

# Sedum Cut Flower

## Factsheet 21/20

Sedum is a perennial plant with thick, succulent leaves, fleshy stems and clusters of star shaped flowers. It is gaining popularity as an autumn flower being available from mid August to early October and is useful for cutting particularly given the range of varieties available with suitable stem length for the bouquet trade or straight lines.

### SITE

Sheltered from prevailing winds. While a south-facing aspect is desirable it is not essential.

### SOIL & PH

Light to medium, well drained soils are best but will grow on a wide range. Ph of 6.0-7.0

### PLANTS

Plants should be planted in spring from rooted cuttings or liners.

Do not plant too deep. The eyes should be seen just at ground level.

### SPACING

The crop is generally planted at high density on the flat or on raised beds. Plant in 1 m to 1.2 m wide beds at 6 plants per sq. meter (40 cm\* 40 cm). High density ensures that stems will grow straight once plants are established after two years.

### PROPAGATION

The species can be propagated by division in the Autumn.

Plantations should be renewed by dividing plants every 5-6 years as stem length and quality can be impacted.

### NUTRITION

A soil test is necessary to accurately determine rates of Phosphorus and Potassium. The following amounts should be applied according to soil analysis.

Index	1	2	3	4
Kg/ha	150	120	100	50
Nitrogen (N)	100	70	40	20
Phosphorus (P)	200	150	100	50
Potassium (K)	75	50	25	nil
Magnesium (Mg)				

Source: Teagasc & ADAS

A top dressing of up to 80 -100 kg/ha of Nitrogen is applied in the spring of second and subsequent years.

### VARIETIES



A number of varieties have been trialled at Teagasc Kildalton. Sedum 'Herbstfreude' (syn S. Autumn Joy), pictured above is a high yielding long stemmed (60 cm) variety with large flower heads up to 20 cm in diameter. Sedum *spectabile* 'Brilliant' pictured below left also has large sprays but shorter stems at 45 cm. Some of the Dutch bred 'Kolster' varieties such as Sedum 'Magical Lizzy' (below right) whilst lower yielding than some of the traditional varieties are particularly suitable for the supermarket bouquet trade having smaller flower heads and stem length of 52-60 cm. Sedum 'Matrona' and S. *telephium* 'Purple Emperor' were also lower yielding and had deeper purple colour flowers and leaves.



### WEED CONTROL

It is very important to keep plantations free of weeds. It is critical that the site has first been cleared of perennial weeds by spraying off, using a mixture of *Glyphosate* (Roundup) and *Carfentrozone-Ethyl* (Spotlight Plus).

The choice of herbicides to maintain clean plantations depends on the weed spectrum and while there are some off label approvals, residual herbicide control can be challenging with this crop. A crop on bare soil can quickly become infested if not managed for weeds. Check with your adviser for updates on approved herbicides.

A non-woven fabric mulch 'Daltax' has been used with good success at Teagasc Kildalton, however, it is necessary to trim the fabric around the plants annually to allow new shoots to develop and the plants to expand.

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### CROP SUPPORT

Some of the Sedum varieties are long stemmed and can be top heavy when flowering especially after rain. This can cause bending of the stems but this can be minimised by supporting the sides of the beds or rows with a wire system of support.

### CUTTING BACK

The crop should be pruned back to within 20 cm of ground level once harvesting is complete. Crop debris should be removed and destroyed.

### PESTS

Aphids if allowed to build up can exude a sooty mass that can become infected with *Botrytis* (Grey Mould) and if left untreated and can affect stem quality.

While there are no fully approved insecticides, there are some with off-label approval – check with your adviser for updates on approved pesticides.

Slugs – can be problematic particularly in wet springs with damage occurring on the new shoots as they emerge. They can persist if the growing season remains humid and wet. Control can be achieved by the use of products based on metaldehyde or ferric phosphate. Both are equally effective in combatting slugs. There are many metaldehyde brands to choose from whereas ferric sulphate is available as SluXX.

Rabbits/hares – it is essential to take precaution by fencing before damage occurs.

### DISEASES

The crop is susceptible to *Botrytis* (Grey mould) and Powdery mildew (pictured). The crop will have to be monitored and treated accordingly. The biological fungicide *Bacillus subtilis* (Serenade ASO) is a useful protectant but check with your adviser for updates on fungicide recommendations for disease control.



### HARVEST

While it is possible to harvest in the first year, the stems tend to be short so it is recommended to pinch the plant in the first year just as they begin to sprout out and begin the main harvest in the second year. Sedum can be harvested green, at the flower bud stage or at full flower. This gives the crop a long harvest period of up to 8 weeks. Generally stems are cut early in the morning and moved to the cold store to maintain quality. Sedum are generally sorted into lengths 40-50 cm. Stems are bunched in 5's. Chill at 1-3 C.

### YIELD

New plants produce 3 – 5 stems in the second year. Whilst varieties can vary in terms of yield, an average of 12-15 stems can be produced from a well managed crop at full maturity.

The table shows average annual yield per m<sup>2</sup> of range Sedum varieties trialled at Teagasc Kildalton.

Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
0	25	48	60	72



Field scale production of Sedum