

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 75

Phlox 'David'

History

Phlox 'David' is an offspring of *Phlox paniculata*. It was preserved in the 1980s by volunteers at the Brandywine Conservancy, near Philadelphia. These volunteers were supervised by F. M. Mooberry, who grew *Phlox paniculata* at the Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. The plants were grown from open-pollinated seed collected from that area.

One day in August 1987, Richard Simon inspected the crop and suggested that a new, white, fragrant form that could withstand powdery mildew (a common problem among phlox) be introduced. The new form was called Phlox 'David' after Mrs. Mooberry's husband.

Description

'David' is an upright perennial that grows 3-4 feet tall. The thin leaves grow opposite, are shiny and have short, bristle-like hairs on the margins. The beautiful, white, fragrant panicles grow to be 6-9" long and 6-8" wide, with the florets being an inch across. This form of phlox has a long blooming season and does well in zones 4-9.

Culture

P. paniculata does best in moist, well-drained organic soils in full sun. Phlox does not tolerate drought and needs to be watered especially after dry spells. It needs good air circulation to combat powdery mildew, so spacing plants 18" apart and thinning the stems as needed is important. Overhead watering should be avoided.

'David' enjoys the benefits of irregular fertilization and mulching in summer months

to keep its roots cool. To prolong flowering in the summer and to avoid self-seeding, faded flowers should be removed.

Landscape Use

Garden phlox is a great backbone in any perennial border. 'David' can be used in both formal and informal garden settings. It provides excellent colour and fragrance from July through September. 'David' mixes well with many perennials such as *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus' (purple coneflower) or *Echinops ritro* (globe thistle) for great textural contrasts. For an astonishing effect, 'David' can be planted with *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' or 'Cabaret.'

Propagation

Phlox 'David' may be propagated by division, root and stem cuttings.

Division is normally the easiest form of propagation. Best done in spring or early fall, it requires separating the crowns within a clump. For a gallon container, three to five crowns should be adequate.

Root cuttings should be taken from dormant plants in the fall. Thick roots are preferable to thin. The roots are cut into 2" segments, placed horizontally in a potting medium and covered in 2" of sand.

Tip cuttings require more care. Best are healthy cuttings, 3 or 4" long, with several nodes. A rooting hormone (available at most gardening stores) may be used at the ends before the cuttings are placed in plugs. The cuttings will then need a cool temperature (15E C.) to initiate root development.

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