Spring Gentian

Gentiana acaulis

Height: 4 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 2

Other Names: Trumpet Gentian

Description:

Dazzling, upward facing, blue star-shaped flowers make an appearance during the middle of spring, emerging from narrow forest green foliage; an excellent addition to early blooming beds, borders, containers and rock gardens

Ornamental Features

Spring Gentian has blue star-shaped flowers with navy blue eyes at the ends of the stems from mid to late spring, which are interesting on close inspection. Its narrow leaves remain forest green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Spring Gentian is a dense herbaceous perennial with a ground-hugging habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Spring Gentian is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Spring Gentian flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Spring Gentian in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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



Spring Gentian flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Spring Gentian will grow to be only 4 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the ground. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 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. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is not originally from North America.

Spring Gentian is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.