Upland Cotton

Gossypium hirsutum



Upland Cotton fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: Mexican Cotton

Description:

This Central American species has hundreds of cultivars that are being grown around the world for textiles and culinary oil; white cup shaped flowers in spring, followed by large white fuzzy seed heads by fall; creates an unusual interest in the garden

Ornamental Features

Upland Cotton has white cup-shaped flowers with buttery yellow eyes and dark red spots along the stems from mid to late spring. The white fruits are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from late summer to mid fall. Its lobed leaves remain green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Upland Cotton is an herbaceous perennial with a more or less rounded form. 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. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects

Upland Cotton is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Upland Cotton will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 4 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 should only be grown in full sunlight. 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 type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is not originally from North America..

Upland Cotton 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.