Dwarf Cardamom

Alpinia nutans



Dwarf Cardamom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: False Cardamon, Shell Flower, Cardamom Ginger

Description:

Beautiful glossy green leaves have a distinctive cardamom fragrance; shell-like, creamy white flowers bloom prolifically in spring; keep moist but not wet in a rich soil; becomes more hardy once established; great for containers or along borders



Dwarf Cardamom foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Dwarf Cardamom features showy spikes of lightly-scented white flowers rising above the foliage in mid spring. Its attractive fragrant narrow leaves emerge light green in spring, turning dark green in color the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Dwarf Cardamom is an herbaceous evergreen perennial with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. 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, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. 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.

Dwarf Cardamom is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Dwarf Cardamom will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

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. 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.

Dwarf Cardamom is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used 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.