

## Aconitum - Growing Guide

### Growing Aconitum 'Stainless Steel'

#### Monkshood

This is a fairly new addition to our catalogue which comes into its own in July in the herbaceous border. Its pale blue flower spikes are an unusual colour which contrasts well with darker blues or red from, for instance, *Salvia* 'Amistad' or *Lobelia cardinalis* 'Queen Victoria'.

These are fully hardy, erect and tallish growing perennials. In maturity A. 'Stainless Steel' can achieve 4ft or more in the border. The flowers have a curious hooded shape and are borne in racemes 12-18in long well above the leaves. The sepals form the 'hood' of the flower and the petals are with the hood itself. These flowers are good for cutting but be careful to wear gloves as the sap can cause skin irritation.

A. 'Stainless Steel' seems to do better in partial shade than in full sun. Staking is advisable in more exposed borders which catch the wind. Propagation is easiest in the autumn when the plants are nearly dormant and the tuberous roots can be divided. We have found that it pays to do this every few years to reinvigorate the clumps. After division they may at first produce rather small flower spikes while they get re-established.





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