

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 63

Leucanthemum 'Becky'

Historical Facts

Shasta is a native Indian word meaning "white." Formerly a member of the genus *Chrysanthemum*, the shasta daisy is now known as *Leucanthemum superbum* and is a member of the *Asteraceae* family. Luther Burbank created the hybrid in 1890. In 2003 the Perennial Plant Association named it Perennial Plant of the Year.

To gardeners, daisies are a classic perennial, having always exuded charm and friendliness. For many people, they are reminiscent of their childhood days of running through meadows, pulling up flowers and singing, "He loves me, he loves me not."

General Description

Leucanthemum 'Becky' is best known for its large (3-inch) single white flower with its contrasting yellow center. The sturdy, upright stems have a height and similar spread of 40" (100 cm). 'Becky' is hardy in zones 4-9 and can tolerate extreme heat, humidity, and strong wind. It is loved for its simple beauty and easy growth habit.

Cultivation Practices

The sunny face of *Leucanthemum* 'Becky' can be prolonged from late June through September if regularly deadheaded. To deadhead, prune the spent flower to a foliage node.

Full sun promotes vigorous flowering though the plant tolerates partial shade.

It grows well in poor to average soil though moist, well-drained is best.

Leucanthemum 'Becky' is best planted in spring or fall and needs little supplementary water. Pests rarely trouble it.

Propagation Tips

Leucanthemum 'Becky' can be propagated by stem cuttings, tissue culture, or division. Best rooting for stem cuttings occurs with cuttings taken at three-week intervals from June through August. To divide a large specimen, simply cut back the foliage, dig up the clump and split it into two or three pieces.

Leucanthemum 'Becky' is short lived but by allowing it to self-seed or by dividing it regularly, you will have this plant in your garden for many years.

Landscape Uses

Leucanthemum 'Becky' is a wonderful choice to be grown as a specimen or in mass plantings in herbaceous perennial borders. 'Becky' is excellent in cut-flower bouquets and large containers, and works well in mixed formal or informal plantings.

For cut-flower bouquets, cut when the flowers are completely open; they will last 7 to 10 days. *Leucanthemum* 'Becky' can be planted along with Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) and tickseed (*Coreopsis* spp.). Place pincushion flower (*Scabiosa caucasica*) in front for a lovely combination of white, blue, and blue-lavender. For extra zing, add a bright-red summer-flowering bulb.

Leucanthemum 'Becky' can also be used to attract butterflies and hummingbirds to the garden. Deer will not eat it.

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