

Penstemon (Foxglove Beardtongue)

Penstemon digitalis or Foxglove Beardtongue is a native perennial that is beloved by hummingbirds and other pollinators. It has light pink to white flowers atop graceful flower spikes. It is very adaptable and grows well in part shade.

Type: Perennial

Height: 120 cm (48")

Exposure: Full sun to part shade

Difficulty: Intermediate



Growing

Cold stratification is the process of breaking seed dormancy through chilling. To artificially cold stratify seeds, place them on a damp paper towel in a sealed bag in the refrigerator for 6-8 weeks before sowing directly outside or starting indoors. To provide natural stratification, plant seeds outside in the fall for next season's blooms.

Sow seeds shallowly at only 3mm (1/8") deep. Seeds should sprout in 1-2 weeks. Keep seedlings moist but not soaking wet. Transplant outside after a hardening off period. Space plants at 30-60 cm (12-24") 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!