

## Eryngium x zabelii 'Big Blue' Big Blue Sea Holly

Eryngium x zabelii 'Big Blue' (Big Blue Sea Holly) is a four season flowering perennial with strong geometric and architectural form. Plants have an overall spiked appearance, with sharply pointed leaves, bracts, and inflorescences that provide unique contrast against flowing, rounded, or soft-textured garden plants. In addition to striking form, Big Blue Sea Holly has a dip-dyed appearance; the upper flowers, stems and leaves are deep blue-violet, fading into silvery blue-green, grounded with deep blue green basal foliage. The glossy, coarse-textured foliage appears in basal clumps in spring, with blue-green stems emerging shortly after. The thistle-like, violet-blue flowers bloom atop branched stems reaching just 1.5 to 2 feet tall. Flowers attract a variety of bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Flowers bloom from June through August, after which the flowers hold their form as a dried seed head, giving strong architectural interest into winter. Both blooming and dried flower heads make beautiful cut flowers. Blue Sea Holly is a hardy, drought tolerant plant that prefers well-drained poor soils; rich soils or fertilizers will cause sprawl and poor form. The prickly texture repels deer.

**Botanical Name:** Eryngium x zabelii 'Big Blue'

**Common Name:** Big Blue Sea Holly

**Family:** Apiaceae

**Nativity:** Not Native to US

**USDA Zone:** 5 to 9

**Light Type:** Full Sun

**Soil Type:** Loam, Sand

**Soil Preferences:** Well-drained soil; prefers dry, poor to moderately fertile soils

**Soil Moisture:** Dry

**Typical height (ft):** 1.5-2'

**Typical width (ft):** 1.5-2'

**Foliage:** Blue green

**Bloom Time:** June, July, August

**Bloom:** Violet blue, silvery flowers

**Ecological features:** Provides floral resources for bees, butterflies and other pollinators.

**Tolerance of:** Poor Soil, Drought, Heat, Salt, Deer

**Additional notes:** Great cut flower; plant does not produce viable seed; forms deep taproot that resents transplanting once established; may sprawl/ become leggy in lower light; will sprawl in overly fertile soils

**Companion plants:** Yarrow (Achillea spp.), Betony (Stachys spp.), Coneflowers (Echinacea spp.), Butterfly Milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa), Whorled Milkweed (Asclepias verticillata), Blazing Star (Liatris), Switchgrass (Panicum spp.), Moor Grass (Molinia spp.), Coreopsis

**For more information see:**

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=299169>

<https://www.highcountrygardens.com/perennial-plants/unique-plants/eryngium-big-blue>

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/sea-holly/sea-holly-flowers.htm>

<https://www.bluestoneperennials.com/ERBI.html>

<https://www.gardenia.net/plant/eryngium-x-zabelii-big-blue-sea-holly>

**Images of Eryngium x zabelii 'Big Blue'**



Eryngium Big Blue\_1.jpg

Flower close-up



Eryngium Big Blue\_2.jpg  
Clumping plant form



Eryngium Big Blue\_3.jpg  
Combine with other perennials



Eryngium Big Blue\_4.jpg  
Fall and winter interest

**Image choices for narrative:**

Eryngium Big Blue\_1.jpg - Flower close-up

Eryngium Big Blue\_2.jpg - Clumping plant form