

Patterns of nature: a series of decorative plants. 6, Helenium.

Contributors

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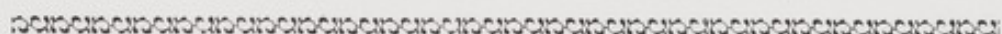
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PATTERNS OF NATURE : a series of decorative plants

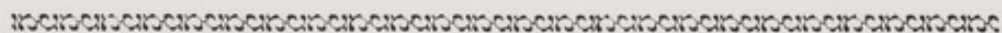


No. 6: Helenium

The genus Helenium is closely allied to the sunflowers and Jerusalem artichoke (species of Helianthus) and, like them, belongs to the family Compositae. The heads have ray florets on the outside and disc florets in the centre. There are about thirty known similar species of erect annual or perennial herbs native to North and Central America.

The name is indirectly attributed to Hippocrates, who first used it to describe a similar flower, though there appears to be no record of Helenium as a medicinal plant.

Variants are common enough in British gardens. They are perennials mostly derived from Helenium autumnale (Sneezewort) and H. bigelovii. There are many garden varieties differing in length of stem, size of the heads, colour of the florets, and the period of flowering. In Britain they are hardy, and particularly suitable subjects for perennial borders in any good garden soil. They flower freely and can be easily propagated by division in the late autumn, or from seed.



Colour photograph by John Markham, F.R.P.S.

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