



The Beautiful Blossoms of the Bleeding Heart

IN THE GARDEN

This flowering plant is not hard to grow, as it thrives in shade and likes the lofty, rich soil you would find in a forest. The key to its growth is in proper watering, since it needs well-draining earth and to be kept moderately moist. It will fade as summer advances, so it is in its prime in springtime and enhances a flower garden when planted with other early bloomers, such as bulbs. It can achieve heights of six inches to two or three feet, depending on the variety you choose.

The arms of the Bleeding Heart produce a row of white or pink dangling blossoms of anywhere from 7 to 15 hearts that are about three-quarters of an inch long. Once the plant begins producing



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How happy it makes you feel to look at your garden and see your plants in full bloom! The beautiful Bleeding Heart is one that certainly is a conversation piece because the flowers are so representative of tiny, little hearts with a teardrop falling from the bottom of each. This delicate plant comes in a variety of colors and foliage; and today, the most popular are the hybrids, which are shown in these photographs.

The earliest Bleeding Heart, or *Dicentra spectabilis* in Latin, has been traced to its native land of northeastern China and Korea. There, it is known to have grown in the woodlands for centuries before a German botanist, J.G. Gmelin, took it to Russia in 1740. It was introduced into English gardens in 1847 and has been popular throughout the world ever since.

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blooms during the first warm days of spring, it will flower continuously for about a month. The heart-shaped petals will fold back as the bloom opens, revealing the stamens and pistil in its falling teardrop.

Even though the Bleeding Heart has an unusual name, it might put a smile on your face to know its other common name... "Dutchman's Britches." Either name you choose, this plant is truly unique and beautiful, and gives those who see it many happy moments, just as hearts are meant to do.

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