Common Columbine

Aquilegia vulgaris



Common Columbine flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 18 inches

Flower Height: 24 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 2a

Other Names: European Columbine, Granny's Bonnet

Description:

Features large flowers in shades of purple and white with long, showy spurs that decorate the garden in late spring and early summer; continue to water after the flowers have faded to enjoy as a groundcover during late summer

Ornamental Features

Common Columbine features showy nodding purple bell-shaped flowers with white overtones, yellow eyes and purple spurs at the ends of the stems in late spring. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its ferny compound leaves remain bluish-green in colour throughout the season.



Common Columbine in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Common Columbine is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects

Common Columbine is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Common Columbine will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity extending to 24 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 18 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant performs well in both full sun and full shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Common Columbine is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden. Be aware that in our climate, most plants cannot be expected to survive the winter if left in containers outdoors, and this plant is no exception. Contact our experts for more information on how to protect it over the winter months.