Variegated Chilean Wintergreen

Gaultheria mucronata 'Variegata'



Variegated Chilean Wintergreen foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Boxberry, Prickly Heath, Pernettya mucronata

Description:

A good shrub for highly acidic, sandy and poor soils; small, urn-shaped pink or white flowers in spring followed by bright pink, white, or claret red berries in fall; very fragrant dark green foliage with white edges, takes on pink tones in fall

Ornamental Features

Variegated Chilean Wintergreen features dainty nodding white bell-shaped flowers at the ends of the branches from mid spring to mid summer. It has dark green foliage edged in white. The fragrant pointy leaves turn burgundy in the fall, which persists throughout the winter. It produces pink berries from early to late fall.

Landscape Attributes

Variegated Chilean Wintergreen is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a mounded form. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Variegated Chilean Wintergreen is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Variegated Chilean Wintergreen will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years. This is a female variety of the species which requires a male selection of the same species growing nearby in order to set fruit.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in 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 rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, 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 is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Variegated Chilean Wintergreen makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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 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.