Homestead Gardens Plant Finder

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Narrowleaf Ironweed

Vernonia lettermannii



Narrowleaf Ironweed foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 30 inches

Spacing: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Letterman's Ironweed

Description:

This compact, well branched variety has lovely fine textured foliage; long blooming masses of purple flowers in late summer; great for borders or massed as an accent; very undemanding and drought tolerant

Ornamental Features

Narrowleaf Ironweed is covered in stunning ray-like plumes of purple flowers with hot pink eyes at the ends of the stems from mid to late summer. Its attractive narrow leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.



Narrowleaf Ironweed
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Narrowleaf Ironweed is an herbaceous perennial with a mounded form. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It is a good choice for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Narrowleaf Ironweed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Narrowleaf Ironweed will grow to be about 3 feet 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 24 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 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 does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Narrowleaf Ironweed is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.