

GENTIAN FAMILY

GENTIANACEAE.

Fringed Gentian.

Gentianopsis crinita.



Found in fields, pastures, and along wayside thickets, frequently where it is damp; coming into bloom late in August and continuing until middle October or later.

The stalk, which branches for the flowers, grows usually from 6 inches to 2 feet in height, and is somewhat square near the blossoms, and sometimes twisted; it is grooved, smooth and shining, and light green, tempered with bronze.

The leaf is heart-shaped at the base, tapering sharply to a long-pointed tip, slightly creased on the midrib, with an entire margin, and thin smooth texture. In color it is light green. The leaves clasp the stalk in pairs, which occur at right angles to each other.



The corolla is a deep vase shape spreading at the top into 4 fringed lobes which curve like shells; of a delicate thin texture, and satin smooth surface, in color an evasive azure, impossible to describe, varying from pale to deep (sometimes reddish tinted), and marked upon the outside with fine lines of darker blue. The 4-parted calyx is pinched into 4 angles at its base, and is a light yellow-green color, its long, sharp tips sometimes bronzy. The flowers are set on short, and long, leafy stems; in groups, or singly.

Though often low, and bearing but one flower, it is not uncommon to find a single tall stalk adorned with a dozen or two of blossoms, and a reliable observer reports having found plants 5 feet in stature, and bearing upwards of a hundred flowers and buds apiece! This remarkable luxuriance could only have occurred in some solitary mountain glen unknown to the gentian-hunter, who, between greedy admiration of its beauty and ignorance of its habits, is doing his best to exterminate the plant. The seeds are exceedingly capricious in their choice of a home, and refuse to germinate when garden-sown.

For the aesthetic pleasure also it is best not to pluck them; their charm loses its subtlety when carried into civilized environments—the spirit of their loveliness escapes imprisonment.

Upper Photo: Eugene van der Pijll [Public domain], Great Lakes image collection, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/image/viz_native2.html

Lower photo: Robert H. Mohlenbrock [Public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



FRINGED GENTIAN: *Gentianopsis crinita*

Text and drawing excerpted from *Wildflowers from the North-Eastern States* by Ellen Miller and Margaret Christine Whiting, 1895
Nomenclature and Families updated.