

# Plant 'Imagination

**Blue Bachelor Button** a favorite of **Alice Tedrow** is a popular annual that does well in most zones, It looks good behind borders, in arrangements and is often worn as a boutonniere or corsage..

Native to Europe and Asia, gardeners are growing bachelor buttons (*Centaurea cyanus*) for their frilly blossoms showing in pale blues, purples, pinks and reds. Also known as cornflowers, they will bloom throughout the summer months and are perfect for cuttings with their long “silvery” stems. Hardy annual, grows to 3 feet tall.

In 1340 B.C. The 1-1/2 inch blossoms were woven into a beautiful wreath and used in the tomb of King Tutankhamen to aid in the afterlife.

Bachelor buttons are not particularly fussy and will tolerate most growing conditions providing they receive plenty of sun. They will do well in average, well-drained soils and do not require large amounts of water. Use a peony ring, or plant in the back or sheltered location as these tall plants tend to sprawl without some support. These are the plants Grandma used to grow and will add charm to your garden while stirring memories with their abundant blossoms and arousing scents.

Bachelor buttons are easy to grow from seed. Sow outdoors just before the last frost or shortly after. Plant seeds just beneath the surface of the soil. Seeds will germinate in 7-14 days. Add a general purpose fertilizer once a month and remove the old flowers to prolong the blooming season. If treated right, they'll self sow — be sure to mulch starting in the fall.

If you want to save the seeds allow flowers to mature and fade on the plant. Seed pods develop at the base of the flower and turn light tan to brown when mature. Remove the pod and allow it to dry for a few days. Use your finger and thumb to rub open the end of the pod. Loosened seeds should release easily.

