

Erysimum perofskianum (Wallflower)

Botanical Bytes by Bruner

By Gregory Bruner

Foliage Height: 9-12”
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Flower Height: 12-18”
Foliage Color: Green
USDA Hardiness: 5-9
Moisture: Average
Light: Full Sun – Part Sun



Erysimum perofskianum is believed to be a native of the Caucasus Region, which includes the bordering areas between Europe and Asia as well as Afghanistan. This wonderfully fragrant leafy family member is also known as Afghan Blistercress or Fairy Wallflower. One of the more common cultivars is **Goldshot Erysimum**.

The genus of *Erysimum* is a large one that contains over 100 members. It is interesting to note that *Erysimums* are members of the mustard family. The golden yellow flowers attract butterflies as well as hummingbirds. While your eyes visually enjoy the flowers, the sweet fragrance will tantalize your sense of smell. Because they are tolerant of both drought and salt, *Erysimums* are a hardy mound-forming addition to any sunny garden.

Flowers will begin to brighten your gardens in the spring and continue into the summer. To encourage compactness and repeat blooming, shear the first set of blooms before seeds are set. If you do not want this plant to spread very far, this shearing will also help discourage self-sowing. On the other hand, this self-sowing trait can be used to your advantage if you wish to “naturalize” an area because the seedlings will sprout up randomly, spreading their bright cheer throughout the garden.

Rock gardens, banks, and other well-drained areas in partial to full sun are the preferred growing locations. Soil fertility can be poor to average, and the pH can range from neutral to slightly alkaline.

Erysimum perofskianum has a long history in gardens dating back to the 1800s. Sir Joseph Paxton included this garden newcomer in his book *Paxton’s Magazine of Botany* in 1838, when this wonderful plant was new and exciting to gardeners. Even now the excitement continues as new and improved cultivars are introduced in the gardening market.

Trimming of *Erysimum* is important. In his book Paxton mentions that “if the plants are not thus decapitated, they are apt too grow too diffuse and unsightly.” This is a very flowery way of saying that if you don’t trim these flowers, the plants will get tall and leggy.

Erysimum perofskianum has a long and well-deserved history in gardens. Whether it’s the ability of the brilliant yellow flowers to brighten spring gardens or the ease with which it attracts birds and butterflies to flower beds, *Erysimum* has rooted into our minds and gardens alike.