

Geranium 'Jolly Bee' | Jolly Bee Geranium

Flower description / bloom time

Jolly Bee features lavender blue flowers with white centers and dark veins; the round, flat flowers are 1¾ inches in diameter. Jolly Bee blooms from June through September (and even beyond).

Foliage interest — color / texture

Deeply cut, medium green leaves are typical of hardy geraniums. Foliage did not attract much comment either positive or negative, however, foliage provides a nice backdrop for flowers and does not show any tendencies toward insect or fungal problems. However, unlike many members of this genus, there was very little fall color reported.



Habit and growth rate observations

Make room in the garden for Jolly Bee as its mounding and sprawling habit can easily spread 24 to 30 inches across and reach 15 to 20 inches tall. Very little maintenance is required beyond a little tidying up of the foliage during the summer to keep the plant in bounds. One evaluator describes this vigorous habit as giving a casual flavor to the garden. Rabbits did not appear to favor this plant!

Site preference — soil / light

Jolly Bee is adaptable but evaluators had the best success in sites with sun to part shade. Protection from late afternoon sun is beneficial while too much shade results in poor flowering and form. Soil should be moist but well draining.

Successes and possible drawbacks — how to overcome them

Across the board our evaluators were impressed with the long period of bloom. You do not have to wait to see results. This plant puts on good growth the first year. A little light trimming in summer may be needed to keep Jolly Bee in bounds.

Notes from growers / retailers

Liner availability is somewhat limited. Several growers decided to grow this geranium over other geraniums previously mentioned because it is more vigorous. Bare root plants potted in April can be ready in mid-May. However, another grower states that it is slow from a 2-inch plug and may need five to six weeks to get to the edge of the pot. All mentioned that pruning is helpful to keep the plant compact.

Best combinations

Jolly Bee looks sensational paired with yellow flowering perennials such as *Hemerocallis* 'Happy Returns'. Alternatively, you could draw out the lavender tones in Jolly Bee by planting it with deep purple foliage such as *Eupatorium rugosum* 'Chocolate' or a plum-colored coleus.

Parting "SHOT" — the overall evaluation results were Good

With its long bloom time, good blue flowers, and healthy foliage, *Geranium* 'Jolly Bee' makes quite a statement in the garden and was rated as **Good**.

Additional Notes:

If you are trying to sort out the differences between the various hardy geraniums on the market, the following observations may help:

- *Geranium* 'Jolly Bee' holds up through the season better than 'Johnson's Blue' and 'Brookside'. These geraniums usually finish flowering and need a hard cut back by the end of June or early July to rejuvenate the foliage.
- *Geranium* 'Buxton's Blue', Rozanne ('Gerwat') and 'Jolly Bee' are similar in habit and repeat bloom into October. The flowers of 'Jolly Bee', while a bit larger, are not as blue in color as 'Buxton's Blue'. Both Rozanne and 'Jolly Bee' appeared to have more magenta tones.
- One evaluator was surprised that no one said that it was almost impossible to tell Rozanne and 'Jolly Bee' apart!



Evaluated 2003-2006