Cape Ivy

Senecio mikanioides



Cape Ivy foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: syn. Delairea odorata, German Ivy, Parlor Ivy

Description:

A non-woody vine producing fleshy, glossy green leaves with angular lobes; creates a dense groundcover or screen, and is great for hanging baskets; will spread and seed vigorously in warmer climates where it is considered invasive

Ornamental Features

Cape Ivy's attractive glossy lobed leaves emerge light green in spring, turning green in color the rest of the year on a plant with a spreading habit of growth. It features dainty clusters of lightly-scented yellow flowers held atop the branches from late winter to early spring.

Landscape Attributes

Cape Ivy is a multi-stemmed annual with a ground-hugging 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 high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and can be pruned at anytime. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Invasive
- Self-Seeding

Cape Ivy is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Cape Ivy will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. As a climbing vine, it should either be planted near a fence, trellis or other landscape structure where it can be trained to grow upwards on it, or allowed to trail off a retaining wall or slope. 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 does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Cape Ivy is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in hanging baskets. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. 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.