

*Platycodon grandiflorus*, (Jacq.) A.DC.

Common name: Balloon Flower

Pinyin: jie geng

Part used: Root

Family: Campanulaceae



Dry herb

### Plant Description

With the characteristic Campanula family bell-shaped flower, when in bloom, Platycodon is a showy treat. The species form of this popular garden flower grows to 1-2' tall and is a prolific summer bloomer. Deep blue flower buds swell before opening giving the plant its' name. Perennial and herbaceous, erect plants form clumps of foliage with simple 2" ovate, serrate, alternately arranged leaves. Balloon flower is cold hardy to at least -30 degree Fahrenheit, traditional USDA zones 2-11. If bruised when handling the stems exude a white sticky latex.

### Propagation

Seeds are sown very early in the spring or in the fall before planting out. Germination is 2-3 weeks in the heated greenhouse. No special requirements for germination.

### Field Production

Grow Balloon flower in a sunny location in well drained, average sandy loam soil. Average fertilizer and compost needs. Transplant 1' apart in rows 1' apart.

### Pest

Gophers eat the roots.

### Harvest

Roots are dug while dormant in the fall after at least 2 years growth. The white taproots grow about 8" long. Washing should be uneventful; slice roots lengthwise and dry easily to a yellow-tan color.

### Note

When sourcing seed or planting stock, choose unselected species and not cultivars or named varieties. Much work has been done in the nursery trade to modify the height, flower etc., of this plant for ornamental purposes – potentially at the expense of the medicinal properties.