



Bat Flower Planting Guide

About Bat Flower

Black bat flower, scientifically known as *Tacca chantrieri*, is a distinctive and exotic plant characterized by a detailed growth process. Despite its unique and unusual appearance, cultivating this perennial is a rewarding experience. Displaying a visually stunning and gothic charm, these plants typically blossom from late spring to early fall, making them an excellent choice for creating a haunting garden leading up to Halloween.

True to its common name, the bat flower resembles a bat, featuring wing-shaped bracts and seed pods that bear a resemblance to bat faces. The plant's dark and dusky color palette ranges from maroon to purple, often giving the impression of being black. Originating from the forests of Asia and Australia, the bat flower thrives as an understory plant and flourishes in a semi-tropical environment.

When to Plant

Black bat flower is suitable for USDA zones 9B through 11. Since this area does not typically experience a frost, black bat flower seeds can be started in late winter to early spring.

Where to Plant

These flowers need shade with indirect light. Indoors, this can be an eastern or western window outside of direct morning or evening rays. A northern window works as well, but avoid southern windows. Outdoors, consider planting them under an awning or a larger tree or bush. They also like to be very humid, preferring around 50% humidity. If your climate is not humid enough, consider frequent misting, a pebble tray, or a plant humidifier.

If planting outside, space plants two to three feet apart.



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How to Plant

Before sowing, soak the seeds in warm water for 24 hours. This process softens the seed coat and enhances germination. A thermos bottle can be used to maintain the water temperature. Sow the seeds at a shallow depth, about 1/8 inch, in a seed-starting mix. Choose a mix that is light and well-draining. Place the seed trays or pots in a warm area where the temperature can be consistently maintained at 81°F to 86°F. This is crucial as fluctuating or lower temperatures can significantly delay or inhibit germination. Use a heat mat under the seed trays if necessary to maintain this temperature. Keep the soil moist but not waterlogged. Over-watering can cause the seeds to rot. Covering the seed trays with a clear plastic dome or plastic wrap can help maintain consistent soil moisture and humidity.

As seedlings emerge, provide bright, indirect light. A north-facing windowsill or a spot under grow lights can work well. Good air circulation is important to prevent fungal growth. If you're using a plastic cover, remove it occasionally to let fresh air in.

How to Care for Bat Flower

Once the seedlings have grown to a size where they can be handled, transplant them into individual pots filled with a suitable potting mix. This typically happens a few weeks after germination. Continue to keep the soil moist and provide bright, indirect light. Gradually acclimate the young plants to the environmental conditions where they will eventually be grown, whether that's outdoors or in a specific part of your home.

Black bat flower prefers light shade and indirect sunlight; suitable for both ground and container planting. Use a light, porous soil mix with good drainage (pine bark, peat moss, and sand or perlite). Keep soil consistently moist during the growing season, reduce watering in winter but don't let soil dry out. Ideal temperatures are 77°F to 84°F in summer and 59°F to 64°F in winter. High humidity is preferred.

Divide rhizomes in spring, ensuring each section has a bud, and plant in a suitable potting mix. Use diluted liquid fertilizer every two weeks during the growing season or slow-release fertilizer. Watch for typical pests and diseases; regular monitoring is important.