





Red Shiso Perilla

Perilla frutescens var. crispa

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 30 inches

Spacing: 26 inches

Sunlight:  

Hardiness Zone: 9b

Other Names: Beefsteak Plant, Red Mint, Chinese Basil

Description:

Dark red-purple leaves with burgundy veins on a dense bushy plant; a great garden accent or landscape plant that also works well in mixed containers; edible sprouts are used for flavoring food; performs well in sun or shade



Red Shiso Perilla foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Edible Qualities

Red Shiso Perilla is a perennial herb that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The fragrant pointy dark red leaves with distinctive burgundy veins and tinges of purple are usually harvested from early summer to early fall. The leaves have a sharp taste with a crisp texture and a strong fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Cooking
- Seasoning

Features & Attributes

Red Shiso Perilla's attractive fragrant pointy leaves remain dark red in color with distinctive burgundy veins and tinges of purple throughout the year on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth. It features dainty spikes of lime green tubular flowers with white overtones rising above the foliage from late summer to mid fall.

This is an herbaceous evergreen perennial herb with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition. This is a relatively low maintenance plant. Trim off the flower heads after they fade and die to encourage more blooms late into the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.



Aside from its primary use as an edible, Red Shiso Perilla is suitable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Red Shiso Perilla will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 26 inches apart. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an evergreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It 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 rich soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Red Shiso Perilla is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. 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.