

The Archibald Archive – Genus Guides

CAMPANULA AND OTHER CAMPANULACEAE

(Codonopsis has its own page)

Many of the 300 or so species in the genus *Campanula* are not likely to interest a majority of gardeners. There are many annuals and monocarpic species, as well as the fine perennials and choice alpine and saxatile plants which are so valuable in the garden. The scope of our listings is irregular. We have in the past offered seeds from many new and desirable species from southern Europe and Turkey and may well do so again in the future.

Although the genus is distributed throughout the Northern Hemisphere, well over half of the species and certainly most of the horticultural valuable ones, grow in Europe and South-west Asia. They range from tall, robust herbaceous perennials, which include many easily grown, trouble-free garden-plants, to tiny high-alpines, which challenge even the most skilled growers. A brief comment regarding cultivation is given under each individual species we list. As far as growing these from seed is concerned, most are summer-growers germinating at high temperatures. Because many come from areas with cold winters, freezing may help to break seed-dormancy. For most of the cold-climate species, we should advise sowing before mid-winter so that the seed can be subjected to some cold before weather warms in spring and induces germination. Many will germinate well if sown in warmth in late winter or early spring. Some of the Mediterranean species may tend to germinate in autumn and young plants need some protection under glass during their first winter. The same germination patterns will be found with several related genera in Campanulaceae.

Symphyandra, with about 12 species in the eastern Mediterranean and South-west Asia, is very close to *Campanula* and is quite sensibly included in it by some botanists. The two genera are linked by *Campanula betulifolia* and its allies.

Adenophora, with about 40 species mainly distributed in eastern Asia, superficially looks very like *Campanula* but the bells have a fleshy, cylindrical disc inside at the base of the style. This is not a genus which is well-known in gardens but it is almost as diverse as *Campanula* itself with some worthwhile dwarf species as well as showy, tall, hardy perennials.

Wahlenbergia is the equivalent of *Campanula* in the southern hemisphere, though there are a few northern species. There are about 200 species, many of them annuals and most unlikely to be of interest to gardeners.

The Archibald Archive – Genus Guides

The beautiful, small genus *Edraianthus* from south-eastern Europe is probably their nearest relative in the northern hemisphere. *Edraianthus* has been included under *Wahlenbergia* in the past.

Asyneuma has about 50 species, centered on western Asia. Again, most of the species are unlikely to excite gardeners but there are one or two outstanding ones.

Ostrowskia from Central Asia and such saxatile genera as *Physoplexis* and *Trachelium* include beautiful and fascinating species but most require specialised treatment. We briefly outline their needs under each species, when we have seeds to list.

Nomenclature: While we more or less follow the names used in the standard floras, such as 'Flora Europaea' and 'Flora of Turkey', this is not always an easy genus to identify. Many species are very variable. We have found the 'Flora of Turkey' account unsatisfactory but it is all we can refer to for this key-area.

Further information: The book most enthusiasts feel they should have is long out of print and is expensive to acquire. This is 'Campanulas' by H. Clifford Crook, published in 1951. We have always thought this to be a rather stuffy, uninformative book and should not recommend it as worth the effort of acquiring it. Much less pretentious and still available is 'Campanulas' by Lewis and Lynch. This is a more popular account but gives an excellent overview of most of the horticulturally worthwhile members of this genus. It is also written from experience as Peter Lewis maintained the NCCPG National Collection of *Campanula* in England for many years.

(Note: In 2006, Timber Press published Dwarf Campanulas and Associated Genera by Graham Nicholls ISBN13 9780881928105
http://www.amazon.com/Dwarf-Campanulas-And-Associated-Genera/dp/0881928100#reader_0881928100)