

Growing Heleniums

Heleniums are totally hardy in all British climates and they will stand temperatures down to -30°C . They prefer to grow in moisture retentive soils but will thrive in any soil that does not dry out excessively during summer. Give them plenty of sun though part shade can be acceptable.

Heleniums establish and divide best if planted during March-April. We do not recommend autumn planting. Plants that you buy after midsummer are best overwintered in their pots outside or in a cold greenhouse and planted out when they start to grow in spring - usually mid-March. In cool and wet springs slugs and snails can be a problem, particularly for young plants. Take particular care in early spring with new plants and those which have been grown under protection which have soft and thin leaves - more palatable to slugs!

The taller varieties will need support in some form - individual canes are OK but we prefer to grow them through pea sticks. If you "stop" the shoots when about 30cm high the plants will flower on shorter stems and be bushier. Regular dead-heading will lengthen flowering. Cut down the old canes sometime during winter - we like to leave the seed heads for finches to eat during winter and prune at winter's end but if you do this you may get volunteer seedlings appear!

You can see the UK National Collection of Heleniums growing at Holbrook Garden, near Tiverton Devon. Visit holbrookgarden.com tel 01884 821164, see the Sampford Shrubs/ Holbrook Garden catalogue or the current NGS Yellow Book for opening details

This information prepared by collection holder Martin Hughes-Jones



Helenium Gay-go-Round in August and growing as part of the UK National Collection