

CALIFORNIA POPPY

Eschscholzia californica



Characteristics

- Type: Annual
- Family: Papaveraceae
- Native Range: Western United States
- Zone: 6 to 10
- Height: 1.00 to 1.50 feet
- Spread: 1.00 to 1.50 feet
- Bloom Time: June to July
- Bloom Description: Orange to orange-yellow
- Sun: Full sun
- Water: Medium
- Maintenance: Low
- Flower: Showy

Culture

Cool weather annual or short-lived perennial that is easily grown in sandy, poor to average, well-drained soils in full sun. Sharp soil drainage is essential. Sow seed directly in the garden at the last spring frost date or start plants in pots indoors 2-3 weeks prior to last spring frost date. Seed may be sown in fall in USDA Zones 6-10. Deadhead flowers regularly to promote additional bloom, but leave some flowerheads for self-seeding. Plants are more apt to perform as short-lived perennials in USDA Zones 8-10.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Eschscholzia californica, commonly called California poppy, is the state flower of California. It is native to hillsides, roads and open areas from southern Washington south through California, Nevada and New Mexico to northern Mexico. Plants grow in loose, free-branching mounds to 12-15" tall and as wide, with finely divided, fern-like, blue-green leaves. Single, cup-shaped, 4-petaled, silky flowers (3" diameter) are typically bright orange or less frequently yellow-orange. Flowers bloom on long stems from late spring to early summer. Flowers close up in rainy or cloudy weather and at night. Flowers give way to dehiscent seed capsules which split open when ripe to release seeds. Plant foliage turns straw-brown after flowering. Cultivars are available in semi-double to double forms in additional colors including white, pink, red, lilac and purple.

Problems

No serious insect or disease problems.

Garden Uses

Beds, border fronts, rock gardens, along paths or walkways, or containers. Good selection for large naturalized plantings in locations where plants freely reseed.

Courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder