

Plant Type: Wild Flower
Colour: pale lilac or light blue
Height: 20cm
Spread: 30cm

Flowering Time: Flowers from Jul to Sep



Species Data (applies to all plants in this Plant Species)

No Species data defined for this species

Plant Data (applies to THIS plant only)

Field Scabious - *Knautia arvensis*
Irish name - Cab an ghasain
Teasel family - Dipsacaceae

This plant is also known as Gypsy Rose, Blue Button and Lady's Pincushion. When it is first in flower, the stamens standing up from the inflorescences resemble pins protruding from a pincushion. However, the effect is relatively short-lived. The male stamens wither before the female flowers mature to reduce the risks of self-pollination.

The Field Scabious is a perennial herb of grassland on well-drained, especially basic soils. It is also a locally common weed of cultivation, especially in field-borders on chalk. Established plants are drought-resistant and are found naturally in open, sunny situations. It grows on dryish soil and is found naturally on roadside verges.

This perennial plant is a member of the teasel family. It develops a deeply-penetrating, somewhat woody taproot, which takes a firm hold on the ground. Field Scabious shows a case of heterophylly, where leaves of more than one type spring from one shoot. The lower leaves have petioles, are lance-shaped and form a basal rosette. They have toothed margins and are often pinnate. The upper leaves in contrast are stalkless and pinnate with 3-6 segments at each side with a terminal lobe.

The flower heads are present from July to September. They are usually in shades of pale lilac or light blue and comprise about fifty densely packed purplish-blue florets. The petals of the outer florets are larger than those of the inner ones. The fruit is rather large and crowned by several short, bristly hairs that radiate from its summit. The fruits are exposed and fall to the ground when ripe. The plant overwinters as a rosette of dark green leaves.

The generic name, Knautia, is derived from a Saxon botanist of the seventeenth century, Dr. Knaut. The name Scabious is supposed to be connected with the word 'scab', a word derived from the Latin scabies. Some of these species were used as remedies for this and similar diseases. A homeopathic remedy can be made from the plant. It is used as a blood purifier and as a treatment for eczema and other skin disorders.

Propagation

The large flower heads are quite suitable for a garden. The plant prefers a dry soil and grows well in the summer meadow. The plant is an important source of nectar and pollen for bees and lepidoptera.

From seed

Sow seed in spring or autumn in a cold frame. When the seedlings are large enough to handle, prick them out into individual pots and plant them out in June. If you have enough seed it would be worthwhile trying a sowing in situ outdoors in the spring. Sow 0.5cm deep in a seed bed. Keep moist until established. Plant out to flowering position in September.

By division

Basal cuttings in late spring. Harvest the shoots when they are about 10-15cm long with plenty of underground stem. Pot them up into individual pots and keep them in light shade in a cold frame or greenhouse until they are rooting well. Plant them out in the summer.