

Pink Turtlehead *Chelone obliqua*

Plant Type: Native Perennial Wildflower
Sun Exposure: Full Sun, Part Sun
Season of Interest: Summer, Fall
Bloom Time: Summer, Fall
Bloom Color: Pink
Height: 24 to 30 in.
Spread: 12 to 18 in.
Spacing: 18 in.
Water Needs: Average, Wet
Maintenance: Very little
Soil Type: High in organic matter
Soil pH: Acidic
Soil Drainage: Well Drained, Moist
Pests: None
Diseases: None
Wildlife: Bees, Butterflies, Hummingbirds



Description: Pink Turtlehead is a clump-forming perennial wildflower native to eastern North America. Its hooded flowers resemble snapdragon blooms. Turtlehead plants grow best in boggy areas but can also grow well in a shaded home garden with about four hours of sunlight, rich, moist soil, and temperate climate. Their leaves are dark green, toothed, and oval-shaped and have upright-standing stems that feature blooms from summer to fall. The flower gets its common name from its resemblance to a turtle's head, but the species and genus name



"Chelone" dates back to a story in ancient Greek mythology. The nymph, Chelone, did not attend the marriage of Zeus and Hera, so she and her house were tossed into a river, where she transformed into a tortoise who carried her house on her back. For more information see:

plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/chelone-obliqua

Care and Growing Tips: As a woodland flower, turtlehead blooms best in partial shade. In nature, it typically grows in the filtered light beneath a canopy of trees. However, the plant can grow in full sun if its soil is not allowed to dry out completely. Turtlehead plants prefer moist, organically rich soil, with a acidic soil pH level less than 6.

Keep your turtlehead plants continually moist for a few weeks after transplanting. Then whenever the ground becomes very dry. As a general rule of thumb, turtlehead grows best when it gets regular water, and this is especially important during the first year as the plants establish themselves. The less water stress they suffer, the more they will thrive.

These plants prefer warm, moist conditions and will not do well in arid climates. In warm climates, shade the plants and mulch the ground with a thick leaf mulch or another organic material to maintain moisture. Don't feed your turtlehead plants during their first year of growth. After that, a yearly spring feeding with a balanced liquid fertilizer is recommended to encourage blooms. For the amount to use, follow the product label instructions.