Ethiopian Plumbago

Ceratostigma abyssinicum



Ethiopian Plumbago flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Shrubby Plumbago, Leadwort

Description:

An excellent shrub variety with clusters of blue flowers in late summer; flowers resemble that of woodland phlox, and the pinkish calyces add a wonderful color contrast; not the hardiest plumbago, shelter from frost, or move indoors for winter



Ethiopian Plumbago
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Ethiopian Plumbago features showy clusters of blue star-shaped flowers with pink calyces at the ends of the branches from late summer to mid fall. It has green deciduous foliage. The glossy oval leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color.

Landscape Attributes

Ethiopian Plumbago 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 shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Ethiopian Plumbago is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Ethiopian Plumbago will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. 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 15 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Ethiopian Plumbago makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, 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.