

Bleeding Hearts

by Pat Stachon

Bleeding Hearts, (DICENTRA SPECTABILIS) is old fashioned and one of the most familiar spring flowers ever grown. Native to China and Japan it was introduced to English gardens in the mid 1800's then brought to North America with the new settlers. It grows 60-90cms tall, colours are rosy pink with some white. This is a clumping forming classic perennial, one of the top 10 that survives so well in this area. that has been growing in gardens for over 100 years. If the location is cool, partly shady, the blooms will last longer. Looks great with daffodils and tulips.

White flowered Bleeding heart (FORMA ALBA) has soft green fern-like leaves, white flowers, looks absolutely wonderful with pink peonies. This delicate looking plant with good drainage and good soil will thrive for at least a month. The leaves will die down during the summer.

Fringed Bleeding heart (DICENTRA EXIMIA) grows about 45cms tall with soft pink blooms and bluish green lacy-like foliage. With good moisture and deadheading the blooms will carry on until fall. I have a grouping of 3 planted with a small ornamental evergreen. I like the effect. in my partially shaded garden. .

Here are a few tips:

1. Plant in spring in rich moist soil as this plant dislikes dry soil.
2. Do not plant in dry hot windy areas.
3. Apply any kind of mulch in May to maintain moisture.
4. Bleeding hearts will create new plants because they self seed.
5. Divide the brittle roots in the fall, which I prefer rather than spring because of potential damage. Divide in spring if you must, but be careful.
6. Sprigs of flower and foliage look lovely in mixed flower arrangements.