

North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox

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Papaver orientale

Common Name(s): Oriental Poppy

Phonetic Spelling

puh-PAY-ver o-rien-tay-lee

⚠ This plant has low severity poison characteristics.

[See below](#)

Description

Oriental poppy is a clump-forming herbaceous perennial in the poppy family that is native to Central Asia. The genus name "*Papaver*" comes from the Latin word for poppy and the species name "*orientale*" means from the Orient. It bears large cup-shaped flowers in orange, red, and pink with black centers in June-July. The finely divided gray-green leaves give it an airy texture in the landscape. They die down after flowering and a basal rosette of leaves reappear in fall through winter until they grow vertically in the spring. They generally don't do well in heat and humidity or south of zone 7 and do need an adequate cold period in the winter in order to have good seed germination.

Plant in well-drained garden soil in full sun and do not over-water to prevent root rot of the deep taproot. Place among plants that will fill in to hide the hole left once die-down occurs. Plants can be propagated by seeds or root cuttings though you may not get a true flower color if you plant from seed.

Plant Oriental poppies in large groups in a meadow landscape, in clumps along a border or walkway. Interplant them with plants that have interest later in the summer as they will leave an empty space in your design after they flower. Some choices to consider are baby's breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*) or false chamomile (*Boltonia asteroides*) as they have sprawling forms and flower through the late summer and into early fall.

Insects, Diseases, and Other Plant Problems: No serious problems. Root rot can occur in poorly drained soils.

[More information on *Papaver*.](#)



Form
Cillas

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Close up of flower
Kathleen Moore

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Attributes:

Genus:

Papaver

Species:

orientale

Family:

Papaveraceae

Life Cycle:

Perennial

Recommended Propagation Strategy:

Root Cutting

Seed

Country Or Region Of Origin:

Central Asia

Wildlife Value:

This plant attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other wildlife.

Play Value:

Wildlife Food Source

Particularly Resistant To

(Insects/Diseases/Other Problems):

sandy soil, loamy soil; dry soil; drought tolerant; deer and rabbit; insect and disease (in general)

Edibility:

Even though oriental poppies have some toxicity, condiments have been made out of seed heads when they are young.

Dimensions:

Height: 2 ft. 0 in. - 3 ft. 0 in.

Width: 0 ft. 6 in. - 2 ft. 0 in.

Whole Plant Traits:

Plant Type:

Herbaceous Perennial

Woody Plant Leaf Characteristics:

Deciduous

Habit/Form:

Clumping

Spreading

Growth Rate:

Medium

Maintenance:

Medium

Texture:

Fine

Cultural Conditions:

Light:

Dappled Sunlight (Shade through upper canopy all day)

Full sun (6 or more hours of direct sunlight a day)

Soil Texture:

Loam (Silt)

Sand

Soil pH:

Acid (<6.0)

Alkaline (>8.0)

Neutral (6.0-8.0)

Soil Drainage:

Good Drainage

Occasionally Dry

Available Space To Plant:

12 inches-3 feet

NC Region:

Mountains

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone:

3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b

Fruit:

Display/Harvest Time:

Summer

Fruit Description:

Ripening of seeds occur in mid-late summer (July to August).

Flowers:

Flower Color:

Black

Orange

Pink

Purple/Lavender

Red/Burgundy

White

Flower Inflorescence:

Head

Flower Value To Gardener:

Good Cut

Showy

Flower Bloom Time:

Spring

Summer

Flower Shape:

Cup

Flower Petals:

7 - 20 petals/rays

Flower Size:

3-6 inches

Flower Description:

Flowers bloom in late spring or early summer. 4-6 inch showy flowers have black/purple centers surrounded by petals that can be pink, red, white, or orange.

Leaves:

Woody Plant Leaf Characteristics:

Deciduous

Leaf Color:

Gray/Silver

Green

Leaf Value To Gardener:

Showy

Leaf Type:

Compound (Pinnately , Bipinnately, Palmately)

Leaf Arrangement:

Alternate

Leaf Margin:

Serrate

Hairs Present:

Yes

Leaf Description:

Gray-green basal thistle-like leaves are pinnately dissected and hairy.

Stem:

Stem Color:

Green

Stem Is Aromatic:

No

Stem Surface:

Hairy (pubescent)

Landscape:

Landscape Location:

Container

Meadow

Slope/Bank

Landscape Theme:

Asian Garden

Cottage Garden

Drought Tolerant Garden

Pollinator Garden

Design Feature:

Border

Attracts:

Bees

Butterflies

Hummingbirds

Resistance To Challenges:

Deer

Diseases

Drought

Dry Soil

Insect Pests

Rabbits

Poisonous to Humans:

Poison Severity:

Low

Poison Symptoms:

Toxicity (usually low) to animals has occurred from Papaver plants. Since toxicity has occurred with similar plants, it is suggested this plant has toxicity too. All parts are poisonous including the juice.

Poison Toxic Principle:

unknown

Causes Contact Dermatitis:

No

Poison Part:

Bark

Flowers

Fruits

Leaves

Roots

Seeds

Stems