

CORNFLOWER PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

INTRODUCTION

- Common name: Cornflower
- Scientific name: *Centaurea cyanus*
- Also known as Bachelor's Buttons
- Native to Europe and the Americas
- Ranges in height from 10 inches to 2½ feet
- Narrow, grey-green, lance-shaped leaves
- Flowers are usually lavender-blue and bloom in summer
- Some species are perennial, others are annual
- Excellent in cut flower arrangements
- Often used as an ingredient in tea

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Grows well in full or partial sun
- Use neutral or slightly alkaline media
- Drought tolerant; water plants infrequently
- Fertilize plants monthly with a balanced fertilizer
- Perennial varieties spread quickly; to control, divide every two years

PROPAGATION

- Easily grown from seed; can be started indoors or outdoors

- When starting outdoors, sow early in spring as soon as the soil can be worked
- Sow seeds ½ inch deep, as complete darkness is needed for germination
- Space plants 2–3 feet apart
- Keep the media moist until germination occurs in 7–10 days
- Cornflowers do not have a long blooming period; more than one sowing will extend the overall flowering period
- When starting indoors, sow seeds one month before planting seedlings outdoors
- Keep newly planted seeds at 60–70° F
- Transplant outdoors before plants reach 4" in height

DISORDERS

- Aphids
 - Dislodge with a hard spray of water
- Rust (*Puccinia cyani*)
 - Pustules appear on stems and leaves
 - Remove infected plants
- Powdery mildew (*Erysiphe cichoracearum*)
 - White coating appears on upper leaves

- Leaves wilt, brown, and drop
- Reduce humidity and remove infected plants

CONSUMER CARE

- Can be an attractive part of an informal garden
- Grows well in containers
- Remove spent flowers to prolong the blooming period
- For fresh arrangements, cut flowers in the early morning when they are half open

CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *Centaurea dealbata*
 - 'Rose': rose-colored blooms
- *Centaurea montana*
 - 'Amethyst in Snow': white flowers with purple centers
 - 'Gold Bullion': vivid blue flowers, chartreuse foliage
- *Centaurea cyanus*
 - 'Black Magic': dark maroon flowers; annual
 - 'Blue Boy': sky-blue flowers; annual

References

- <http://www.floridagardener.com/misc/Cornflowers.htm>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornflower>
- <http://www.gardenguides.com/plants/info/flowers/annuals/bachelor.asp>

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