



# FORT TICONDEROGA

National Historic Landmark

## Flower of the Week

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Common Name:	Balloon flower, Chinese bellflower
Botanical Name:	Platycodon grandiflorus
Family:	Campanulaceae
Plant Type:	Herbaceous Perennial Flower
Season of Bloom:	Early to mid-summer

Balloon flower is a reliable summer bloomer native to China, East Siberia, Korea, and Japan. It is the only member of the genus *Platycodon*, and is very closely allied to the *Campanulas*, which include harebell, bluebell, and canterbury bells. The term *platycodon* means "flat bell" which describes its opened flowers. It gets its common name from puffy, balloon-like buds resembling a hot-air balloon or chinese lantern. Balloon flowers are a cottage garden standard, and they are excellent for cutting. To make the flowers last in the vase, sear the stems with a match or candle flame immediately after cutting. The blooms attract birds, bees, and butterflies.



Balloon flowers bloom for a month or more. The flowers are usually a deep, rich blue-violet, however white, pale blue, lilac, and pink flowers are available. While rich in color, the flowers have no scent. They are easy to grow and require little care.

The root of this species is used extensively in Asia for medicinal purposes. In Korea, the fleshy root, either dried or fresh, is a popular ingredient in salads, soups, and traditional herbal cooking.