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| Maintype | Substrate |
| Crop | Cucumber |
| Croptype | Substrate |
| Variety | Demarrage RZ |

Crop manual for cucumber variety Demarrage RZ

General

Demarrage RZ (24-162 RZ) is a cucumber variety suitable for spring, summer and autumn plantings. We advise sowing this variety from beginning February and no earlier.

'Demarrage' (from the world of cycle racing) means 'spurt' in English, i.e. a sudden increase in speed to gain the lead. With a name like that, further explanation of the variety's characteristics is almost superfluous.

Character

Demarrage RZ has a fertile crop type with an open structure and can sometimes 'draw' slightly, which can make the laterals look a little lanky. Demarrage RZ does not have as many leaves up to the wire as, for instance, Roxanna RZ. The stem fruits are fairly compact with a very good colour and a good shelf life. The cucumbers on the laterals are not quickly too long and also have a good shelf life and colour. Shelf life and colour are comparable to those of Roxanna RZ, for example.

We have not noticed any susceptibility to burnt heads in this variety.

Mildew resistance

Demarrage RZ has intermediate mildew resistance. This means that the variety is less susceptible to powdery mildew. Susceptibility in this variety is about the same as in Aviance RZ, for example. This entails carrying out mildew control several times during the growing period, but the frequency will be significantly lower than for a fully-susceptible variety. We do advise to adhere to a normal control schedule for the first three weeks, though, as you would for susceptible varieties; not only to control infection pressure, but also to allow the resistance in the plants to develop its full potential.

Tips for plant raisers

Attention points when raising Demarrage RZ plants:

- Do not grow too generatively, i.e. keep the day and night temperatures level or reduce the night temperature by 0.5°C. This is more than enough to get Demarrage sufficiently generative.
- If an older plant is to be supplied, space the plants out at their final distance at a very early stage (when the cotyledons have spread properly), far enough apart (12 - 14 plants/m).

Plant raising

During the plant-raising stage Demarrage RZ gives a different plant type than, for instance, Roxanna RZ. Demarrage RZ will be slightly more drawn and be ready for delivery a day earlier compared with Roxanna RZ. Especially during warm summer conditions we advise growing the variety sufficiently generatively for the sake of fruitfulness. During hot summer conditions, keeping temperatures low is central to the growing regime, but this applies to all cucumber varieties.

The variety is naturally vigorous enough. If you have any further questions about raising plants of Demarrage RZ, please contact our crop-technical advisors.

Tips for growers

Start of the crop and stem fruit load

The best results are obtained with a well-chosen stem fruit load. In order to get a good balance and total yield, thinning is required. From then on, Demarrage RZ will fairly quickly find its own rhythm. If the stem is overloaded, the balance might well shift towards growth and leaves. Remember that the stem production is not the most important one. That is why we advise retaining at least some sets of 2 on the stem (i.e. 2 axils with 1 cucumber, then 1 empty axil). It is quite all right, though, to retain the first cucumber at the 5th leaf.

Easy to work: Demarrage RZ can quite easily initiate several ovaries, so that is easy when it comes to thinning out.

The first harvest will be about equally quick as in a Roxanna crop.

Climate

Normal temperature set points can be used from the start. From the first flowering a brief pre-midnight is certainly desirable, "short but fierce" being the principle behind this, so a brief pre-midnight period with a temperature decrease is often sufficient. This should prevent that the 24-hour temperature works out too low. The most important thing in this story is the difference between the day and night temperatures and not the length of time the pre-midnight temperature decrease is in operation. Even on warm summer nights a pre-midnight of 19°C can be enough to steer the crop if the afternoon temperature is more than 25°C.

Remember: "A Demarrage crop will be successful when it has sufficient speed".

The keyword in the climate management for Demarrage RZ is activity. We do not want to create

weakness and a fungus climate in this type of variety. While there is no fruit load yet the climate should not be allowed to become 'dead'. A cold pipe is not acceptable when the humidity is high (> 85%) and insolation low. Up to the first flowering the bottom pipe network should be run at 40°C min. Best results are realised in active climates - that is when the production capacity of this variety is used to the full.

'Stretch'

Demarrage RZ has a crop type that tends to 'stretch' easily. We would like to emphasise that this in itself is not a problem because this variety quickly finds its balance anyway. Try and beware of trying to limit 'stretching' of the crop, especially if it is done while conditions are cold. We would rather not see cold heads or a morning dip in the temperature. We like to see 'stretching' of the crop limited slightly by using the EC in the water. This will give vigour, strength and is also positive against weakness fungi.

The laterals will appear fairly easily and give sufficient 'stretch' between the leaves. In order to prevent too much lateral growth at the base of the crop, we advise topping Demarrage RZ at 5 leaves, 6 leaves at most, from the crop wire. Because of its growing habit the crop will still remain fairly open.

Watering and feed

Tolerant cucumber varieties require a good balance. If there is an imbalance, tolerant cucumber varieties can get problems with weakness fungi like botrytis and mycosphaerella sooner. Up to first flowering we like to water with 3.0 mS/cm. Reduce this only if (summer) conditions dictate. Try nevertheless to keep the total feed level in the substrate sufficiently high (> 3.0 EC). Realise this with the EC in the water and do not start keeping things too dry. Due to its huge production capacity Demarrage will demand a lot of water. There is no standard volume we can give, as each substrate and system requires its own specific watering regime. We do have to watch out for large watering rounds with a lot of 'false' run-off. We have noticed that Demarrage will perform well with relatively many and smaller watering rounds. Remember: "Production requires water". The watering strategy is best compared with that for Roxanna RZ.

Second half of the crop

Once Demarrage RZ has settled into regular production on the laterals, the variety does not require any special steering. Always work on sufficient activity and speed. Especially during late autumn this will result in extra production. Take away a small leaf where necessary.

Trial figures 2008:

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|-----------------|-----------|--|-----------------|-----------|--|--|
| Grower A | | | Grower C | | | |
| Sowing date: | 20-4-2008 | | Sowing date: | 20-5-2008 | | |
| Plant date: | 14-5-2008 | | Plant date: | 12-6-2008 | | |
| Grower B | | | Grower D | | | |
| Sowing date: | 21-4-2008 | | Sowing date: | 26-4-2008 | | |

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|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Plant date: | 17-5-2008 | | Plant date: | 20-5-2008 | | |
| | Demarrage RZ (24-162 RZ) | | | Roxanna RZ | | |
| | | | Average | | | Average |
| | Pieces/m ² | Kg/m ² | Fruitweight (gr) | Pieces/m ² | Kg/m ² | Fruitweight (gr) |
| Grower A | 80,2 | 33 | 411 | 79,8 | 33 | 413 |
| Grower B | 56,3 | 24,8 | 440 | 57,6 | 25,2 | 438 |
| Grower C | 61,5 | 28,8 | 468 | 65,4 | 30,2 | 462 |
| Grower D | 65,7 | 28,9 | 439 | 67 | 29,3 | 437 |

Finally

For any questions, comments or tailored advice you can always contact one of our crop advisors. We wish you every success with Demarrage RZ and the lead it will bring you.

Cucumber advisors Rijk Zwaan
Spring 2009

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