





special section

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We've hunted high and low (high-tech and low-tech, that is) for the latest gadgets, gear, apps, and ideas.

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The kitchen of the future is about making connections, both technological and human. No robot maid necessary!

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Redo our cover kitchen

Try out your own color and pattern combos in our enhanced tablet edition: BHG.com/Trial



garden blantings

Coneflowers have sprouted a new look! No longer limited to a purple palette, garden-worthy Echinacea varieties come in cheerful hues of orange, yellow, red, pink, and white.

A cut above

Thanks to plant breeding, modern coneflowers are even more versatile in the garden. Here are a handful of our favorites:

1. FIREBIRD

Blooms of scarlet (a rare color even among modern coneflowers) seem to scream "Gat your nectar here!" 24 inches

2. PURITY

These gold-centered, snowy blooms are the new standard for white petals. Pencil straight stems are perfect for cutting. 27 inches

3. SECRET AFFAIR

A blossom this showy can't be kept hidden. Double vivid pink flowers open by the dozen on bushy plants. Great in pots, too. 22 inches

4. DAYDREAM

With bright yellow rays surrounding a prominent orange cone, this hybrid brings the sun down to earth. Most dramatic when massed in borders. 26 inches

5. FLAME THROWER

Radiant, two-tone redorange and gold flowers add hot hues to any mixed border. One of the earliest coneflowers to bloom. 36 inches



SOMBRERO HOT CORAL

Coneflowers grow anywhere the sun shines. Hardy in Zones 3-10, their delicate beauty belies a tough-as-nails resilience. We're blissed-out over these new blooms. You'll love them, too!

Culture

SUN: Plants bloom best in full sun but will tolerate light shade.

WATER: Give new plants 1-2 inches of water per week. Drought-tolerant once established.

FERTILIZER: New hybrids like well-drained garden soil enriched with compost.

Harvest

PICK AT THEIR PEAK: Cut stems when petals are fully open but the disk florets (the center "quills") are still closed.

DAYS IN BOUQUETS:

To prolong vase life, trim leaves below the waterline before you arrange fresh-cut stems. Replace water daily.

Sources

BLUESTONE PERENNIALS

bluestoneperennials.com

GARDEN CROSSINGS gardencrossings.com-

GREAT GARDEN PLANTS greatgardenplants.com

WHITE FLOWER FARM whiteflowerfarm.com

How to use

There's a coneflower for every garden position and purpose, thanks to an abundance of new cultivars in heights ranging from 12-inch dwarfs to 40-inch divas. For edging and containers, choose dwarfs like Chiquita. Rosita, and Cranberry Cupcake, Fill the middle of a border with stocky, multistem, medium types, such as Meteor Red, Tangerine Dream, and Dixie Blaze, Reserve the back of the border for tall types, including Flame Thrower, Tiki Torch, and Ruby Giant. All bloom from June till the first fall frost.



medium tall

Prairie roots

Long before plant breeders began hybridizing Eckinacea purpurea, this North American native was a mainstay in formal and cottage gardens alike. In addition to myriad color combos of petals and cones, today's cultivars offer longer blooming seasons and stronger stems for cutting. Hybrids hold their bright hues longer than the species do. Many are sweetly fragrant, too.

perennials

Find plants that solve your biggest landscaping challenges BHG.com/ **ToughPerennials**

No-fail

Propagation

Wild coneflowers readily self-seed and sprout like weeds if blooms are left standing. Most new hybrids have sterile seeds, so they won't spread. Those few that do often revert to purple.

FROM SEEDS: Garden catalogs sell seeds of both the wild purple species and many new hybrids. Start Indoors 8-10 weeks before the last frost.

FROM DIVISIONS: Early spring and early fall are ideal times to divide coneflowers. Be sure clumps are large enough to split into several plants, each with at least one set of leaves and roots.

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176 dogs

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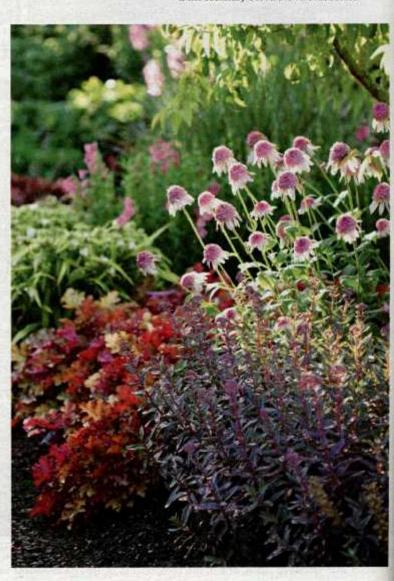
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garden plantings

"Coneflowers now come in flashy colors—some with fully double blooms. Their multiple crowns translate to fuller plants and more flowers."

Dan Heims, Terra Nova Nurseries



Echinacea Secret Romance's double pink blooms sparkle next to Marina sedum and Heuchera Ginger Peach.





Perennial pairings

Coneflowers are great team players in the garden. Here are two of our favorite combos:

AMAZING DREAM CONEFLOWER/ STRAWBERRY PUNCH COREOPSIS Staggered heights, compatible rosy hues, and long blooming cycles are the hallmarks of success

DIXIE SCARLET CONEFLOWER/

in this dynamic duo, left.

Even when it's not in full bloom, the mauve buds of this sedum add airy contrast, right. Both droughtresistant plants like average soil.



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Host a wingding

No flower says "Come and get it!" to butterflies and birds better than coneflowers. For the giant swallowtail, right, the level landing pad of brightly colored petals advertises sweet nectar within the cone's 200-300 disk florets.

OFFER SUN AND SERENITY

Like the flowers they're drawn to, butterflies love to bask in the sun. They're more likely to stop in a spot sheltered from the wind, such as alongside a fence or on the south side of a house or garden shed.



CATER TO CATERPILLARS Butterflies will lay eggs on leaves their offspring eat. Tuck in a few favorite food plants, such as parsley, dill, fennel, and milkweed.

LEAVE PLANTS STANDING

Seed-eating songbirdsparticularly goldfinchesflock to mature coneflowers. Let the flower stalks remain in fall to provide food.



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