Brunette Bugbane

Actaea racemosa 'Brunette'



Brunette Bugbane foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Black Snakeroot, Black Cohosh, Cimicifuga racemosa

Description:

Beautiful chocolate-purple, fragrant foliage and long, airy upright spikes of white flowers; prefers moist, but well-drained soil; use this plant primarily for its wonderful contrasting leaves

Ornamental Features

Brunette Bugbane is blanketed in stunning spikes of fragrant white flowers with shell pink overtones rising above the foliage from mid to late summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive deeply cut compound leaves emerge burgundy in spring, turning dark green in color with showy burgundy variegation and tinges of dark brown throughout the season. The brown fruits are carried on spikes from late summer to late winter. The deep purple stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Brunette Bugbane is an herbaceous perennial with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Brunette Bugbane is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Brunette Bugbane will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant performs well in both full sun and full shade. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selection of a native North American species. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

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