Himalayan Blueberry

Vaccinium retusum



Himalayan Blueberry foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Chinese Blueberry

Description:

A dwarf perennial evergreen shrub that is bushy and compact; produces pink flowers in mid summer and fruit in fall; prefers highly acidic soil, perfect drainage and mulch; plant with peat moss

Edible Qualities

Himalayan Blueberry is a small shrub that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. It produces small clusters of plum purple round berries with silvery blue overtones which are usually ready for picking in early fall. The berries have a sweet taste.

The berries are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Baking
- Preserves

Features & Attributes

Himalayan Blueberry features dainty clusters of pink bell-shaped flowers hanging below the branches from early to mid summer. It has green deciduous foliage. The small glossy oval leaves turn an outstanding brick red in the fall. It features an abundance of magnificent plum purple berries with silvery blue overtones in early fall.

This is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition. This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Himalayan Blueberry is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Himalayan Blueberry will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub 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 edibles 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 very fussy about its soil conditions and must have sandy, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.

Himalayan Blueberry is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use 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 grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.