / 72–75°F, then 18–20°C / 65–68°F. Growing on: night 16–18°C / 60–65°F after transplant, lowered to 10–13°C / 50–55°F once rooted; day 16–21°C / 60–70°F.
Relative humidity	100% to radicle emergence, then 40–70%. Horizontal air movement essential once foliage closes over the pot.
Irrigation	Saturated days 0–5, moist days 6–18, medium from day 19; then alternate wet and moist. Keep foliage and crowns dry — sub-irrigation, capillary mat or drip beats overhead, because Botrytis is the main finishing loss.

DISORDERS & PESTS

Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (thrips-vectored). Pythium root rot in cold wet media. Botrytis on crowded foliage and spent flowers. Whitefly, leafminer, aphids, thrips, fungus gnats. Worker health: primin causes allergic contact dermatitis — gloves or primin-free cultivars. Crop time 16–20 weeks total.

GROWN BY

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P. obconica was the single most common cause of plant dermatitis in Britain until the 1960s, thanks to primin in its leaf hairs — which is why breeders spent decades chasing primin-free strains, releasing the first in 1995.

Sources

- Syngenta Flowers, Primula obconica culture sheet
- DermNet NZ — Primula dermatitis