Viper's Bugloss

Echium vulgare

Plant Height: 12 inches

Flower Height: 24 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Blue Devil, Blue Thistle, Blueweed

Description:

A clump forming, short lived perennial that will freely re-seed, sometimes aggressively; attractive spikes of violet-blue flowers from spring to fall; dead head to promote re-bloom and limit re-seeding; drought tolerant once established



Viper's Bugloss flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Viper's Bugloss has masses of beautiful spikes of blue tubular flowers with violet overtones and red anthers rising above the foliage from mid spring to late summer, which emerge from distinctive rose flower buds, and which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its narrow leaves remain bluish-green in color throughout the year.



Viper's Bugloss in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Viper's Bugloss is an herbaceous evergreen perennial with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. 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. Trim off the flower heads after they fade and die to encourage more blooms late into the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds 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;

- Invasive
- Self-Seeding

Viper's Bugloss is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Viper's Bugloss will grow to be about 12 inches tall at maturity extending to 24 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 18 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 3 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America..

Viper's Bugloss 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. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.