Eustoma (Lisianthus)

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***Eustoma***, commonly known as **lisianthus** or **prairie gentian**, is a small [genus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genus) in the [gentian family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentianaceae). They are native to warm regions of the southern [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), [Mexico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico), [Caribbean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean) and northern [South America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_America). This genus is typically found in [grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grasslands) and in areas of disturbed ground.



## Description

They are [herbaceous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbaceous) [annuals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annual_plant), growing to 15–60 cm tall, with bluish green, slightly [succulent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succulent) [leaves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leaf) and large funnel-shaped flowers growing on long straight stems: sometimes erect single stems, other times growing on branching stems that can rise to be eighteen feet tall. The flowers can grow up to two inches across and can be found in a variety of colors. They have been found in all shades of pink, purple, white, and blue. In addition, some are bicolored and some are occasionally found in yellow or carmine-red.

*Eustoma* flowers are either single-flowered or double-flowered. Both types of flowers can be found in all ranges of the possible colors listed above. They are usually one to three feet tall, although there are dwarf varieties that only grow up to eight inches in height.

## Taxonomy

*Eustoma* is a small genus, containing only two or three species.

The genus name *Eustoma* is a compound of the Greek prefix ευ- ( *eu*- ) 'good / pleasing' and Greek στόμα ( *stoma* ), 'mouth' - hence '( having a ) pleasing mouth', while the obsolete *Lisianthus* is a compound of λισσος ( lissos ) 'smooth', and ανθος ( anthos ) 'flower'.

## Cultivation

*Eustoma* flowers are tricky to grow and require some maintenance. They have tiny seeds that must be sown on the surface, not buried, and they must be planted in rich, well-drained soil and exposed to full sun. They must be kept moist but not overwatered: overwatering may result in the growth and development of fungal diseases. Lisianthus flowers will begin to bloom in early summer and some will continue to bloom throughout the later months of the summer. When cut, Lisianthus flowers can last anywhere from two to three weeks in a vase.

[*Eustoma russellianum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eustoma_russellianum) is particularly popular and has a number of [cultivars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultivar) that are grown for the [cut-flower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cut_flowers) market.