Homestead Gardens Plant Finder

Davidsonville, MD | Severna Park, MD | Smyrna, MD
(410) 798-5000 | HomesteadGardens.com

Cardinal Flower

Lobelia cardinalis



Cardinal Flower flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 20 inches

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3b

Ornamental Features

Cardinal Flower features showy spikes of scarlet flowers rising above the foliage from mid summer to early fall. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its pointy leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Cardinal Flower is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Cardinal Flower is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use



Cardinal Flower in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Cardinal Flower will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 3 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 20 inches apart. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 3 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 should be grown in a location with partial shade or which is shaded from the hot afternoon sun. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.



Cardinal Flower flowers
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