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How to Grow Veronicas: The Complete Veronica (Speedwell) Flower Guide



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FREE GUIDE!

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Planting, Growing, and Caring for Veronicas

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

Last Updated: April 22, 2025



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Veronica, also called speedwell, is a carefree and easy-to-grow perennial

flower with vertical or ground cover forms and blooms of purple, blue, pink, or white. Learn how to plant, grow, and care for lovely Veronicas.

About Veronicas

There are many types of speedwells, ranging from groundcovers only a few inches tall to upright plants with tall, spiky blooms. They all belong to the genus *Veronica*, which has hundreds of species. There are spring and summer blooming varieties, with some flowering until autumn frost.

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With so many species of *Veronica*, there is one suitable for almost any growing zone in the US. As a genus, they are hardy from USDA zones 3-11, although individual species have a more narrow range.

Check the tag or the seed packet to be sure a particular speedwell is hardy in your climate. Just because it is at the

garden center doesn't mean it will survive the winter.

So many cultivars of Speedwell are available, and some common names have been used to refer to hybrids from several different species. Check the tag to be sure you are getting the one you want.



Veronica Longifolia, known as garden speedwell or longleaf speedwell, in the garden. Credit: Gabriela Beres

Is Speedwell an Upright or Groundcover?

As a quick guide, upright, spiky veronicas for cut flowers or use as taller bedding plants are often cultivars of *V. longifolia*, *V. spicata*, and *V. austriaca*. They may be called spiked speedwell,

Hungarian speedwell, or long-leaved speedwell.

Groundcover veronicas are frequently cultivars of *V. alpina*, *V. repens*, *V. prostrata*, *V. pectinata*, and *V. gentianoides*.

They go by common names like creeping speedwell, gentian speedwell, or creeping veronica.

Read Next

- [How to Grow Geraniums: The Complete Geranium Flower Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Asters: The Complete Aster Flower Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Lilies: The Complete Lily Flower Guide](#)

PLANTING

Veronicas love full sun and, once established, are drought-tolerant—all varieties like well-drained soil. Upright speedwells will grow and bloom better in fertile soil with some compost worked in.

Many groundcover types are happy with rocky, lower-fertility soils. They are an excellent choice for rock gardens and will fill in between pavers or cascade of small rocks.

The ground cover varieties are slower spreaders, so purchase accordingly or divide plants the next year to help them cover the area more quickly.

When to Plant Veronicas

Transplants can be planted in the spring. (Veronica can be sowed by seed in containers in a cold frame in autumn, but most people start this perennial as a transplant from the nursery.) Plant them out after your last frost date has passed.

Plants purchased from a nursery or garden center greenhouse should be hardened off before planting.

How to Plant Veronicas

Plant veronicas the same way as other perennials, taking into account their sunlight and soil needs.

- Loosen the soil and mix in compost.
- Dig a hole twice the diameter of the plant's container.
- When placing the plant in the hole, ensure the top of the root ball is level with the soil surface.
- Water thoroughly after planting and weekly until well rooted.
- Apply mulch to keep weeds down and keep the soil cool and moist.
- If the plants are not yet branched, pinch to promote lateral growth and a bushier habit.



Veronica spicata, spiked speedwell plant with blue flowers.

Credit: Kabar

GROWING

Like many perennials, speedwells don't need much help once they are established.

- During the first year, water in the summer if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. Afterward, water only if needed during prolonged dry spells.
- Tall varieties can benefit from some staking, especially in windy locations.
- Topdress with compost every spring (a great idea for all your perennial plants) and apply new mulch as necessary.
- Deadheading may extend bloom time. Some varieties will rebloom if

their spent flowers are removed.

- Like other perennials, you should divide them every few years to reinvigorate the clump. You'll also get more veronica! Low-growing groundcover veronicas are especially suited to dividing to keep the patch fresh and speed up their coverage.

Overwintering Speedwell

While many veronicas are cold hardy to USDA zone 4 and some are tolerant to zone 3, you can give them a hand in colder climates by cutting back the stems to an inch or two above the soil line after the frost. Cover the crowns with a thick layer of straw or other mulch.

A couple of stakes and some old netting or chicken wire will help hold the mulch against the wind until the snow arrives to anchor it.

Types

- ‘Crater Lake Blue’ (*V. austriaca*) is a mat-forming perennial that grows 12 to 18 inches tall with beautiful, deep, gentian blue flowers in early summer. Hardy in USDA zones 4-8. Great for mass plantings.

- ‘Sunny Border Blue’ (*V. spicata*) is a clump-forming perennial with erect spikes of tubular, dark violet-blue flowers that reach 18-24 inches.

This hybrid blooms from early summer to frost and makes excellent cut flowers.

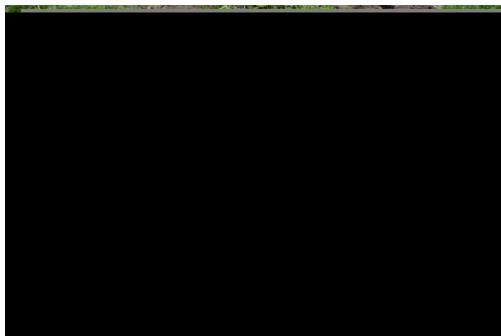
- ‘Red Fox’ (*V. spicata*) has deep pink flowers on a narrow spike similar to ‘Sunny Border Blue’ but is a bit shorter, at about 12-16 inches.

Hardy to USDA zones 3-8 for the northern gardener!



Veronica spicata 'Rotfuchs' Red Fox in the garden. Credit: Irenestev

'Dick's Wine' (*V. prostrata*) is a ground cover that grows to about 4-8 inches tall and produces an abundance of rose-wine-colored blooms—so many that they actually hide the dark-green foliage. Easily divided as they grow for quicker coverage. Drought tolerant once established and deer resistant.



A prostrate speedwell. Credit: APugach

HARVESTING

- Some varieties of Veronica make excellent cut flowers. For the longest vase life, bring a vase or jar with you and cut in the morning, placing them immediately in water—don't

wait until you get them up to
the house.

- Remove any foliage that would be submerged in the vase.
- Add flower food, keep the bouquet out of direct sunlight, and change the water daily (good practice for all fresh-cut flowers from the garden).

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- Leaf smut
- Root rot

WIT AND WISDOM

- Speedwell has been used as traditional medicine in Korea and China for more than 100 years for respiratory problems like asthma and COPD.
- Some veronicas will drop their lower leaves in summer. After the first bloom flush, a good trimming will promote more low foliage and encourage more flowers.

FLOWERS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture. [Read More from Andy Wilcox](#)

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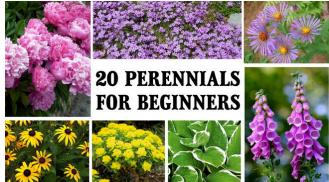
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COMMENTS

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Kate (not verified) 9 months ago

My ground cover Veronica's seem to flop to
the outside so there aren't any blooms or
leaves in the middle. Any suggestions
appreciated!

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REPLY**Joe Bills** 7 months 1 week ago

Your problem is not an uncommon one, but it may take a bit of experimentation to determine an exact cause. The most likely culprit is that your soil is too rich, causing the blooms to grow faster and larger than the stalks can support. The Wisconsin extension service and Pennsylvania horticulturist George Weigel offer some helpful hints at the links below.

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/ground-cover-veronicas/>

https://www.pennlive.com/gardening/2010/04/floppy_veronica.html

REPLY

Mary Freeman (not verified) 1 year 3

months ago

Will Speedwell grow well in 9a?

REPLY

Leigh (not verified) 4 years 1 month ago

I'm in a zone 7b, when should i expect my veronica to emerge from it's winter dormancy?

REPLY

The Editors 4 years 1 month ago

It depends on the weather this year, but we usually see it emerge in early April in northern Texas (which is 7b). Be careful not to overwater Veronica or water from the top to avoid fungus. Use a soaker hose. It likes full Sun and well-draining soil.

REPLY

Nicole (not verified) 4 years 8 months ago

How do I divide my Veronica?

REPLY

deborah stemp (not verified)

7 months 1 week ago

Just like a hosta....cut with a sawzell or shovel right down the center. Plant In good soil deep enough to have the roots covered and even with the plants bottom growth.

I bought one dead looking one on sale in the clearance at Lowe's garden center. Looked pretty patenting, but for 5 bucks, I gave it a shot. One plant....sawed in into 4, and cut the bottom roots off as it was severely root bound. Put it in a bucket of water for an hour or

so....planted in my garden. Now have 4, soon to be 8 gorgeous plants.

REPLY

Leslie Lawrence (not verified) 4 years 8 months ago

Bought what was told a veronica but it didn't have flower spires. Does have purple flowers but they form off a 7-8" side sprout. Mine is about a 5 ' plant. Spent blooms turn into fuzzy little blooms!

REPLY

Michelle (not verified) 4 years 8 months ago

Please help.... my husband bought this one for me and it was so purple and healthy 2 weeks ago! I transplanted it to a little bigger pot it was good for a week, now the tops are fading, the leaves keep wilting like it's dry, but I check it twice a day. I have quite a few plants on my patio, I am totally

learning as I go! So I'm wanting to make it pretty again... should I trim it? As I have read some people do. How... topping it? Trimming the deads...? Thank you!

[REPLY](#)

Julie (not verified) 2 years 11

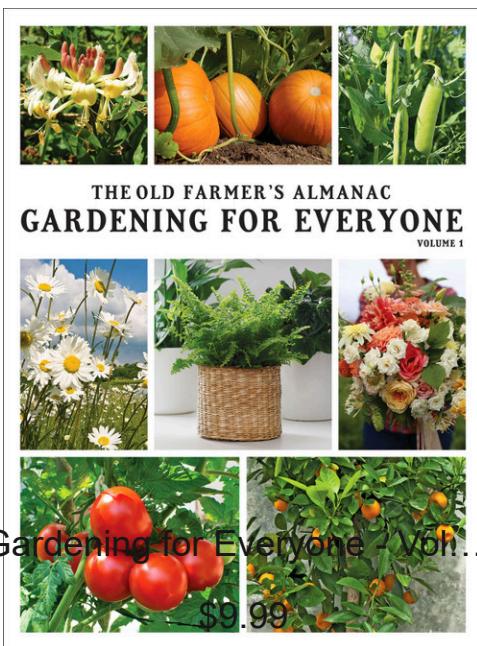
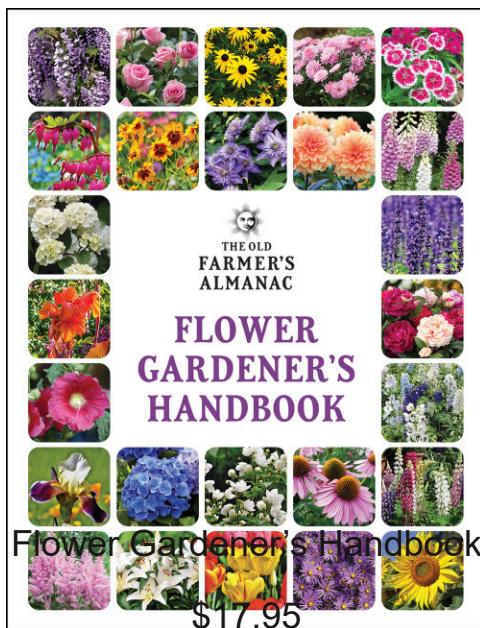
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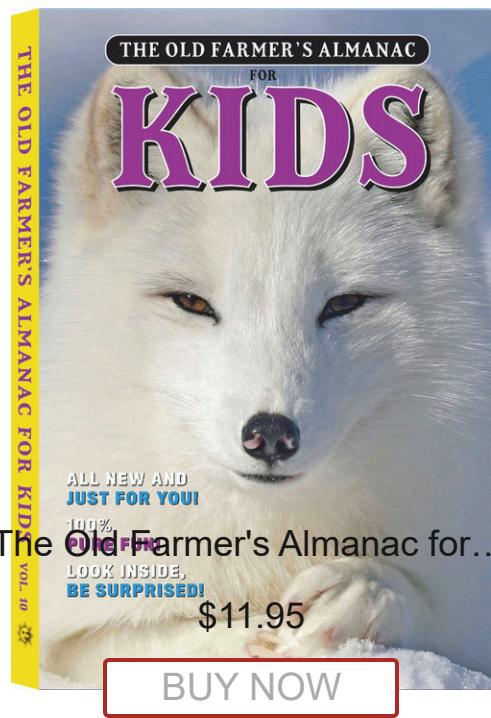
As birds & butterflies sip/drain
the nectar, the spikes appear
more pale. Trim and new bright
spikes will follow...

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