Shell Bush

Ocimum labiatum

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Pink Sage, Pink Cat's Whiskers

Description:

A wonderful fast growing variety that looks and smells fantastic; small light green, heart shaped leaves with a minty scent and flavor, are perfect for culinary dishes and tea; eye catching spikes of lovely pink flowers rise above create a lovely accent

Edible Qualities

Shell Bush is a woody herb that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The small fragrant heart-shaped light green leaves can be harvested at any time in the season. The leaves have a minty taste and a pleasant fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Drying
- Seasoning
- Tea

Features & Attributes

Shell Bush features showy spikes of fragrant pink flowers with lavender overtones held atop the branches from early summer to mid fall. It has light green evergreen foliage. The fragrant heart-shaped leaves remain light green throughout the winter.



Shell Bush flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Shell Bush flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is a multi-stemmed evergreen woody herb with a mounded form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition. This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.



Shell Bush in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Shell Bush is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Shell Bush will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It has a low canopy. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years.

This woody herb is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Shell Bush is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use 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 grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.