East Bay Nursery

Opium Poppy

Papaver somniferum



Opium Poppy flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 2a

Other Names: Sleep Bringing Poppy, White Cloud Poppy

Description:

This variety grows tall with large flowers that range in color from white to purple, and any shade of red or pink; plant in rich soil with good drainage; needs plenty of room in containers

Ornamental Features

Opium Poppy features bold semi-double red round flowers with purple overtones and deep purple eyes at the ends of the stems from early to mid summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its deeply cut ferny leaves remain grayish green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Opium Poppy is an open herbaceous perennial with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Opium Poppy is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use

Planting & Growing

Opium Poppy will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 3 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 18 inches apart. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. 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! As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.