# Gentian

***Gentiana paradoxa***



*Gentian flowers*
*Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

Height: 12 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Spacing: 8 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

**Description:**

True blue tubular flowers appear from late summer to early fall, on this bushy, mounded plant; part shade is best in hot summer climates, great for containers, rock gardens, or the middle of flower borders

**Ornamental Features**

Gentian features dainty clusters of royal blue tubular flowers with white throats at the ends of the stems from late summer to early fall. Its pointy leaves remain green in color throughout the season.

**Landscape Attributes**

Gentian is an herbaceous perennial with a mounded form. 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 plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Gentian is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

**Planting & Growing**

Gentian will grow to be about 12 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 8 inches apart. 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 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 does best in full sun to partial shade. 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.

Gentian is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers against which the thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.