

PRIME ROSE OR PRIMULA



Primrose flowers (*Primula polyantha*) bloom in early spring, offering a variety of form, size, and color. They are suitable for use in garden beds and borders as well as in containers, or for naturalizing areas of the lawn. In fact, when given the proper growing conditions, these vigorous plants will multiply each year, adding stunning colors to the landscape. Blooming often lasts throughout summer and in some areas, they will continue to delight the fall season with their outstanding colors. Most primrose flowers seen in gardens are Polyanthus hybrids, which range in color from white, cream and yellow to orange, red and pink. There are also purple and blue primrose flowers. These perennial plants prefer damp, woodland-like conditions. Growing Primrose Plants Growing primrose is easy, as these plants are quite hardy and adaptable. You can find primrose perennials at most garden centers and nurseries. Look for primroses that are healthy in appearance, preferably with unopened buds. Primroses can also be grown from seeds with an equal mixture of soil, sand and peat moss. This can be done indoors or out depending on the time of year and the climate in your area. Generally, seeds are sown indoors (outdoors in cold frames) during winter. Once seedlings have obtained their second or third leaves, they can be transplanted into the garden. Cuttings can also be taken from some varieties during summer. Primrose Care Primrose perennials should be planted in lightly shaded areas with well-drained soil, preferably amended with organic matter. Set primrose plants about 6 to 12 inches (15-30 cm.) apart and 4 to 6 inches (10-15 cm.) deep. Water thoroughly after planting. Add a layer of mulch around the plants to help retain moisture. Continue to give your primroses thorough watering throughout the summer months, about once a week or more during periods of drought, but let off once fall approaches.

Ranunculus



Ranunculus is a favorite amongst flower lovers for good reason. With its defined round shape and whisper-thin petals, ranunculus inspires comparisons to [roses](#) or [peonies](#). The blooms are available in just about every color you could want and last a long time as a cut flower, making them a great choice for romantic arrangements or bouquets.

Ranunculus thrive in full sun and in organically enriched, well-drained soil. If your soil is too wet, consider building some raised beds so you can control the environment for your ranunculus. Set roots with prongs down, 1-2 inches deep and 6–8 inches apart. Water thoroughly, then withhold water until leaves emerge. Birds are fond of ranunculus shoots, so protect sprouting plants with netting or wire. Or start plants in pots or flats, then set them in the garden when they're 4-6 inches tall (a size that will be less appealing to pesky birds.). You can also start with nursery-grown seedlings. Remove faded flowers to encourage more bloom.

When flowering tapers off and leaves start to yellow, stop watering the plants and allow the foliage to die back. Where tuberous roots are hardy in the ground, they can be left undisturbed as long as soil can be kept dry during summer. Some gardeners dig plants when foliage turns yellow; cut off the tops; let roots dry for a week or two; and store them in a cool, dry place until planting time. But because roots don't store that well, most people find it simpler to discard the plants and set out new roots when the time comes.

HUMMINGBIRD LUNCH

Nectar-filled cherry-red flowers attract pollinators from early spring until fall



If you love hummingbirds, hummingbirds love Cuphea Hummingbirds Lunch. Cuphea, also known as the firecracker plant and the cigar plant, loves sunshine, heat, and dry locations. Planted in full sun, in a warm, protected garden spot, Cuphea Hummingbirds Lunch (the name says it all) produces a compact, rounded shrub smothered in

tubular (cigar-shaped) cherry-red (like a firecracker) flowers with apricot tips. The flowers are full of the nectar hummingbirds find irresistible, but butterflies and bees like them too. Cuphea Hummingbirds Lunch is long blooming, so it'll keep 'em coming from early spring until fall.

This plant can be used in a variety of ways. It can be grown indoors as a house plant or outdoors in a hanging basket. But to bring in the most pollinators, plant in mass (5-10 plants) in the landscape, alone or with any of our Butterfly Attracting or Hummingbird Lovers		Cuphea
Zone		8 - 10
Bloom Start To End		Early Spring - Mid Fall
Habit		Compact
Plant Height		12 in
Plant Width		24 in
Additional Characteristics		Bird Lovers, Butterfly Lovers, Hummingbird Lovers
Bloom Color		Red
Foliage Color		Dark Green
Light Requirements		Full Sun
Moisture Requirements		Dry, Moist, well-drained
Resistance	Disease Resistant, Drought Tolerant, Pest Resistant	
Soil Tolerance	Clay, Normal, loamy, Poor, Sandy	
Uses	Baskets, Beds, Border, Containers, Houseplant, Outdoor	

Big Kiss Mix GAZANIA



Big Kiss Mix includes Big Kiss Red, Yellow, Yellow Flame, White, and White Flame. Big Kiss Mix gazania flowers are huge, up to 4½ in. across. The super vigorous, 8-10 in. tall plants will display as many as 10-15 flowers at one time. Big Kiss gazanias need less water than most flowers, and are top performers when edging paths, filling in

parking strips, or providing colorful accent in rock gardens, or containers. Big Kiss gazanias are most often grown as an annual, are perennial in zones 9 and 10.



AFRICAN BLUE BASIL

Description/Taste

African Blue basil leaves widely range in size, depending on plant maturity, and have an elliptical, slightly tapered shape ending in a soft point on the non-stem end. The leaves are flat, broad, and smooth, covered in prominent veining with lightly serrated edges. When young, African Blue basil leaves are dark purple, and as they mature, they transition to purple-green, followed by bright green. The leaves also showcase distinct dark purple and green speckling on the underside and maroon veining on the surface. African Blue basil leaves are crisp, semi-chewy, and succulent with an earthy, herbaceous, and woody flavor with notes of menthol, musk, and cloves. Beyond the leaves, the plants also bear fuzzy, purple-green stems and long stems with a series of small purple buds that eventually bloom into lavender flowers. When flowering, African Blue basil has a pungent, camphor-like

Current Facts

African Blue basil is a rare, aromatic herb that can grow up to one meter in height, belonging to the Lamiaceae family. The flowering plant was found naturally growing in a nursery in the late 20th century and is believed to be

a cross between camphor basil, *Ocimum kilimandscharicum*, and dark opal basil, *Ocimum basilicum*. African Blue basil is primarily grown as an ornamental, highly favored for its evergreen, green and purple leaves, bushy, fast-growing nature, and aromatic, bright purple flowers. The variety is one of the few perennial basil and is sterile, meaning it will not produce seeds. This unique trait allows the plant to stay in bloom for a longer season, attracting pollinators and creating an aesthetically pleasing landscape. In addition to its ornamental nature, all parts of the African Blue basil plant are edible, including the stems, flowers, and leaves, which are incorporated by home chefs into a wide array of culinary

Nutritional Value

African Blue basil leaves provide vitamins A and C, antioxidants that boost the immune system, manganese to assist with protein digestion, and vitamin K to promote faster wound healing. The greens are also a source of magnesium, calcium, and iron. In addition to vitamins and minerals, African Blue basil contains many essential oils and compounds, including limonene, eugenol, citronellol, camphor, and camphene, which contribute antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties.

Applications

African Blue basil is best suited as a fresh flavoring or finishing garnish. The leaves are popularly blended into pesto, chimichurri sauce, salad dressings, and dips, or they are sprinkled over soups, tossed into salads, or layered over bruschetta. African Blue basil leaves can also be mixed into pasta, stuffed into sandwiches, used as a pizza topping, substituted as a flavorful twist in caprese, or integrated into desserts. It is important to note that the leaves carry a strong flavor and should be used in moderation not to overpower a dish. In addition to the leaves, African Blue basil flowers are edible and can be used as a garnish in soups, salads, and grain bowls. They can also be incorporated into cocktails, floated on sparkling beverages, or stirred into teas. African Blue basil pairs well with parsley, cardamom, beverages such as black tea, ginger ale, and champagne, green beans, tomatoes, potatoes, lentils, rice, and feta cheese. African Blue basil leaves and flowers should be used immediately for the best quality and flavor. The leaves can be wrapped in a paper towel, placed in a plastic bag, and stored in the refrigerator for 1 to 3 days.

Ethnic/Cultural Info

African Blue basil was selected as a preferred variety in 2006 for Florida gardens by the Florida Landscape Growers and Nursery Association, or FNGLA. This state association is one of the largest in the nation and seeks to unite horticulturalists throughout Florida to advance the growing nursery and landscape industry. Each year, FNGLA selects plants well-suited for home cultivation in Florida's subtropical to tropical climate. African Blue basil was chosen as a Florida Garden Select choice for its hardy, productive, and ornamental nature. The plants can expand in height and width, creating a bushy appearance, and the leaves showcase dark purple and green speckled hues, providing an attractive contrast to other garden plants. The basil variety was also selected for its long flowering season. Pollinators, especially bees, are highly attracted to the light purple flowers, and the plant is sterile, preventing the flowers from ever going to seed. This sterility prolongs the blooms on the plant and allows pollinators a stable location to retrieve pollen for an extended season.