

***Echinacea Cayenne Spirit***

Echinacea is commonly known as the ‘Cone Flower’ and originates from the North American prairies .This hardy perennial, with its bright flowers, is immensely rewarding when planted en masse in a garden.

Although Echinacea are ‘poor- soil’ tolerant they will perform best if planted in well drained soils. Avoid wet, mucky soil types as they won’t enjoy this. They love a full sun position and once watered to establish will grow into showy, sturdy plants.

Although Echinacea is a low-water plant you’ll need to water young plants at first to help them establish new roots .Applying a mulch will help water retention and prevent them drying out. Once plants are established they are tough and drought tolerant.

Echinacea are also resistant to adverse weather conditions, they can withstand hail, strong winds, blazing heat, frost, snow and are humidity tolerant. They are perfect for farm and rural gardening as they are not palatable to buck and other grazing animals.

Echinacea are long blooming and produce large daisy-like bright petaled flowers that surround a brown spiny, cone-like centre. The bushy deep green foliage fills containers nicely and if planted in a garden should be spaced approximately 30 cm apart to avoid overcrowding. Remove spent flowers and cut back stems to encourage more blooms.

Echinacea Cayenne Spirit has a gorgeous mix of purple, pink, rosy -red, orange, yellow and cream colours. They reach approximately 60 cm in height and have well branched strong erect stems.

In vegetable gardens Echinacea can be used as a companion plant with egg-plant, green peppers, onions and beans. Medicinally it has been used for centuries by American Indians and today IT is valued worldwide as a healing plant. Medical research has established that Echinacea contains antiviral, antibiotic and antibacterial properties; it is a true immune system booster and effective detoxifier. It is said to also stimulate the circulatory system, the respiratory system and the lymphatic system.

All in all Echinacea is a showy, unusual plant that asks for little and rewards with much. It is easy to care for and has few pests and disease problems. It makes for excellent cut or dried flowers and is long lasting in a vase. They are loved by butterflies and birds and are ideal for sunny borders, mass plantings or growing in mixed containers.