Cardinal's Guard

Pachystachys coccinea

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8b

Other Names: Justicia coccinea, Jacobinia coccinea

Description:

This perennial, evergreen shrub produces terminal spikes of scarlet red tubular flowers for most of they year in warm climates; grown as an annual in colder areas; cut back hard occasionally to maintain density; an excellent choice for containers



Cardinal's Guard flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Cardinal's Guard features showy spikes of scarlet tubular flowers at the ends of the branches from early spring to late fall. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The large textured oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Cardinal's Guard is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its strikingly bold and coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced landscape 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 is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Cardinal's Guard is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Cardinal's Guard flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Cardinal's Guard will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Cardinal's Guard makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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 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.



Cardinal's Guard in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder