

## Myosotidium hortensia - Chatham Island Forget-Me-Not

One of New Zealand's most beautiful & spectacular flowering plants. A perennial with huge glossy kidney shaped leaves and occurring naturally only on the Chatham Islands.

Seed germinates without pre-treatment.

In the right growing conditions, the Chatham Island Forget Me Not thrives, it requires shade, a frost free position and a humus rich well drained soil.

Probably best grown in a position where it gets good shade especially in the afternoon, a humus rich moist soil. We suggest growing Chatham Island Forget Me Nots or Myosotidium hortensia seedlings in a container for the first year for a little added care and attention.

This plant is found growing near the beach or on the beach in the Chatham Islands, which are fairly southerly islands in New Zealand. They apparently grow in sandy, but moist conditions, in the open, under mostly cloudy skies. It never gets very cold there and it never gets very hot.

The conditions under which this plant grows naturally tell us something about the conditions under which it will thrive.

### Propagation

First, it grows in open conditions. This means that full shade in our climate is not its preferred habitat. When I first obtained this plant, many years ago, I tried to grow it in full shade, and it did not do well there. Nor does it like competition from tree roots. This probably stems from its love of moisture.

Second, even though it does not like full shade, it is from a mostly cloudy climate, and it does not like hot baking sun, either. I tried growing it in a part of my garden that got all day sun, and on those one or two days a year when it actually got hot here, the plant wilted although it recovered as soon as it cooled down, I would not recommend a hot site for this plant.

Third, Myosotidium hortensia likes good rich soil that is well drained, but always moist. I have grown it in parts of my garden that consist of sand and compost, and it did well there. I have also grown it in parts of the garden that didn't have sand, but that were nonetheless enriched with lots of compost, and it did well there, too. Where I would not plant it is in waterlogged soil nor in hard clay soil.

Fourth, it is important that you not let the plant get too dry. When I finally figured out how to grow these, I had probably 20 or 30 plants in different parts of my garden. Then, several summers ago, I had to be gone much of the summer, and my garden did not receive much attention and I did not water it at all. This coupled with an extra cold winter, led to the demise of all but one of my plants.

Fifth, these plants are like caviar to slugs, so be sure to use some kind of slug bait.

