

Cut flowers
for farm
production:

Statis
“Forever
Happy”



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Cover photo: Stock photo of a cluster of “Forever Happy” statice flowers.



Introduction

Statice (*Limonium sinuatum*) is a beautiful and ancient plant known for its vibrant blooms and enduring beauty. The ancient flower originates from the Mediterranean region. Another commonly used name for statice is sea lavender. This flower has been a staple in gardens and floral arrangements for centuries. Historically, the plant's botanical name, "Limonium," comes from the Greek word for meadow, indicating its natural habitat in the coastal meadows of the Mediterranean. Statice has played a key role in various cultural traditions due to its symbolic meanings of remembrance and sympathy. As a decorative plant, its primary purpose is to provide long-lasting, vivid color to gardens and flower arrangements. Thanks to its papery, robust blossoms, it is widely recognized as an excellent choice for dried flower arrangements. The plant is appreciated for its hardy nature, with the ability to thrive in challenging environments, including poor and salty soils, thus lending it the common name sea lavender.



Pictured, the "Forever Happy" stems have almost a cactuslike appearance.
Photos by Kathryn Fontenot

Production

Statice can be transplanted into Louisiana gardens in the spring. Seed is typically sown five to 14 days prior to your desired planting date. Seedlings can be transplanted after the danger of the last frost has passed. When starting seed, lightly cover with soil to ensure that the seeds receive enough light to germinate. We recommend starting seed in 50-96 count trays. Harden off the seedlings before transplanting by placing them outdoors and out of direct sunlight for three to seven days. A preplant application of a complete fertilizer is recommended. Fertilizer was applied at a rate of 300 pounds of 13-13-13 per acre for the spring 2023 planting. Seedlings can be planted 12 inches apart in a single drill line down the center of the row. Trellising was not required for this crop. However, we do recommend planting statice in full sun with well drained, moist soil. Approximately three to four weeks after transplanting, biweekly applications of a light nitrogen fertilizer such as calcium nitrate will boost plant growth. Soils vary throughout the state and therefore making exact fertilizer and exact irrigation recommendations is difficult. We do recommend using drip irrigation with emitters set no further apart than 12 inches. Drip irrigation maintains soil moisture and is not meant to take completely dry soil and replenish all water. Therefore, we recommend daily irrigation simply to maintain a moist but not saturated soil. Overhead irrigation is not recommended as it enhances disease probability especially in rainy years. In the LSU 2023 trial, the bottom foliage tended to turn very dry and brown. This was also an extremely dry year. We would remove dried foliage to promote clean fresh foliage growth. One specific feature we liked was the thick stems with a unique ruffle along the edges and almost flat shape. This cut flower would be excellent in minimalistic or modern arrangements. The stems are as interesting as the flowers. Flowers are small yellow and purple combinations on the same stem – perfect for LSU fans. The one disappointing feature about the Forever Happy variety is that the plants do not all set flowers at the same time and the number of stems per plant varies greatly. When the flowers begin to dry, the yellow fades and the purple becomes a light pink to tan color, which is still visually appealing.

2023 SPRING CUT FLOWER TRIAL FOREVER HAPPY STATICE DATA

Characteristic	Measurement
Average Number of Stems per Plant on the First Harvest	3.6 stems
Average Stem Length	12.8 inches
Average Number of Flowers per Stem	6.2 flowers
Average Flower Width	3.92 cm (across the cluster)

Data collected from five random plants per plot, four plots planted in a randomized complete design with 10 plants per plot, for a total of 20 plants collected for data analysis.



The statice blooms are fully open. Try to harvest when they are only three-fourths open. Photos by Kathryn Fontenot



The stems of Forever Happy statice have a unique shape. They are flat with almost frilled edges.

Pests and diseases

The primary pests observed in the LSU AgCenter plots were snails and slugs. Iron phosphate bait products can attract snails and slugs with their smell. These products can be applied along the row middles and are most effective when applied in the evening. Avoid applying these baits before rain or early in the day. Other snail and slug baits contain the active ingredient metaldehyde. This active ingredient is known to be toxic to dogs, affecting their nervous system. Therefore, we do not recommend using baits with metaldehyde if you have dogs near your cut flower fields or if you operate you-pick fields and allow customers to bring animals.

A second insect pest in the spring-planted statice crop was the cucumber beetle (*Diabrotica undecimpunctata howardi*). We found the beetles chewing on the foliage. However, the damage incurred in the spring 2023 planting did not reach an economic threshold. Therefore, we chose not to spray the flowers since they do attract pollinators. Biological control methods can be employed if cucumber beetles become a problem. Kaur Gill et al., 2020, recommends deploying natural enemies such as tachinid flies, soldier beetles and entomopathogenic nematodes. Cultural practices such as keeping cucurbit, beans and corn crops away from these flowers also help reduce populations. Organic control methods include using kaolin clay and spinosad products. Make sure not to spray spinosad when the plants are near or during bloom.

Harvest and post-harvest handling

Forever Happy statice is a variety with a playful color contrast of light rose-lavender bracts and sunny, yellow flowers when used as a fresh cut flower. This color combination is useful for bridging multiple colors in an arrangement. It is also a great addition to any LSU-themed party as the primary colors are yellow and a violet to dark purple depending on age of the flower.



The Forever Happy statice plants do not all bloom at the same time. Be prepared for a staggered harvest. Photo by Kathryn Fontenot



Only the rose-lavender bract color will persist when dried as the yellow flowers fade quickly. This variety should be harvested when the individual flowers are mostly open and showing color. During harvest, bring buckets of water with fresh flower food solution to store flowers between the field and cooler. Multiple trips during the harvest to a cooler or air-conditioned facility may be necessary to extend vase life. Post-harvest cold storage will help extend vase life. For post-harvest storage in a cooler, store statice flowers at 35-40 F (2-4 C). Statice is a long-lasting flower for both fresh and dried bouquets. It is one of the best choices for a dried floral as it holds its color well and is easy to dry. Forever Happy statice is a variety good for fresh cut flower displays. It is excellent for creating dried flowers and crafts and attracts and supports pollinators and insects that prey on garden pests.

Design applications

Statice makes a great choice of flower to dry or preserve because it retains its color well after drying. To dry these flowers, gather several stems together and tie them at the base of the stems with a nylon or cotton twine. Hang the flowers upside down for at least a week in a room with good air circulation. Dehumidifiers may be necessary if drying large quantities of flowers in rooms with poor air circulation. Limiting exposure to sunlight will help to preserve the flower color. Statice can also easily be arranged into a gorgeous, dried potpourri by cutting the clusters of blooms off of the top of the stem and allowing those to dry on a flat surface. Display the dried blooms in a shallow bowl for a simple, delicate decoration. Perfumed oils can be added to the potpourri for a scented experience.

Statice drying.
Photo by Allison
Huddleston



Photo by Allison
Huddleston

The rich purple color with pops of yellow in Forever Happy statice makes it a perfect flower for an LSU-themed bouquet. Pair this flower with the bright yellow blossoms of Sunny Ball feverfew for a purple and gold arrangement. To form the arrangement:

1. First remove any foliage that is browning or will be under water in the vase.
2. Separate bunches of statice and feverfew flowers into single stems and remove any individual stems that will be too short for the arrangement.
3. Cut the feverfew stems just slightly shorter than the statice stems and center the statice blossoms in the middle of the vase. Place feverfew blossoms all around the statice for a full-looking bouquet with bright color contrast.
4. Add additional foliage as desired. In the bouquet pictured, yaupon holly was added for its medium-green color which contrasted the lighter foliage around the statice flowers.
5. Adding flower food solutions to the vase will help retain clear water and extend vase life for fresh bouquets but is not mandatory.
6. Change the vase water regularly to promote longer vase life for your bouquet. At each change, cut a quarter inch off the bottom of the stems to promote better water uptake.

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