

# Echium strictum



## Taming the Tower of Jewels: How to Propagate Echium Strictum

The *Echium strictum*, more affectionately known as the Pride of Madeira or Tower of Jewels, is a sight to behold. This majestic plant shoots up towering stems studded with breathtakingly vibrant blue-violet blooms, transforming any garden into a pollinator paradise.

While admiring its beauty is easy, you might be wondering how to welcome more of these floral giants into your life. Fortunately, propagating *Echium strictum*, though not without its nuances, is achievable for gardeners of all levels. This guide will illuminate the path to success, allowing you to multiply your Tower of Jewels and share its splendor.

### Two Routes to Propagation:

#### 1. Seed Starting:

- **Timing is Key:** *Echium strictum* seeds are best sown in the fall or early spring.

- **Sowing the Seeds:** Choose a well-draining seed starting mix. Sprinkle the seeds on the surface and lightly press them in, as they require light to germinate.
- **Patience is a Virtue:** Germination can take anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of months. Maintain a consistently moist (not soggy) environment and provide ample indirect sunlight.
- **Thinning the Herd:** Once the seedlings develop a couple of true leaves, thin them out to provide adequate spacing for growth. Aim for the strongest seedlings, leaving about 6 inches between each plant.

## 2. Taking Cuttings:

- **The Ideal Candidate:** Choose a healthy, non-flowering stem from the current year's growth. The stem should be around 4-6 inches long.
- **Making the Cut:** Use a sharp, sterilized knife or pruning shears to make a clean cut just below a leaf node.
- **Prepping the Cutting:** Remove the lower leaves from the cutting, leaving only a few at the top. You can dip the cut end in rooting hormone powder (though not strictly necessary) to encourage root development.
- **Planting the Cutting:** Plant the cutting in a well-draining potting mix, burying the lower nodes. Water it well and place it in a warm, bright location out of direct sunlight.
- **Encouraging Root Development:** Cover the pot with a clear plastic bag or use a humidity dome to create a humid environment, misting regularly. Roots should develop in 4-6 weeks.

## Transplanting Your Echium Strictum:

- Whether you've nurtured seedlings or rooted cuttings, transplant them into larger pots or directly into the garden once they are well-established.
- Choose a location with full sun to partial shade and

well-drained soil. *Echium strictum* thrives in sandy or rocky soils.

- Be mindful of spacing as these plants can become quite large, reaching heights of 3-8 feet.

### **Echium Strictum Care Tips:**

- **Water Wisely:** While they need regular watering during their first year, established plants are drought-tolerant and prefer infrequent, deep watering.
- **Feeding is Minimal:** *Echium strictum* doesn't require heavy feeding. A light application of a balanced fertilizer in spring is sufficient.
- **Deadheading for Beauty:** While not necessary for blooming, deadheading spent flower spikes can encourage bushier growth and prolong the flowering season.

Propagating your own *Echium strictum* is a rewarding endeavor. With a dash of patience and these tips in hand, you'll be well on your way to cultivating a flourishing colony of these spectacular Towers of Jewels.