Fragrant Wintergreen

Gaultheria fragrantissima



Fragrant Wintergreen foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Checkerberry

Description:

An adaptable evergreen shrub or small tree for highly acidic, sandy and poor soils; small urn-shaped flowers in spring, bright plum-red berries in fall, and purple fall color; leaves are very fragrant when crushed; a beautiful understory plant

Ornamental Features

Fragrant Wintergreen is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent shell pink berries from late summer to late fall, which fade to plum purple over time. It features dainty fragrant nodding white bell-shaped flowers at the ends of the branches from mid to late spring. It has dark green foliage with grayish green undersides. The fragrant narrow leaves remain dark green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Fragrant Wintergreen is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It is a good choice for attracting birds and bees 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;

- Suckering

Fragrant Wintergreen is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Fragrant Wintergreen will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years.

This shrub performs well in both full sun and full shade. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in standing water. 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 in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America..