Sand Myrtle

Kalmia buxifolia

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: syn. Leiophyllum buxifolium, Sandmyrtle



Sand Myrtle in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

A compact, spring blooming evergreen shrub with lovely deep pink buds that open to white flowers, over dark green oval foliage; grows in a variety of habitats including sand and rocky woods

Ornamental Features

Sand Myrtle features showy clusters of white cup-shaped flowers with red eyes at the ends of the branches from mid spring to early summer, which emerge from distinctive pink flower buds. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The glossy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter.



Sand Myrtle flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Sand Myrtle is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a more or less rounded form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Sand Myrtle is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Sand Myrtle will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It has a low canopy. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.



Sand Myrtle flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Sand Myrtle makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used 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 grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.