

Wahlenbergia stricta – Native Bluebell

This is an uncommonly cultivated Australian Native herbaceous perennial growing from 40 – 90 cm tall with soft linear leaves and pale blue (rarely white) in Spring through to Autumn borne on long thin stems. The individual flowers are open bells 15 – 25mm in diameter with 5 petals and a white throat, petals are said to be edible.

Wahlenbergia makes a fantastic feature when planted en masse in a full sun to part shaded position in a moist but not an overly waterlogged area.

Found growing in all states except NT on plains, grasslands, Eucalypt woodland, wet and damp valleys and dry sclerophyll forests and grassy open forest.

Makes an unusual addition to the home garden and flowers are a lovely shade of pale blue.

Propagation

Root Cuttings – Wahlenbergia is part of a group of plants that can propagate themselves from their roots! Cut the roots into sections about 2cm long and place them on top of the potting mix on a container - you can put about 10 – 15 root cuttings in a 140mm pot – cover the cuttings with more potting mix and water them in. This method will take a couple of months but once they sprout, they are ready to go into the garden.

Seed – Best started in Spring or Autumn at temperatures of 18 - 22°C.

Research suggests that a smoke pre-treatment may benefit this species although not critical.

Sow seed on the surface of seed raising media – do not cover or bury the seed deeply.

Water with a fine mist spray to avoid seed disturbance.

Place in a warm sheltered position, keep warm and moist but not too wet.

Germination should occur from 14 to 45 days in the correct conditions.

Note that seed dormancy is prevalent among many Australian Native species and they require specific conditions or pre-treatments before they will germinate.

Don't throw away seeds that don't germinate too quickly as they may just be waiting for something that triggers them out of dormancy, so put them away to the side and they may surprise you later on!