Sooty Sweet William

Dianthus barbatus 'Sooty'



Sooty Sweet William flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Spacing: 10 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 3

Other Names: Perennial Sweet William

Description:

Deliciously clove-scented, velvety frilly chocolate-burgundy flowers with brighter pink centers; optimal site has full sun with ample moisture, and deep, rich, well drained soil; seeds freely but divide for truest color

Ornamental Features

Sooty Sweet William is blanketed in stunning fragrant crimson flat-top frilly flowers with dark brown overtones and pink centers at the ends of the stems from mid spring to early summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive tomentose pointy leaves remain green in color with showy burgundy variegation throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Sooty Sweet William 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 plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Sooty Sweet William is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Sooty Sweet William will grow to be about 15 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 10 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and tends to be biennial, meaning that it puts on vegetative growth the first year, flowers the second, and then dies. However, this species tends to self-seed and will thereby endure for years in the garden if allowed. 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 or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. 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.

Sooty Sweet William is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers and foliage against which the larger thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.