

Anchusa - Care Guide

Growing Anchusa Azurea 'Loddon Royalist'

Large Blue Alkanet

Anchusa are rightly regarded as an essential addition to any herbaceous border because of their bright deep blue flowers. However these plants do need a bit more attention and care through the growing season than other clump forming, perennial herbaceous plants.

Anchura azurea has mainly basal leaves growing up from its fleshy roots. These are elliptic to lance shaped and extremely hairy. The flowers appear in branching panicles which grow up to 3ft tall. The deep blue flowers turn blue-purple as they age and die which produces another attractive overall effect.

We find that A. 'Loddon Royalist' seldom needs staking or plant supports as it is sturdy and upright enough on its own. What does really benefit these plants is to cut out the flowering stems once the flowers have finished. If you do this you will encourage a second flush of flowering.

Later in the summer you can again cut back the top growth of the plant to avoid it wasting energy on setting seeds but, more importantly, you will be encouraging the growth and development of the basal rosettes which will produce better taller flowers next summer.

Anchusa grow best in fertile soil in full sun. They dislike waterlogged conditions but will perform best if the border is well dug with leaf mould or rotted dung incorporated into the soil.

The plant can readily be propagated from basal root cuttings. Basically you need to sever a length of the fleshy root in the autumn or in spring and encourage regrowth in the mist bench or directly into pots with bottom heat.



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Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk

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