Poor Man's Rhododendron

Impatiens sodenii

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Shrub Balsam, Touch-me-nots



Poor Man's Rhododendron flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Poor Man's Rhododendron
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

Lovely clusters of pale pink flowers nearly year round in frost free areas; a great woodland or shade garden plant; showy foliage is deep green with a white midrib; frost damaged plants usually re-sprout from base, prune yearly to remove damaged branches

Ornamental Features

Poor Man's Rhododendron features showy clusters of shell pink round flowers with white overtones at the ends of the branches from early spring to early winter. Its attractive glossy narrow leaves remain dark green in color with pointy white spines throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Poor Man's Rhododendron is a multi-stemmed annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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 is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. 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.

Poor Man's Rhododendron is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Poor Man's Rhododendron will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. Although it's not a true annual, this plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well 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 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 quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in both summer and winter to conserve soil moisture and protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.

Poor Man's Rhododendron 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.