

Rhododendron Species Foundation & Botanical Garden

Himalayan Blue Poppy Care Sheet

The enchanting **Blue Poppy** creates a spectacular show in the late spring and early summer. Such a rich true blue flower is a rare garden treasure. Blue Poppies have a reputation of being difficult to grow, but these plants can be grown successfully if you follow a few basic guide lines.

Chose a location in partial shade out of hot afternoon sun and protected from strong winds.

Soil preparation is the single most important factor. Blue Poppies demand a rich well draining soil in an area of partial shade. If planting a single plant, dig a large hole about 18 inches by 18 inches deep. Mix one part compost or well rotted manure, one part fine bark mulch (composted for 2 – 3 months, if possible), and two parts original soil. Fill your planting hole with this mixture and add a balanced organic fertilizer or other slow release fertilizer. If you are creating a larger planting (three or more plants) prepare a planting bed by spreading 2 – 3 inches of compost or rotted manure and 2 – 3 inches of fine bark mulch and dig into the soil to a depth of 18 inches. Work slow release fertilizer or organic fertilizer into the top 3 – 6 inches. Gently loosen the roots of the poppy and place at the same depth the plants were in the pots.

Water regularly during the summer. Soaker hoses are great for thorough, deep watering. If the poppies are too dry, powdery mildew could be a problem.

Use liquid fertilizer every two weeks or a balanced granular fertilizer once a month during the growing season. This will keep your plants vigorous and healthy.

Sometimes Blue Poppies will die after flowering. To help your plants be perennial, pinch out all flower buds for the first year and protect from slugs.

Enjoy the unique experience of growing these spectacular plants and with a little luck, you will have them reseeding in your garden.