Millcreek Gardens

Red Shiso Perilla

Perilla frutescens var. crispa



Red Shiso Perilla
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 30 inches

Spacing: 26 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

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

Edible Qualities

Red Shiso Perilla is an annual herb that is commonly 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

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. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

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 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.