

Actinotus helianthi – Flannel Flower

The Flannel Flower has brilliant white, star-shaped flowers up to 5 - 7.5cm across appearing in Summer with soft flannel-like bracts and soft silvery grey leaves. It is a perennial growing to about 50cm tall.

WHEN TO SOW – in warm areas, or in a glass house - at any time in frost prone areas sow when the danger of frost has passed.

WHERE TO GROW – Full sun. Any well-drained soil but prefers poor, sandy soil mixed with chunky sandstone. They can be grown in the garden or in pots.

SOWING – Fill pot or tray to 7.5cm from the top with loose chunks of sandstone and then add 5cm of moist sandy soil. Sow seeds on the surface, compress lightly and cover with a light layer of sand. Then place 3 to 4 inches of dry leaves on the soil to be used, set the leaves alight, remove the burnt debris, lightly scuff the soil surface. Keep the soil moist but not wet. Cover with clear polythene until germination. Place in a warm, shady position to germinate (this can take up to 22 weeks in some situations).

CULTIVATION – Transplant to a sunny garden position at a height of 7.5cm. Cover soil beneath the plant with loose chips of sandstone to prevent drying out. Water in well and water regularly until established and then weekly in dry weather. Use an occasional light application of low phosphate organic fertiliser. Protect from slugs and snails.

