Blood Leaf

Iresine herbstii

Height: 16 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Spacing: 16 inches

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Bloodleaf, Beefsteak Plant, Chicken Gizzard



Blood Leaf foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Blood Leaf
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Blood Leaf's attractive textured oval leaves remain dark red in color with distinctive pink veins and tinges of fuchsia throughout the year on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Blood Leaf is an herbaceous annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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. The flowers of this plant may actually detract from its ornamental features, so they can be removed as they appear. 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.

Blood Leaf is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Blood Leaf will grow to be about 16 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 16 inches apart. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant should be grown in a location with partial shade. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. 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. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Blood Leaf is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a canvas of foliage against which the larger 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.