

Join the Bee Cause -Plant Borage

(*Borago officinalis*)



Borage is an edible flower with a mild cucumber flavour. Large plants bear hundreds of small edible flowers, most blue and some pink. Borage has origins in the Middle East, Syria in particular, and was historically used in war as a herbal enhancement of bravery and courage. Today however, Borage is more commonly used as edible decorations for salads and garnishes. Borage is unique in that it is also referred to as the starflower thanks to the flowers forming a 5-point star shape. Borage leaves, stems and sepals are additionally covered in thin white silvery hairs that add to its unique appearance.

Borage plants can grow between 2-3 ft. in height and up to approximately 12 inches in width. The lower foliage can grow to 6 inches in length while the oval shaped leaves are hairy and rough. Borage leaves do contain a small amount of silica which may irritate the skin of sensitive individuals, so handle with care, whether they are fresh or dried. Borage is a beneficial garden choice because it helps any plants it is interplanted with by increasing resistance to pests and disease, and by adding trace minerals to the soil it is planted in, making it good for composting and mulching.

Growing Borage:

Borage is a hardy annual herb- which means it is extremely easy to grow from seed. Furthermore, Borage can be sown in the early spring, or even in the fall and left to overwinter in the soil. Borage requires approximately 7-14 days of complete shade to germinate. Borage is not easily transplanted due to its long taproot so it is important that the pot you plant it in is the pot it is intended to grow in. Flowers will begin to bloom after 50-60 days and once flowered they prefer full shade. Since the lower foliage can grow to lengths of 6" it is important that plants are spaced at least 12" apart. If Borage is left to bloom and set seed then it will readily self seed providing a new generation of Borage each year.



A favourite plant of honeybees, bumble bees and small native bees.