The Mustard Seed
Landscaping & Garden Centers

Prairie Ironweed

Vernonia fasciculata



Prairie Ironweed in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Spacing: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5a

Other Names: Common Ironweed, Smooth Ironweed

Description:

This variety is found in prairies, meadows and pastures with sandy, loamy soil; long blooming masses of rose-purple flowers on unbranched stems in early summer; great for borders or massed as an accent; very undemanding and drought tolerant

Ornamental Features

Prairie Ironweed has masses of beautiful clusters of rose flowers with purple overtones at the ends of the stems from mid summer to early fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. Its serrated pointy leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.



Prairie Ironweed flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Prairie Ironweed is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

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...the birds of the air can perch in its shade. Mark 4:30-32

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Prairie Ironweed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting



Prairie Ironweed flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Prairie Ironweed will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 3 feet apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Prairie Ironweed is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden. Be aware that in our climate, most plants cannot be expected to survive the winter if left in containers outdoors, and this plant is no exception. Contact our experts for more information on how to protect it over the winter months.