

Meconopsis 'Barney's Blue' & 'Jimmy Bayne' (George Sherriff Group)



Background

These two big blue poppy cultivars are members of the George Sherriff Group. As they are sterile they do not set viable seed, and can only be propagated by division. They are probably hybrids involving *M. grandis*. They are clearly different from one another, but until fairly recently were both known by the species name *M. grandis* GS600. The most obvious difference between them is that the flowers of *M. 'Jimmy Bayne'* are all-blue, while those of *M. 'Barney's Blue'* are bi-coloured opening purple-pink, gradually changing to blue. We believe that both these cultivars are derived from the seed collection *M. grandis* GS600 by George Sherriff in 1934 in east Bhutan: hence the collective name *Meconopsis* George Sherriff Group. A number of other George Sherriff Group cultivars have also been named, e.g. *M. 'Huntfield'* & *M. 'Ascreavie'*.

The height of the plants at flowering is about 1m-1.25m and peak flowering is 2-3 weeks in late May to mid-June. They flower significantly later than *M. 'Lingholm'* or Infertile Blue Group cultivars.



Cultivation

Plant in moist, humus-rich, well-drained soil in an open situation or in partial shade. Avoid close proximity to tree roots. Keep well-watered in hot, dry weather. Summer drought is the worst "enemy" of these plants. But also avoid boggy conditions.

To keep in good heart, divide every few years in early spring by lifting and carefully prising the clump apart. Try to avoid damage to the new shoots, particularly important with George Sherriff Group cultivars which often produce fairly widely-spreading rhizomes as well as off-sets close to the base of the plant. Re-plant divisions in freshly cultivated soil with added compost or well-rotted manure. Water well until re-established.

The Meconopsis Group For much more information on *Meconopsis*, particularly on the big blue poppies, see The Meconopsis Group web-site: www.meconopsis.org. This Group is primarily a study group. We welcome information, enquiries and applications for new membership. Present membership is over 150. A print-friendly membership form is available on the web-site, or apply to Dr. Evelyn Stevens, The Linns, Sheriffmuir, Dunblane, Perthshire, FK15 0LP Tel/fax 01786 822295.