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How to Grow Foxgloves: The Complete Foxglove Flower Guide



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How to Plant, Grow, and Care for Foxglove Flowers

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Foxglove is a stately flower with tall, elegant spikes covered in bell-shaped blossoms beloved by hummingbirds and bumblebees. It's also rabbit- and deer-resistant. Learn more about growing foxglove.

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About Foxgloves

Common foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) is a biennial or short-lived herbaceous perennial in most regions, although there are hybrids that grow in flower in year one. It is hardy in Zones 4-9.

In its first year, the plant simply forms a

ered in 20 to 80 small downward-facing,
tubular flowers in purple, pink, or white.

Each flower tube has a small lip on which
bumblebees can land to access the nectar
at the base of the tube. [Hummingbirds](#)
may also visit the flowers.

The flower blooms from late spring
through midsummer and then dies.
Therefore, for continuous blooms, plant it
for 2 consecutive years. Or, look for vari-
eties that flower in year one.

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Foxgloves are gorgeous in tall borders or

building or a fence. They make excellent cut flowers.

Be aware that foxglove also self-seeds prolifically. In some places, it's considered an invasive plant. Deadhead after flowering to avoid an excess number of seedlings, or reconsider planting foxglove.

Is Foxglove Poisonous?

Yes. Foxglove is poisonous, although recorded poisonings from this plant are very rare. The plant contains digitalis and other cardiac glycosides. These chemicals affect the heart. To be poisoned from foxglove, you would need to eat the seeds, stems, or leaves, or suck the flowers.



- [20 Easy-to-Grow Perennial Flowers for Beginners](#)
- [Common Plants You Probably Thought Were Natives](#)
- [How to Grow Bee Balm: The Complete Bee Balm Flower Guide](#)

PLANTING

Foxglove grows best in full sun, with light afternoon shade. The plant prefers moist, well-draining soil high in organic matter, with a slightly acidic to neutral pH.

Prepare soil by mixing in a 3- to 4-inch layer of compost or [aged manure](#).

When to Plant Foxglove

Sow seeds in late summer. Any seedlings should be planted into the garden bed in early fall so that they can establish the root system before cold weather arrives.

Or, if planting in containers, set out in late spring or fall.

How to Plant Foxglove

seeds need light to germinate, so do not cover. Thin the seedlings to about 18 inches apart. [See more flowers that are easy to start from seed.](#)

- When planting pots, space 1 to 2 feet apart; the foliage spread can be 1 to 3 feet. Dig the hole twice the diameter of the container. Set the top of the root ball level with the soil surface. Fill in around the root ball and firm the soil. Water thoroughly.

GROWING

- Keep soil moist.
- Add a thin layer of [compost](#) around the plant each spring.
- Stake tall varieties to keep the flower stalks upright.
- Cut the center flower stalk back after flowering for a chance for additional flower stalks to develop later in the season.
- Leave the flower stalk on the plant if you want it to reseed, as well as to attract birds to the garden in the fall.



Types

There are many foxglove cultivars and a few hybrids commonly available. Here are a few of our favorites.

- **'Alba'** has pure white flowers on 4-foot sturdy stalks
- **'Apricot Beauty'** has apricot-pink flowers with spotted interiors; 3 to 4 feet tall
- **'Camelot'** series is a variety that flowers in year one; in the South, they can be treated as cool-season annuals; flowers face outward instead of down in shades of lavender, rose and white; 3-foot stalks
- **'Candy Mountain'** has strong 4-foot stalks with large, upturned flowers. The blooms change from rose to pur-

- ‘Foxy’ also blooms reliably from seed the first year; blooms are white, cream, purple and rose; up to 3 feet tall

HARVESTING

Cut stems for arrangements when lower flowers are just opening. Vase life is 10 to 14 days.

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PESTS/DISEASES

Foxglove is rabbit- and deer-resistant

leaf spot, [powdery mildew](#), crown and rot,

Verticillium wilt

Pests: [aphids](#), [Japanese beetles](#), mealy

bugs, [thrips](#)

WIT AND WISDOM

- *Digitalis* comes from the Latin word for finger (*digitus*), referring to the shape of the flower. *Purpurea* refers to the color of the flowers, which often is purple.
- Foxglove leaves were used in the treatment of heart failure in the 18th century and were once the source of heart stimulants.
- Each foxglove plant can produce 1 to 2 million seeds.
- Foxglove was often grown in cottage gardens in the Middle Ages.

FLOWERS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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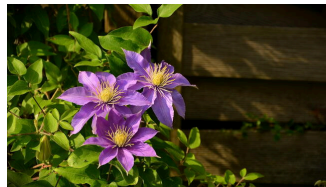
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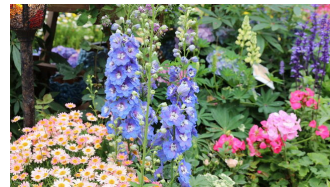
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COMMENTS

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Eric Lee (not verified) 12 months ago

It hasn't overwintered here in Minnesota. Must use annual variety. Self seeding is not equivalent to biennial.

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REPLY

Roopa Awal (not verified) 10

months 1 week ago

Very happy

REPLY

GC (not verified) 1 year 9 months ago

Digitalis is a very useful plant that is still used to treat heart ailments. Three main glycosides can be extracted from it : digitoxin, digoxin, and ouabain. They differ in their half-lives, from longest to shortest, respectively, though digoxin (brand name Lanoxin) is the one most commonly available in the US. The mechanism of action is at the Na-K ATP'ase receptor. It is used for its inotropic effect to strengthen heart contractility in heart failure as well as to control heart rate in supraventricular arrhythmias such as atrial fibrillation. The effect of digitalis can be seen on an ECG as ST coving commonly referred to as dig effect. An overdose can on the other hand produce practically any kind of

overdose clinically can be a feeling of weakness.

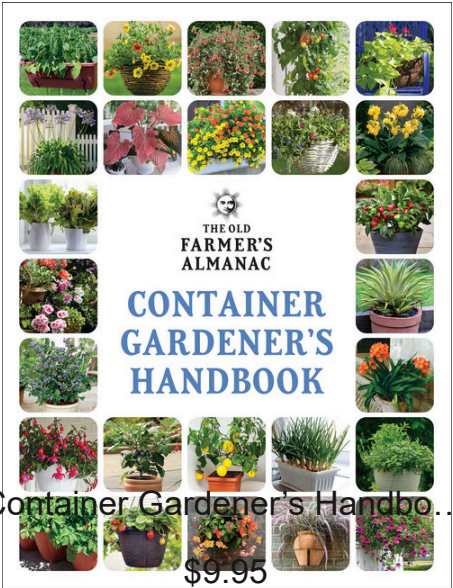
REPLY

Don Marks (not verified) 1 year 9 months ago

Digitalis leaves were still being used in the 1960s/1970s as a tablet, noticeably being green and looking like it was made from leaves. Now, though, it has been replaced by digoxin extracted from the leaves (a white tablet) which is easier to standardise for a dosage which is safer. Natural plant products are greatly influenced in content depending on the weather.

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