

Agapanthus Cultivation Notes

Agapanthus are a perennial group of plants mainly native to South Africa. They have strap like green leaves growing in a fan from a basal point. Flowers are held on long stems and are numerous, opening in a cascade from the outside of the cluster. There are three main groups in the genus. Firstly the evergreen group, which are usually not hardy, secondly the deciduous group which are mainly hardy and finally the Semi evergreen group which are hardy, but need protection. All agapanthus have similar requirements when it comes to soil, position, water and feeding. It is winter protection that differs depending on group.



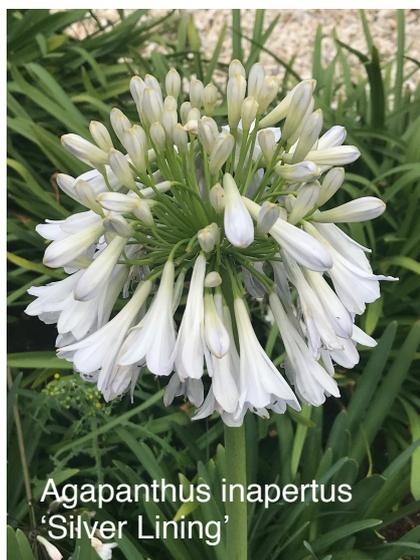
Agapanthus 'Navy Blue'
AKA 'Midnight Star'

Growing Medium.

Whether you are going in pots, planters, borders or raised beds, it is essential to use a free draining substrate. In pots and planters we use a mix of 60% John Innes number 2, 20% peat free compost or coir and 20% grit (we use Hydroleca granules). To this we add our slow release fertiliser at a rate of 2 grams per litre of substrate and remember to crock that pot! When growing in borders and raised beds it is important to avoid areas that are wet, particularly in winter. If the soil is heavy, add plenty of grit. We try to mound the soil when creating a growing area for Agapanthus. Can't stress enough- Drainage is key to success! One little myth about Agapanthus is that they like to be pot bound in order to flower. This is not true. Pot bound plants that are crawling out of their pots, will run out of steam and will produce less flowers. Top dressing every year will help, but eventually all Pot grown Agapanthus will need to be repotted.



Agapanthus 'Royal Velvet'



Agapanthus inapertus
'Silver Lining'



Agapanthus 'Oxford Blue'

Evergreen Agapanthus

A special mention on Evergreen Agapanthus. These plants are best suited to pot culture in the UK. Unless you are lucky enough to live in southern coastal areas, Evergreen Agapanthus like *A. Praecox* and its many cultivars are very prone to crown rot. It is best to grow in large pots and to move these plants into a greenhouse or similar frost free position. Some of the semi evergreen cultivars are also better of being given this type of cultivation.

But remember to get them out, cleaned up, and top dressed, as soon as the last heavy frost has passed.



Agapanthus Praecox 'Phantom'

Water and Feeding

Agapanthus are very happy in poor, very well drained soils. However it is also true that they love a good soak, particularly in late spring, after the last frost. Many of the deciduous, hardy Agapanthus we grow in the UK, come from summer rainfall areas of South Africa. They need a soak early in their growing period to give them a kick start and ensure strong healthy growth. This is also the time to feed Agapanthus, as it is with many perennial plants. We mix our Agapanthus slow release fertiliser with John Innes number 2 and sprinkle it around the root zones. You can if you prefer use a liquid feed, but whatever you do keep up the water and feeding until the first flower stems appear in late May/ early June.

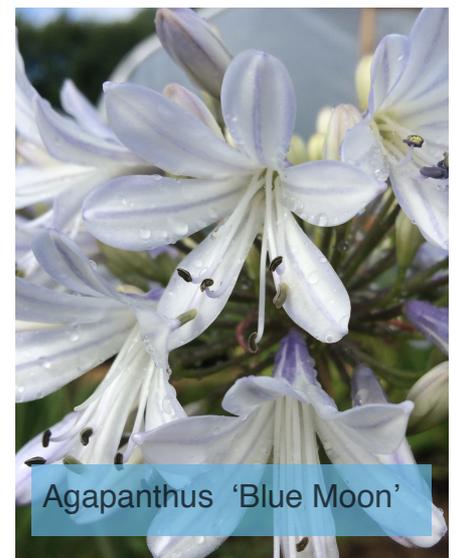
Once the flowers have opened it is advisable to slow down on the watering and cut out the feeding until the end of August, when a booster feed should be applied. The booster feed helps the plants start to form next years flower buds deep within the basal rhizome. We apply this booster in the form of a half strength liquid feed twice in the last week of August /first week of October. Watering should cease at this point and not restart until the following spring.



Agapanthus 'Twister'



Agapanthus 'Indigo dreams'



Agapanthus 'Blue Moon'

Pruning and General Care.

Deciduous Agapanthus need a little tidy up when flowering has finished. The seed heads can be left, however any seedlings that are produced are unlikely to be similar to the parents. So if you want to keep your Agapanthus true to the cultivar, cut the seed heads back before they ripen. We leave the leaf growth on deciduous Agapanthus even when they have died back. We fold this over the crowns to help protect the plants over winter. Evergreen Agapanthus should be tidied up in early spring, cutting back damaged leaves and cleaning up old flower stems.

Winter Protection.

For most deciduous Agapanthus, there is no need to do anything more than folding over dead leaves over the crown. However when particularly harsh cold weather is expected or a very late frost, it is advisable to cover the plant and root zone with Horticultural fleece or even a pile of straw. With Evergreen Agapanthus it is advisable to move plants to a greenhouse for winter and even here, they may need a fleece cover if things get really cold.



Plant selection and cultivars.

When selecting an Agapanthus for growing in your garden, there are literally hundreds to choose from. New cultivars are appearing every year and so here are some of our favourites (Some pictured in these notes).

1. For all round performance, hardiness and flowering our top pick is Agapanthus Navy Blue also labeled 'Midnight Star'. It is proven and is an absolute winner.
2. For height and impressive displays pick Agapanthus inapertus Lydenburg. At 2 meters high with mid blue long tube like flowers, it is unusual and hardy with it.
3. If you want something a little more sophisticated, try Agapanthus 'Indigo Dreams'. It is good in pots as well as the ground and has the most stunning indigo trumpet flowers.
4. White flowering Agapanthus have always had an issue with hardiness, so maybe try Agapanthus 'Silver Lining' or A. Blue Moon' Or, our favourite - Agapanthus 'Windsor Grey' These are all near white and very hardy.
5. The "latest thing" in the Agapanthus world is Bi colour flowers. There are now a few worth mentioning. Agapanthus 'Queen Mum' (Semi evergreen best in pots), Agapanthus 'Twister' (Deciduous and hardy but slow growing) and the newest being Agapanthus 'Fireworks' (Semi evergreen, fast growing and hardy- so far!)
6. Evergreen Agapanthus Praecox are the original species, found wild. One selection of this species is Agapanthus 'Phantom' . Not hardy but fantastic flowers of white, tinged with pale blue. Best given Pot Culture.
7. Rare and hard to find, but definitely a big favourite is Agapanthus 'Yves Klein'. This is a smallish Agapanthus with deep blue flowers that are loosely displayed on slender stems. Very hard to find, mainly due to it falling out of micro propagation and so only now available through division.

There are loads more species, selections and cultivars but the plants mentioned above are a great starting point and all have been tested on our Nursery and in our garden.



Agapanthus 'Yves Klein'

You can buy Agapanthus plants and slow release Agapanthus fertiliser from the Blue Nurseries web shop. www.bluenurseries.com

For specific questions or direct orders email us at: office@bluenurseries.com

© Blue Nurseries Ltd 2020