Getting to know CALIFORNIA POPPY

Eschscholzia californica

The California Poppy, Eschscholzia californica, graces many a sun-drenched meadow throughout California and the Southwest with its brilliant orange, saucershaped flowers. On bright days, the poppy's silky petals open to greet the sun. At dusk, the golden blooms close into tightly fluted repose.

Eschscholzia californica, was first described to the scientific community in the early 19th Century by a German naturalist, Adelbert von Chamisso. Since then, the flower has gained admirers the world-over, becoming the State Flower of California in 1890, and winning the hearts of gardeners everywhere with its welcoming beauty and the ease with which it grows.

Always friendly and neat in appearance – a popular flower to press – the California Poppy features a compact, upright form, lifting its famous orange blooms 12 to 18 inches above a finely cut bed of lacy, bluish-green foliage.

In milder climates that resemble its native California, the poppy is a perennial, blooming throughout the spring and summer, reseeding itself freely and generously. In colder regions, poppies must be reseeded by hand each spring in preparation for their summer.



GROWING GUIDE

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A FIELD OF POPPIES! There's enough seed here to plant an entire meadow full of poppies – almost 30,000 seeds in all!

Scattered in an informal, wildflower planting, this seed will cover about 1,400 square feet, or an area roughly 38' x 38'. Approximately 70% of these seeds will germinate.

WHAT POPPIES LIKE: Poppies love dry and sunny places and well-drained, sandy soils. They are quite drought-tolerant, but don't like relentless high temperatures. Cool and sunny is their favorite combination. Water sparingly.

THE BEAUTY OF POPPIES: Poppies are very pretty in cottage gardens, rock gardens, and casually mixed into other wildflower plantings. They make a fantastic color accent, and thrive in most any open, sunny area. They are not at their best in small containers, and can be transplanted only when very young.

WHEN TO PLANT: In colder climates, sow your seeds in early spring. In milder regions, plant poppies in fall. NOTE: In climates without cold, deep frosts in winter, poppies are perennial – re-seeeding themselves naturally and generously year after year!

HOW TO SOW POPPY SEED: Sow your seeds in soil cleared of other vegetation. The seeds should be buried near the surface (1/16" deep), and watered-in lightly. Beware, birds love poppy seeds!

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE: Your poppy seeds will germinate 15 to 30 days after planting. The optimum soil temperature for germination is 60-70°F. In most areas, poppies bloom from April through August.

STORING EXTRA SEED: Any seed you do not use can be stored in a cool, dry place.