



## Column Stock Planting Guide

### About Column Stock

For such a beautiful flower, the word "stock" does not do it justice. Presumably, column stock was named after the stocky appearance of the flower-laden stems. It's also an early season "stock" flower to fill in the garden where gaps may exist. Fun fact: It is believed that Matthiola incana was brought to Monticello in 1771 by Thomas Jefferson and by Victorian times had become a favorite in gardens on both sides of the pond.

### When to Plant

In zones 7 to 10, pre-seed your garden or outdoor containers in the fall for early spring blooms. In cool regions, start seeds indoors 8 to 10 weeks before the last average spring frost date. For plants to set buds, nighttime temps must not reach above 60°F. Blooms will begin to fade once daytime temps reach 80°F.

Expect column stock to reach maturity 10 to 12 weeks after sowing seeds.

### Where to Plant

Before planting, choose a suitable location with well-draining soil and full sun exposure. Make sure the soil is fertile and rich in nutrients.

If you are container gardening, choose pots that can accommodate column stock's mature dimensions, plus an inch to fit in a hose nozzle or watering can spout.

### How to Plant

We recommend using individual seed starter cells for minimal disruption when transplanting to the garden. Moisten the potting medium and press two seeds gently into each cell. Barely cover the seeds with an eighth of an inch of soil, as flower seeds need light to germinate. Maintain even moisture without oversaturation by letting the cells almost dry out before watering again. Place the cells in a sunny room with a temperature between 65 to 75°F. The seeds should sprout within two weeks.

After the danger of frost has passed, harden off your seedlings by gradually acclimating them to the outdoors for a few hours a day; then transplant them to the garden or containers. Place the seed starter cells level with the garden soil to maintain the same planting depth.

When direct sowing, prepare the soil by removing any debris, rocks, or weeds. Till the soil to a depth of six to eight inches and mix in some compost or fertilizer. Sow column stock seeds directly into the soil at a depth of about an eighth of an inch. Space the seeds about six to eight inches apart. After planting, water the seeds gently to keep the soil moist. Avoid over-watering as this can cause the seeds to rot.

### Caring for Columbines

As column stock begins to grow, thin it out to leave the strongest plants. Water regularly and fertilize the plants once a month. Once column stock plants begin to bloom, you can start harvesting the flowers. Cut the stems just at soil level and use them for flower arrangements as a fragrant addition to your home.