



FORT TICONDEROGA

National Historic Landmark

Flower of the Week

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Common Name:	Foxglove
Botanical Name:	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Family:	Plantaginaceae
Plant Type:	Herbaceous Biennial Flower
Season of Bloom:	Late spring to early summer

Actually a woodland plant, the **common foxglove** prefers rich acidic soils, plenty of moisture, and can tolerate shade, though it is adaptable to sunnier locations. It is native to Europe and is naturalized in the Pacific Northwest. The historic planting plan for Marian Coffin's King's Garden utilizes this plant and also a perennial yellow foxglove, *Digitalis grandiflora*.

Common foxglove is biennial, forming only a low-growing rosette of leaves in its first year, and then maturing in the second year with a towering flower spike up to 6 feet tall.

The scientific name means "finger-like", and refers to the ease which the tubular flower can be fitted over a human fingertip. Colors range from purples, pinks and whites, with variable marks and spotting.

Modern medical technology enables pharmacologically active compounds to be safely extracted from the leaves of *Digitalis* for use in medicines used to treat heart problems. Herbalists largely abandoned the use of this plant due to difficulty in determining the amount of active drug in herbal preparations. For this reason, all parts of the common foxglove should never be ingested.

