

### Crop manual Baselga RZ Yellow blocky pepper



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A new season for peppers is starting! Of course we at Rijk Zwaan are very pleased to start the second commercial year of growing Baselga RZ. There are many steering opportunities with a young pepper plant – so here's a quick overview of some of the starting points for Baselga RZ.

#### **Plant condition from the plant raiser**

You might find that the plant looks a little on the vegetative side. Large leaves and a light colour. Don't try and change this too much. If you want a darker colour in the plant, use a higher EC. Use temperature to keep speed in the plant – its natural that a young Baselga RZ plant is looking lush in growth. Relative to other varieties, this is not a problem.

#### **Young plant on the slab**

For the first days you might use night irrigations to help with the roots. Make sure that the block has made good contact with the slab. Some slabs will wick water from the block more than others – so be aware of this. Remove the night shots as soon as the roots have penetrated the top of the slab. This will help avoid making a weak plant.

You are giving a lot of water at this time for root development, so make sure that the EC is high enough. Even though you want this to be a vegetative time of growth (to make roots), the higher EC will help to bring balance in the plant. At this time 80% of the fertilizer for the plant is coming from the drip water.

The pipe temperature should be limited to a maximum of about 50 –55C. Even if the air temperature goes lower than you want, the plants are so close to the pipes that they will be warm enough. At these pipe temperatures, the plants are always warmer than the air. If you have some sun, careful not to let your pipes drop too far down. Keeping a minimum of 40C will allow for fast re-heating.

Use your screens carefully. Consider an afternoon period when you can open up the screens and use the pipes for a while. This will activate the plant and allow you to use the light to help make assimilates for the root development.

There is no need to give a lot of CO2 at this time.

#### **First fruit setting**

Our main goal in the early period of Balsega RZ is keeping speed in the plant while making good quality flowers. This variety will set fruits; our job is to make strong generative flowers. Slow developing large size flowers are what we want to avoid. Look to the quality of the buds and flowers in making your steering decisions.

As you cut back with the irrigation, keep the EC level the same. If you use a preN period, keep it short and not too low with temperature. Start it late enough in the day. Make sure you have achieved a darker colour in the head before they go into the preN. The most benefit will come from using a boost period in the afternoon and carrying this boost right to the time of the preN drop. Keep it going with the pipes if necessary. This is a differential in temperature that will achieve a generative effect and make better quality flowers. If you start the PreN too early, there is a chance that you will make weak/ vegetative flowers. Baselga RZ naturally wants to make big flowers, so we have to be extra sure to use a preN effectively. A long cold preN will slow down the plant and make vegetative flowers, just the opposite of what we want.

Look at the plant head again in the morning. Make sure you're not pushing too hard with the afternoon boost. In the morning the head should be light in colour and looking like the cells are full with water.

As you review your flower quality, keep in mind that you might not need a preN. Baselga RZ will set. Use the PreN as a tool when necessary; to help steer generatively.

When you have a healthy well developing plant you can start to use a high CO2 level to aid in generative steering. This is very useful for Baselga RZ.

Overall, steer Baselga RZ generatively with EC, moisture content, afternoon boosts and CO2 levels. Maintain the night and average temperatures to keep the speed in the plant.

We wish you success for this new growing season!

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## More information

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