

Belgian growers raise tuberous begonias for carpet displays by tending the plants through the growing season and harvesting their flowers near the time they are needed. The blooms are then arranged close together to form patterns, using their strong colors and broad petals.

Starting with tubers

Many begonias used for flower carpets are tuberous begonias. They grow from fleshy underground tubers that store energy for new shoots. Growers can start the tubers in a protected place, where emerging growth is sheltered from cold.

As the shoots develop, they need light and careful watering. The growing medium should not stay waterlogged, since excess moisture can cause tubers to rot. Young plants are handled gently because their stems can break.

Begonias are sensitive to frost, so planting outdoors must wait until frost is no longer a risk. Timing depends on local weather as well as the needs of the display. Plants need enough time to establish themselves and produce flowers before harvest.

Growing flowers through summer

Belgium has a long tradition of growing begonias, particularly in East Flanders. For a carpet, growers need many blooms in suitable colors, so healthy, consistent flowering matters as much as the beauty of an individual flower.

Plants need regular attention as they grow. Growers watch the soil moisture, keep competing weeds under control, and check for damaged or diseased growth. Good spacing gives plants room to develop and makes it easier to reach the flowers at harvest.

Several practical concerns shape the work:

- Choosing begonia varieties with the colors needed for the design.
- Protecting tender plants from frost and excessive wetness.
- Watching flowering times as the display date approaches.
- Handling harvested blooms carefully to limit bruising.

Weather can affect both growth and flowering, so a grower cannot make every plant bloom on an exact day. Planning and careful observation help make the best use of the flowers that are ready.

From field to flower carpet

Flowers for a carpet are picked close to the time of assembly so they look fresh for the display. They are gathered and moved with care, then sorted by color for the people laying out the design.

A flower carpet is made by placing blooms close together on the ground according to a planned pattern. Unlike flowers in a vase, the blooms in the finished carpet do not have stems standing in water. The display is temporary, and its appearance changes as the flowers age and respond to the weather.

Begonias suit this kind of work because their colorful flowers create a dense surface. A design may also use other natural materials for contrasting areas and details.

Questions about begonia carpets

Are the begonias still growing in the carpet?

No. The flowers have been harvested from the plants and arranged on the ground. They remain there only for the life of the display.

Can the flowers be prepared far in advance?

Fresh blooms are best picked close to assembly. Cutting them too early gives them more time to wilt before visitors see the finished pattern.

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