Homestead Gardens Plant Finder

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Ornamental Sorrel

Rumex sanguineus



Ornamental Sorrel
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 12 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Spacing: 8 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Bloody Dock, Bloody Sorrel, Bloodwort, Wood Dock

Description:

This variety is a taprooted perennial producing a rosette of leaves distinctively marked with deep red veins; a hard clipping back after blooming rejuvenates the foliage; beautiful along the front of borders or in containers

Ornamental Features

Ornamental Sorrel's attractive crinkled narrow leaves remain dark green in color with distinctive dark red veins throughout the season on a plant with a mounded habit of growth. It features subtle spikes of green star-shaped flowers rising above the foliage in early summer. The dark red stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Ornamental Sorrel is an herbaceous perennial with a mounded form. 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, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.



Ornamental Sorrel foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Sorrel is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Ornamental Sorrel will grow to be about 12 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 8 inches apart. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 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 prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets. It can be propagated by division.

Ornamental Sorrel is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers and foliage against which the thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.