Brazilian Joy Weed

Alternanthera brasiliana



Brazilian Joy Weed foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Calico Plant, Parrot Leaf

Description:

This showy, heat loving ground cover plant is perfect as a landscape edging plant, and is great for basing containers, tolerates partial shade, but most vivid color is produced in full sun

Ornamental Features

Brazilian Joy Weed features airy spikes of creamy white ball-shaped flowers rising above the foliage from mid to early winter. Its attractive pointy leaves emerge light green in spring, turning burgundy in color with curious hot pink undersides and tinges of purple the rest of the year.



Brazilian Joy Weed
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Brazilian Joy Weed is a dense 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 plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Brazilian Joy Weed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Brazilian Joy Weed will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. 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 does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. 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.

Brazilian Joy Weed is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.