

I'Conia® Begonia Propagation Guide

Creating a “Goldilocks” Environment — Everything Just Right

Successful propagation of I'conia begonias comes down to maintaining a **low-stress environment** from start to finish. Think of it as creating “Goldilocks” conditions — not too much, not too little, but *just right* in every aspect.

1. Know Your Type

Stick all begonias with leaves facing the same direction, this allows the growing point to remain uncovered for light penetration. However, not all begonias propagate the same way, these follow very different propagation timelines.

- **Hybrid (I'conia)** — identifiable by their **wing-shaped leaves**, Stick **priority 1**, they will not store well
- **Elatior/Reiger** — identifiable by **rounded or C-shaped leaves**, Stick **priority 2 or 3**, they can store in a cooler

For I'conia (Hybrid) Begonias:

- Aim to be **off mist by day 7–10**.
- Even if only a healthy callus has formed, removing them from mist will encourage **root initiation**.
Extended misting keeps them “comfortable,” often leading to prolonged callusing rather than root growth.

For Elatior Begonias:

- Can remain **on mist up to day 20–21**.

2. Managing the Microclimate

Maintain **high humidity** around the cuttings while avoiding overly wet media. The method depends on your greenhouse setup and management style.

- **Best: Dry fog or fog systems** – maintain high humidity without saturating the leaves or media.



- **Better: Remay cover** – keep it close to the crop canopy and mist over the top; uncover at **day 7–10**.



- **Good: Standard mist system** – align with your “fast crop” (e.g., geranium) mist settings.
Pull completely **off mist by day 7–10** (some expert begonia growers pull by day 4–5).

3. Moisture Management

- Start with media at a **level 4.5–5** on day one (thoroughly watered in).
- After day one, **avoid saturation**. Keep moisture fluctuating between **2.5 and 4** throughout propagation.

4. Temperature

- Begonias thrive on warmth. If you want great I'conia, **don't cheat the heat**.
 - Maintain consistent **root-zone and air temperatures of 70–75°F (21–24°C)** throughout propagation.
 - Consider mist water temperature, tempered mist is best. Cold mist is stressful for the cuttings.
-

5. Light Quality and Duration

- **Photoperiod:** Provide **long days** (minimum **16 hours**) through day extension lighting. Boom lighting is not effective.
- **Light Quality:** Ensure strong **light penetration** to the growing point to prevent **stretching** and **non-branching (blind)** plants.

6. Pinching and Branching

We don't recommend pinching and it is **not required**, but if performed:

- Pinch only between the **3rd and 5th node**.
 - Below the 3rd or above the 5th node increases risk of blind plants.

Branching chemicals (optional):

- **Configure:** 100–150 ppm once roots are established.
 - **Florel:** 150–200 ppm once rooted.
- Use caution — l'conia are sensitive to ethylene, which can cause leaf drop.*

7. Transplant Timing

- **Transplant on time.** Root-bound liners are more likely to produce **blind** plants.
- **Avoid crowding trays.** Crowded propagation trays lead to **stretching** and poor light penetration to the meristem, resulting in weak or blind plants.
(See example: trays of the same age — the left, fully stuck tray shows stretch compared to the spaced tray on the right.)



8. Disease Management

Implement a **preventive fungicide rotation**.

- Apply a product such as **Mural** or **Postiva** within **1–2 days after sticking** to prevent early disease issues.

9. Insect Management

While our farms maintain rigorous scouting programs, it's still possible for an occasional pest to slip through, making a preventive control program during propagation essential.

- A **preventive insecticide spray** or **biological control program** is recommended.
- Always include protection against **broad mites** — once visible damage occurs, it's often too late to correct.

Final Thought

Success with l'conia begonias comes from **balance and timing**. Give the crop just what it needs—no more, no less—and it will reward the grower with a well branched beautiful finished product.