

your garden needs...



## ... Hollyhocks

Species: *Althaea rosea*

Family: Malvaceae

Common Name: Hollyhock

Height: 1.8m to 2.5m (5ft to 8ft)

Grow as: biennial

Flowering period: July to August

Hollyhocks are a popular biennial plant giving “vertical interest” to any garden, in a wide range of colours.

**Use** [packetseeds.com](http://packetseeds.com) **Hollyhock double flowered mixture**, offered at 95 pence per packet.

Hollyhock (*Althaea rosea*) is probably a native of Syria. It is generally cultivated as a biennial but sometimes will grow for a number of years in one site.

The large, roundish, heart-shaped, lobed leaves form a ground rosette from which rises the stem, sometimes as much as 2.5m (8 ft.) high, the upper half bearing a spike of large showy flowers – single, semi-double as well as double. All green parts of the plant are rough and felted. The flowers measure 7–10cm (3 to 4 in.) across. The double varieties are the most widely cultivated.



**Growing:** Hollyhocks may be propagated by cuttings and division but are generally grown from seed. This should be sown under glass or in a seedbed at the end of May or beginning of June. The young seedlings should be pricked out and after they have been hardened off planted outdoors in early September where they are to flower (spaced 60cm [24 in.] apart), or use in a temporary bed (spaced 20–30cm [8 to 12 in.] apart), and transfer to final position in spring. The plants should be provided with a light cover, as protection against frosts.

The hollyhock requires nourishing, loamy soil and a warm, sunny, sheltered situation. In soil that is too wet it is easily killed by frost.

The large, showy plants are very effective when planted in groups in grass, at the back of simple beds in a cottage-type garden or to hide walls and fences.

**Sowing:** surface sow in late spring/early summer. Germination usually takes 10-20 days at 15-20°C (60-68°F). Light is beneficial to germination.

Alternatively, seed can be sown in mid-summer and over-wintered in a frame or cold greenhouse and planted out in spring 60cm (24in) apart. This method can produce larger plants and is suitable if the soil is heavy.