Heavy Metal® Astilbe

Astilbe x arendsii 'Heavy Metal'

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 18 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 2

Other Names: False Spirea

Group/Class: Music Series

Description:

Striking, fluffy, cherry red plumes rise above rich dark green foliage; perfect in a shady spot with dappled light, either in the garden or containers; prefers even moisture, so water regularly for abundant flowers and nice foliage

Ornamental Features

Heavy Metal Astilbe has masses of beautiful plumes of cherry red flowers at the ends of the stems from mid summer to early fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its ferny compound leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season. The dark red stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Heavy Metal Astilbe is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Heavy Metal Astilbe is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Heavy Metal Astilbe flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Heavy Metal Astilbe in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Heavy Metal Astilbe in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Heavy Metal Astilbe will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 18 inches apart. It grows at a medium 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 does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in full shade. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid. 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.

Heavy Metal Astilbe 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.