

## Gaillardia - Growing Guide

### Growing Gaillardia

#### Blanket flower

G. 'Kobold' could very easily be mistaken for Rudbeckia and indeed both these genera have much in common as they both originate from Canada and the USA. G. x grandiflora is a cross of garden origin between G. aristata and G. pulchella and 'Kobold' is one of the best of the many named forms.

G. 'Kobold' is a bushy perennial with grey green leaves produced in basal rosettes and on up the stems. The flowers are 'daisy-like' which is why they can be confused with Rudbeckia or Leucanthemum which flower at much the same time from early summer on into early autumn. 'Kobold' has rich red florets or disc flowers whose tips are yellow to give a superb and long lasting effect in the summer border where these plants thrive best.

G. 'Kobold' flowers are some 3-5in across when fully out and the flower stalks can be up to 3ft tall. If you do manage to deadhead the finished flowers you will do even more to encourage this plant to keep flowering for many weeks as is its inclination as flowers continue to appear from multiple stems as the season progresses. It makes a great cut flower as well and this too may actually improve the plant if you cut selectively rather than all in one place.

Although this is a perennial it is a plant which can be relatively short lived as it exhausts itself by over flowering. To overcome the problem you can take root cuttings over winter and allow these to develop in trays of light compost or you can lift and divide the clumps in spring. If you are not growing other varieties of Gaillardia nearby (and even if you are it probably will not matter) collect the seed in the autumn and sow in early spring. The seedlings are quite capable of producing flowers in their first

season.



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