

## Echinacea - Growing Guide

### Caring For Echinacea – Coneflower

Echinacea have seen a startling improvement in their popularity in more recent years because of the release onto the market of a whole range of new varieties with vibrant colours which were not previously known in the UK. E. 'Tomato Soup' and E. 'Green Envy' are particular favourites amongst our customers and deservedly so since the names reflect reality.

Echinacea originate from the prairies and hillsides of Central and East America. They have thick black rootstocks and short rhizomes. As the name 'Coneflower' implies this clump forming perennial produces erect hairy stems with lance shaped to ovate dark green leaves which are bristly. Solitary stems of daisy-like yellow, white, purple, red or pink flower heads are produced at the ends of the stems. In the garden the flowers do not usually need supporting but, when grown individually in pots in the nursery, the flowers often do. The petals on individual flower heads open slowly and are often slightly recurved. The centre of the open flower has an ovoid or cone shaped central disc which is brownish yellow.

Echinacea thrive in deep, well drained, fertile and humus-rich soil in full sun. They do best if the ground is well prepared first with the incorporation of well-rotted dung or leaf mould. In shade they produce fewer flowers.

The flowering stems should be cut back soon after flowering as near to ground level as possible. This will avoid wasted energy on setting seed and, in a milder wet summer, there will then be a second crop of flowers later in the summer.

Echinacea resent having their root systems disturbed but new plants can be created by lifting mature clumps and dividing off some side shoots. Far better is to take root cuttings in late autumn or early spring when the plants are dormant. These can be set in a loamy compost with bottom heat to reshoot in the spring. Seeds may well not prove true to name if

you or your neighbours grow more than one colour of this excellent flowering plant.

Echinacea partner well with other darker green herbaceous plants which grow taller and lower than they do. Echinops, eryngium, canna and leucanthemum are good partner plants.



E. 'Big Kahuna'



E. 'Big Kahuna'



E. 'Firebird'



E. 'Green Jewel'



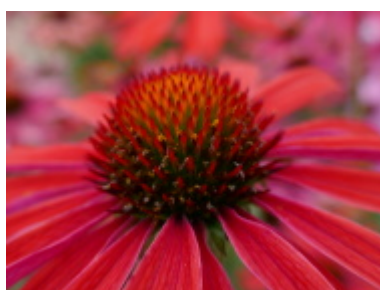
E. 'Marmalade'



E. purpurea



E. purpurea



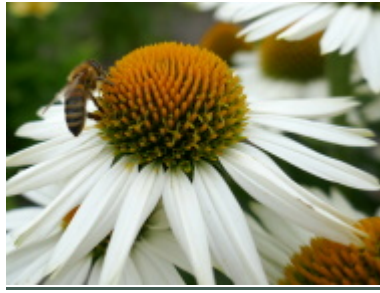
E. purpurea 'Hot Summer'



E. purpurea 'Hot Summer'



*E. purpurea* 'White  
Meditation'



*E. purpurea* 'White  
Meditation'



*E. 'Tiki Torch'*

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