



Keep Your Garden Feeling Blue all Season

From the first glimpse of grape hyacinths in spring to the statuesque splendor of morning glories in September, blue flowers capture our hearts. It may be the scarcity of botanical true blue or the role blue flowers play as they create harmonious partnerships in the border that make them so appealing.

Blue is at the center of the cool side of the color wheel and holds a pivotal role in moderating other color tones.

While most color combinations work best if colors are of similar intensity, blue is an exception to this rule. Pale pink may be jarring in a sea of red and orange, but sky blue flowers in the same bed are a welcome addition. Similarly, a bed filled with pastel flowers would be enhanced with the introduction of a deep blue flower but a brilliant orange would be harsh.

Colors thought to be clashing can often achieve harmony when blue is added to the combination. Blue is the ultimate botanical peacemaker, and there are blue-flowering perennials for every season.



Spring Blues

Some of the best true blues bloom in spring. Squill, grape hyacinth, false forget-me-nots, and Virginia bluebells chase away the snow with drifts of blue. Amsonia, Jacob's ladder and blue columbines keep blue in the garden into May.

Baptisia is a fine prairie plant offering indigo blue flower spikes in late spring. And varieties of perennial geraniums serve up blue flowers in shades from sky blue to violet blue.

Siberian and Japanese irises add blue to the border from May to July. Bearded irises are traditional harbingers of summer and several varieties boast blue flowers.

Summer Blues

Summer wouldn't be summer with the best garden blue of all: delphiniums. Available in blues from navy to sky blue and in sizes from small to tall, delphiniums peak in June but offer a second flush in August if deadheaded after their first bloom.

There is a campanula to fit just about any space in the garden. In my garden, Blue Waterfall spills over a rock wall while Pearl Deep Blue blooms happily beside Moonbeam Coreopsis.



Although most alliums bloom in shades of pink and purple, caeruleum shows off its beautiful bright blue globe-shaped flowers in June.

The catmint family contributes blue flowers with a long bloom time. Little Titch grows just 8 to 10" tall and blooms from June to August; Six Hills Giant grows up to 3' tall and bloom from June to September.

Blue Hill Salvia and several Veronicas offer spikes of blue flowers. Goodness Grows grows 8 to 12" tall and blooms from June to August; Heavenly Blue grows in a dense creeping mat covered with blue flower spikes in June.

Fall Blues

As the late summer garden turns to shades of gold, red and orange, blue flowers are a welcome addition.

Monkshood is fall's answer to delphinium for the partly shaded border. Strong stems hold spikes of blues flowers. Word of caution: all parts of monkshood are poisonous.

In September, asters are in their glory. My favorite, Jindai, blooms in clusters of sky blue flowers on 4' stems over large, low-growing, dark green leaves. It spreads in a weed-choking mat so give it some room to roam.



One of the best blues of fall is the ground cover plumbago with small, brilliant blue flowers that bloom at the top of shiny bronze foliage.

There are also blue-blooming annuals when season-long bloom is needed. Chinese forget-me-nots, ageratum, bachelor buttons, love-in-a-mist, and Victoria Blue Salvia are just a few for a sunny spot. Try Lobelia and Torenia if you garden in light shade.

The tropical agapanthus blooms its heart out in containers on my deck all summer long.

Garden décor can also provide what nature lacks. Gazing balls, birdbaths, and pots are always available in blue. Or grab a can of spray paint and paint a trellis, arbor or gate an unexpected splash of blue.



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