

Echinacea (Purple)

Echinacea, also known as Purple Coneflower, are long-blooming from July to October. They may bloom in the first year if planted in early March, but it's their third year that is really spectacular. These perennial coneflowers attract hoverflies and parasitoid wasps, so they're useful for pest control in companion plantings. Overwintering seeds provide food for birds.

Type: Perennial

Height: 80cm (32")

Exposure: Full sun

Difficulty: Easy



Growing

Sow indoors 8-10 weeks before planting out. If started indoors in late winter, Echinacea may bloom in the first year. It can also be direct sown in early spring or early fall. Germination should occur in 10-21 days.

Sow seeds shallowly at only 3mm (1/8") deep. If starting indoors, provide total darkness and a soil temperature of 21-25°C (70-75°F). Once sprouts appear, provide bright light. Space plants at 30-38cm (12-15") apart.

Saving

To save seeds, snip flower stalks after the petals die. Cut as long a stem as you can. Slip this stem into a paper bag, putting it in with the spiky flower head toward the bottom of the bag. You can put more than one stem into the same bag. Close the bag around the stem base using a rubber band, twist tie, or string. Hang the bag up in a closet, dry garage, or basement. As flower heads dry, seeds will fall into the bag. Leave some seed heads intact over winter to feed birds and provide shelter for beneficial insects. Put the seeds into a dated and labelled envelope and return to Brock!