

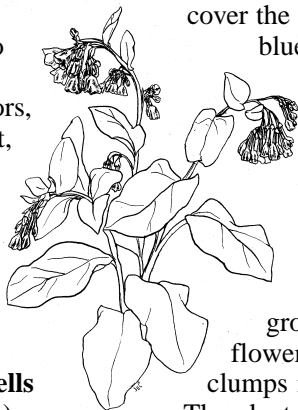
Horticulture

Blue Flowers for the Garden

Blue is a cool and calming color. Many gardeners look for plants that have blue flowers to plant with other complementary colors, such as white, violet, grey, pink, and yellow. Here are a few plants that will grow in Southeast Nebraska and have blue flowers.

Virginia bluebells

(*Mertensia virginica*) This woodland flower blooms in the spring. This perennial has nodding clusters of blue, bell shaped flowers. It grows best in shady areas of the garden. The plants grow from one to two feet tall and spread about a foot. They go dormant in



summer, so I like them near hostas or other perennials that cover the space later. Virginia bluebells are cold hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9.

Blue corydalis

(*Corydalis flexuosa*) This is a wonderful woodland plant that thrives in shade and moist soil, but also grows in full sun. The flowers bloom in neat clumps mid-to late-spring. The plant has a lovely fernlike foliage. Blue corydalis is a perennial and hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8.

Heartleaf brunnera (*Brunnera macrophylla*) This spring bloomer prefers moist,

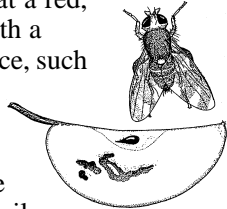
See **BLUE FLOWERS** on page 11

Think About Apple Maggot Control Now

The adult of the apple maggot is a fly similar to the housefly, but smaller. The larvae feed on the fruit and cause the fruit to rot. They then drop to the soil to pupate during the winter months. The control of the apple maggot must be directed at the adult fly. This control should occur between the time the adults emerge and the time they lay their eggs. Sanitation helps reduce the number of flies. Pick up the fallen apples and dispose of them. Weekly spraying with

insecticides such as Sevin is an effective control. The spray schedule should begin mid to late June and continue through August.

To tell when the flies begin to emerge, coat a red, plastic ball with a sticky substance, such as Tanglefoot. Hang the apple look-a-like in the tree and check it daily. (MJM)



Propagation of Shrubs from Softwood Cuttings

Many ornamental shrubs in the home landscape may be propagated by softwood cuttings. Softwood cuttings are taken in late May through early July from the current season's growth. Cutting material should be flexible but mature enough to snap when sharply bent. Lilac, forsythia, weigela, barberry, potentilla, and viburnum are some of the shrubs that may be propagated from softwood cuttings.

A proper rooting medium is needed to successfully root softwood cuttings. The rooting medium must not only retain moisture, but drain well and provide physical support. Coarse sand, perlite, and vermiculite are good rooting materials.

The container that holds the rooting medium must have holes in the bottom for drainage. If only a few cuttings are taken, a large clay or plastic pot should be adequate. A wooden or plastic flat may be used if larger quantities are rooted. Once the container has been filled, the medium should be watered and allowed to drain before the cuttings are inserted.

When taking cuttings, remove plant material with a sharp knife. Softwood cuttings should be approximately 4 to 6 inches long. Pinch off the leaves on the lower half of the cutting and remove any flowers. Make a fresh cut just below the point where one or two leaves

are attached to the stem (node), then dip the base (cut end) of the cutting in a root-promoting compound. Tap off any surplus material.

Cuttings from some shrubs root easily, but others are more difficult. Root-promoting substances increase the percentage of cuttings that root, shorten the period needed for rooting, and increase the number of roots per cutting. Root-promoting materials are often available in garden centers and mail-order companies. Most products are in powder form.

To avoid brushing off the powder when inserting the cuttings, make holes in the rooting medium with your finger or a pencil. Insert the cuttings approximately two inches deep into the rooting medium. After all the cuttings are inserted, carefully water the medium and let it drain.

Water is critical to the survival of the cuttings. A cutting has no root system to absorb water, yet continues to lose water through its leaves. The cutting will wilt and die if it loses a large quantity of water. Water loss can be reduced by placing a clear plastic bag over the cuttings and container.

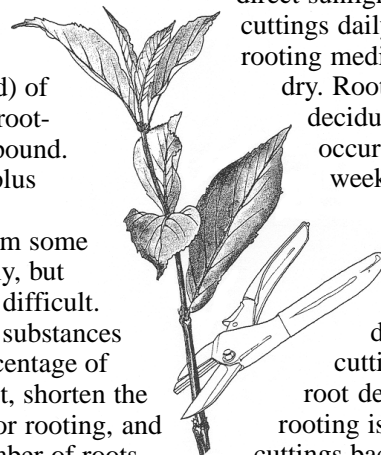
Once covered, place the cuttings in bright light, but not

direct sunlight. Inspect the cuttings daily. Water the rooting medium if it begins to dry. Rooting of most deciduous shrubs should occur in six to eight weeks.

Examine a few cuttings after four or five weeks. Carefully dig up several cuttings to check on root development. If rooting is poor, place the cuttings back in the medium, water them in, then cover again with a plastic bag. When the cuttings have a well-developed root system, they should be hardened off in preparation for transplanting. Remove the covering but don't allow

the cuttings to wilt. Keep the rooting medium moist. After several days, carefully remove the cuttings and transplant them into individual pots with a good potting mix. The young plants can be planted into the ground in a few weeks. Home gardeners may want to grow them in the garden for one or two years before moving the small shrubs to their permanent site in the landscape.

It takes several years for rooted cuttings to become nice-sized plants. However, many gardeners find root cuttings and growing the small shrubs to be fun and rewarding. (MJM)



2000 June/July Garden Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Power rake zoysiagrass	2	3
4	5 Plug zoysiagrass	6 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	7 Watch for cabbage worms	8	9	10
11	12 Control apple maggot	13 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	14 Apply fungicide to pines for needle blight	15 Prune spring flowering shrubs	16	17 Check bluegrass for sod webworm
18	19 Control bagworms	20 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	21 Watch for bean leaf beetle	22 Check roses for black spot	23 Take softwood cuttings to start plants	24
25	26 Watch for squash vine borer	27 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	28	29 Remove faded flowers from annual plants	30	1
2	3 Control bean leaf beetle	4 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	5 Check garden plants for spider mites	6 Check tomatoes for blight	7 Plant fall garden	8
9	10 Control squash vine borer	11 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	12 Prune suckers on maple tree	13	14 Pull weeds	15
16	17 Keep garden well watered	18 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	19 Pick flowers to dry or press	20 Store extra seeds	21	22
23	24	25 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	26	27 Divide iris	28	29
30	31					

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MJM)

Horticulture information center

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- 237 Strawberries
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- 157 Black Spot On Roses
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- 277 Squash Vine Borer
- 278 Vegetable Pest Control
- 279 Tomato Problems
- 290 Weed Control in Garden
- 292 Rabbit Control in Garden