

# Celosia argentea plumosa

## Dragon's Breath



**SAKATA**<sup>®</sup>

Dragon's Breath puts the fire into Celosia! This unique plant stands out not only for its dramatic red foliage and plumes, but also for the many versatile ways it can be used. Due to its daylength responsiveness, Celosia Dragon's Breath is suitable as Spring colour, hot Summer item or Autumn extender. Or how about indoors to warm up the Winter or fire up the festive season!



 Annual	 Bedding Plant
 Patio, bedding + landscaping	 Half shade + full sun
 Upright	 1,300/gram
 60-80cm	 Normal
 30-40cm	 Pack, pot 15-21cm

## Culture Guide

### Plug Culture

#### Stage 1

(days 1-10)

Sow seeds in a well-drained soil mix and cover lightly with medium vermiculite or media. Provide a soil temperature of 25°C. Germination takes place in 7 to 10 days. Since the root system is very delicate, so sowing directly into plug cells is recommended rather than sowing into open flats.

#### Stage 2

(days 11-20)

After seedlings emerge, place flats in a well-ventilated area and reduce the temperature to 20-22°C during the day and 18-20°C at night. Fertilize plugs lightly with 50-100 ppm N. Over watering will promote disease; especially damping off and botrytis.

#### Stage 3

(days 21-28)

Maintain good air circulation and keep media EC levels around 1.0 to 1.4 (2:1 slurry). Celosia is sensitive to day length and any type of stress; like cold water, low temperature or root banding. Avoid stressing the plugs or else they can bud prematurely and cause stunted growth later in production. Celosia will bloom more quickly under short day conditions, so provide long days (>14 hours) if sowing under increasing short day conditions (sowing mid-June to mid-March (Northern Hemisphere)).

#### Stage 4

(day 29-35)

Plugs are ready for transplanting and be careful not to damage the delicate root system. It is best to handle Celosia by the leaves to prevent damaging the soft delicate stem. Also avoid deep transplanting to prevent Rhizoctonia. Do not delay transplanting. Holding the plugs too long in the plug tray will stunt future development of the plant and might cause premature budding.

## Transplanting

<b>Media</b>	Select a well-drained media with little or no starter charge. Ideal pH is 5.5 to 6.0.
<b>Temperature</b>	Maintain the plants at a temperature of 18-25°C
<b>Lighting</b>	High light, full sun is best
<b>Growth regulator</b>	Normally not needed but depending on pot size and required plant height, Celosia reacts very well on B-Nine ( Daminozide) Do not pinch.
<b>Fertilization</b>	To promote bright red foliage avoid applying excess Nitrogen, which promotes green leaves; especially when planted in the landscape. Apply 100 ppm N biweekly targeting the EC at 0.7 - 0.8 (2:1 slurry). It is important to supply sufficient amounts of Potassium in the fertilizer as a lack of Potassium causes weaker stems and abnormal shaped flowers. Therefore, a high potassium formulation, such as 15-10-30 (pot mum special), works well and is highly recommended.
<b>Photoperiod</b>	Celosia Dragon's Breath is an obligate short day plant and is best sown in early April (Northern Hemisphere) under increasing day length to promote sufficient vegetative growth prior to flowering. If sown in mid-June the plants will sense increasing short days and begin to flower in mid-August on shorter plants. Therefore, if sowing under short days one should provide long day conditions (>14 hours) with either night interruption or day length extension until the desired plant height is achieved. More UV light on the plants will result in more intense bright red foliage
<b>Disease/Insects</b>	Celosia is susceptible to Pythium, Downy mildew, botrytis, Rhizoctonia, Aphids and Thrips.
<b>Culture Watch Points</b>	Boron deficiency can cause deformed foliage and a witch's broom effect. Also, avoid low temperatures (under 16°C).
<b>Landscape</b>	Celosia Dragon's Breath is ideal for planting outdoors. Highly prized for its attractive red foliage from sowing through flowering. Space 40 cm. apart. Avoid mulching too close to the plants to prevent stem rot (Rhizoctonia).

