

Echium - Growing Guide

Growing Echium Candicans (*E. Fastuosum*)

'Pride of Madeira'

Last summer, after a run of mild winters, the early June national newspapers had stories of record sized echiums. The first in Wales was depicted at 14ft tall but the record was soon usurped by another 16ft plant from Dorset. We did not measure ours at Burncoose but several were near misses to the record. We even cut three enormous flowering stems and took them to Chelsea for our stand but, sadly, they flopped and never made it onto public display.



Echium pinnifolium



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E. candicans is a BIENNIAL plant. In its first year it grows to about 2 or 3ft. In the second year it produces a huge lance covered in flowers which can be many feet tall. In milder areas, with no frost at all, the plants keep growing all year around and, after a frost free winter, you will see record sized flower spikes. After flowering the plant dies.

The flowers are bluish or purplish-blue (or they can be white) fading to pink. Without frost the spikes can appear and flower very early in the year but, more normally, you would expect flowering spikes in July or later.



However, once you have managed to flower one, the flowering stalk will quickly brown and die off so do not cut it down until the autumn by when the seed will have scattered in all directions. Even if your first crop of

seedlings do get killed by frost more will emerge. In any even you can pot a few to overwinter in the greenhouse to be on the safe side or simply store some seed over winter.



Echium fastuosum



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Echium 'Red Feathers'



Echium 'Red Rocket'

On Tresco these impressive plants grow wild all over the islands and at Ventnor Botanic Gardens there is a huge half acre clump of echium of varying ages which is a wonderful spectacle in June and July.

This is a truly iconic and self perpetuating garden plant.



Echium piniana



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View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/YL78iT1uIW0?rel=0>

From Seedling To Mature Plant - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/ii60uNArTvM>

Echium - Self Sown Seedlings - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/-k5GG-kJu9U>

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