Homestead Gardens Plant Finder

Davidsonville, MD | Severna Park, MD | Smyrna, MD
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Red Valerian

Centranthus ruber

Red Valerian flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: Jupiter's Beard

Description:

A well branched, clump forming variety which is valued for use in poor, alkaline soils; a showy bloom of pink to red flowers from red buds from spring to frost; deadhead to prevent seeds from forming; less vigorous in hot humid temperatures

Ornamental Features

Red Valerian features showy cymes of fragrant pink star-shaped flowers held atop the stems in late spring, which emerge from distinctive crimson flower buds. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive fragrant pointy leaves remain grayish green in color throughout the season.

Red Valerian in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Red Valerian is an herbaceous perennial with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. 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. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Red Valerian is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Red Valerian will grow to be about 32 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. 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 is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for poor, alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

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