

Culture in the garden:

Hepatica nobilis var. nobilis (Garsault)

Liverworts should always have good, spotless leaves, including from the end of flowering in the spring until the beginning of the new flowering in the following winter. They may not become earth-colored and dry wizened until the new generation of leaves takes its place during the following flowering season. Accordingly, liverworts are evergreen when they encounter the right environment and then bloom profusely. The real task of the Hepatica - lover is not the production and admiration of the lovely flowers, but the continuous, conscientious wish fulfillment of the leaves. Unfortunately, this is not always and everywhere easy, because Hepatica react to everything that does not suit them with dry brown spots mainly on the edges of the leaves. In other words, they appear to the keeper like capricious princesses on the pea. But when they find everything as they want it, they act as if they have no demands at all, because the local climate is perfectly fine for them..

In nature, *Hepatica nobilis var. nobilis* grow in deciduous forests of the hilly - montane region, which in summer form a dense canopy of sunlight, and in which the tree roots often suck the soil dry steppe-like, because they need to supply the canopy with water. Only in the spring time is there still enough water for small tender plant on the forest floor. Most of them generally disappear from the surface altogether very soon, but a few have a harder, firmer foliage, the surface of which protects them from excessive evaporation, while the abundant leafy greens and net roots provide their nourishment. Liverworts belong to the latter. They are not grateful when the toil and hardships of their barren homeland are replaced by a life in the garden - land of milk and honey. No, the stupid ones want it absolutely so! Therefore it must be determined first, which components condition this life world.

The deciduous trees control the incidence of light:

Moderately light from leaf fall in autumn, shady from full leaf set from April to autumn: shade plants!

The trees control the water supply:

Sufficient to much from fall to spring, moderate to very little (to wilting!) from April to fall: alternating moisture!

The location on the north slope often helps, also for the preservation of possible coolness!

The fallen leaves provide light winter protection and humus. It is clear that soil and air humidity during the summer is not desired. An airy north-facing slope under shrubs and trees would be good. The fallen leaves will stay put. If there is no slope, a raised bed with shade would certainly be desirable. Dry spring weeks must be prevented by watering.



H. nob. var. nob. `Alba Plena`



H. nob. var. nob. `Rubra Plena`



H. nob. var. nob. `Müssel Plena`



H. nob. var. nob. `Floro Plena`

So hepatica are ideal plants for places that are otherwise difficult to plant - in drought plus shade, with some friendly assistance from the caretaker from fall to spring.

Their deep, reticulated root system shows that hepatica are forest dwellers that can find water before it evaporates, even in low drip conditions, as the loose, slightly loamy forest soil allows it to search around.

II said at the beginning that *Hepatica nobilis* var. *nobilis* reacts with leaf spots to everything that he does not like. This includes too frequent dividing or transplanting. Also wrong or too frequent fertilizing and many other things lead to leaf spots. In rare cases, it is fungal or pest infestation, which must then be controlled. The chemical reaction of the soil does not seem to be as important as the physical condition, although a certain amount of lime and iron is usually preferred, as is a supply of minerals in general, which can be achieved, for example, by fertilizing with trace elements instead of simple lime. Too much lime can be fatal. They usually resent transplanting at the wrong time. Unlike *Hepatica transsilvanica*, *Hepatica nobilis* var. *nobilis* are not transplanted in early autumn, but from the beginning to the end of flowering, about every 3-5 years. The condition of the roots is important for this. When the black-colored network gets white tips, then the moment has come. Since the flowers come before the new leaves, the first bud indicates that it's time to go.

Because the time for transplanting is the flowering season, it is always right during this time to look in the nurseries for pretty forms that will complete their own garden treasure. It is even good to wait until several flowers are developed because of the color composition. *Hepatica* love the company of other shade plants, they do not like the loneliness of singles at all. The most beautiful is a *Hepatica* group or carpet in bloom, but it costs loving attention to create such a thing.

Marlene Ahlburg
Januar 2000



H. nob. var. japonica `Sandanzaku-Rosa`



H. nob. var. nob. `Polen's Alba`



H. nob. var. nob. `Odette`



H. nob. var. nob. `Blauer Zwerg`



H. nob. var. nob.
`Oeland's Feuer`