

Meconopsis - Growing Guide

Caring For Meconopsis Betonicifolia (Baileyi)

Commonly known as 'Himalayan Blue Poppy'

The Himalayan blue poppy is one of the most sought after and popular plants which we try to grow in our gardens. Blue flowers have a peculiar attraction in themselves as they are relatively uncommon in cultivation. However, despite all this horticultural 'desire', these plants are difficult to grow and can quickly die if you do not treat them correctly and understand what they like and need.

Meconopsis like humus rich, leafy, moist but well drained acidic soil. They do not like being waterlogged and will quickly rot off in winter if they are.

These poppies dislike cold winds, full sun and drying out in dry summers. So shelter, dappled shade, additional watering in dry conditions and heavy mulching to retain water and offer winter protection are needed.

Even when you get all this right and your plants are growing well there is one other crucial thing to remember. These poppies are short lived anyway but, if you let them set seed after flowering, they will very probably die from the effort. Therefore it is essential to remove the flower heads after the last petals have dropped to prevent energy being wasted on setting seeds.

It may well be sensible to let one plant in a group set seed and collect it yourself while 'dead heading' the others. This way you hedge your bets! Alternatively remove all flower heads altogether until a good clump of plants has developed.

Seed can be sown in containers or a cold frame as soon as it is ripe or in the spring. Sow thinly in a loamless seed compost and keep moist and well lit to encourage germination. Seedlings are prone to damping off or scorching in full sun.

Slugs and snails can be a problem as the leaves emerge in early spring.



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Meconopsis lingholm



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