Blue Cross Gentian

Gentiana cruciata 'Blue Cross'

Blue Cross Gentian flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 10 inches

Spread: 10 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Cross Gentian

Description:

Intense blue-violet tubular flowers steal the show on this compact, durable, drought resistant plant; spoon shaped leaves meet at the nodes to form a cross, thus the name; perfect for rock gardens, easy to care for

Ornamental Features

Blue Cross Gentian features dainty clusters of blue tubular flowers with violet overtones along the stems from mid summer to early fall. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its narrow leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Blue Cross Gentian is an herbaceous perennial with a mounded form. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Blue Cross Gentian is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Blue Cross Gentian will grow to be about 10 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 inches. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the ground. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 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!

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, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Blue Cross Gentian is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers against which the thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.