Jacob's Coat

Acalypha wilkesiana



Jacob's Coat foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Copperleaf, syn. Acalypha tricolor

Description:

Widely grown as an annual in colder areas, this variety will grow up to 4 feet in one season; in frost free areas it can become a very large shrub; stunning multicolor leaves are impressive in the garden, or containers; overwinter indoors in a bright spot

Ornamental Features

Jacob's Coat's attractive serrated oval leaves emerge coppery-bronze in spring, turning dark green in color with showy plum purple variegation and tinges of red the rest of the year on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Jacob's Coat is a multi-stemmed 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 plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects
- Disease

Jacob's Coat is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Jacob's Coat will grow to be about 15 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. 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 somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.

Jacob's Coat is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base 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.