

Eryngium giganteum

MISS WILLMOTT'S GHOST is a perennial (often grown as a biennial). Native to the Caucasus and Iran it has silvery-veined, green leaves and green-tinted, bluish-grey flower heads framed by glossy silver leaf-like bracts.

It is also known as Giant sea holly, *Máčka obrovská* (Czech), Sea holly, *Silvermartorn* (Swedish), and Tall eryngo.

It is attractive to wasps that no doubt pollinate it.

Giganteum means gigantic, very or unusually large (or tall)'.

The name Miss Willmott's ghost is given an amusing explanation based upon truth. This was one of the plants that an eccentric English gardener, Ellen Willmott (1858-1934) is said to have had a respect for. It seems that into this category she shared wherever seeds would be found surreptitiously wake – whether the recipients liked these Miss Willmott's eccentricities probably further her standing in the gardening for her own garden at Warley Place in which now remains) or the garden she the Italian Riviera, but also for her plant hunters (such as Ernest Wilson) and published on roses (*Rosa*). In 1897 with Jekyll, who is familiar to a far wider she received a rare distinction – the of Honour in Horticulture from the Royal



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any that fell she went as the scattered in her gifts or not. only enhanced world, not only Essex (little of developed on patronage of a book she Gertrude audience today, Victoria Medal Horticultural

Society. She is also believed to have been instrumental in acquiring today's home for RHS Wisley by persuading Sir Thomas Hanbury, who had just bought the property, to give it to the Society in 1903 to provide an experimental garden.

This attractive perennial is believed to have been introduced to England in the 19th Century. Today Miss Willmott's ghost is cultivated as an ornamental plant – and flower arrangers dry the Summer flowers for inclusion in their arrangements.