Town & Country gardens

Common Foxglove

Digitalis purpurea



Common Foxglove flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 5 feet

Spread: 30 inches

Spacing: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

Elegant tubular flowers in shades of straberry pink, white or purple with dark spots in the center; attractive green lance-shaped leaves; a biennial that's happiest in part-shade with adequate moisture

Ornamental Features

Common Foxglove features bold spikes of pink tubular flowers with deep purple spots rising above the foliage from early to mid summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its pointy leaves remain green in color throughout the season.



Common Foxglove flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Common Foxglove is an herbaceous perennial with a rigidly upright and towering 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 is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting hummingbirds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Common Foxglove is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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- Vertical Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Common Foxglove will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 5 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 30 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 24 inches apart. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. It grows at a fast rate, and tends to be biennial, meaning that it puts on vegetative growth the first year, flowers the second, and then dies. However, this species tends to self-seed and will thereby endure for years in the garden if allowed. 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 is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.

Common Foxglove is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden. Be aware that in our climate, most plants cannot be expected to survive the winter if left in containers outdoors, and this plant is no exception. Contact our experts for more information on how to protect it over the winter months.