Skylark Black Sage

Salvia mellifera 'Skylark'



Skylark Black Sage foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Description:

Rich blue flowers appear from late winter into spring on this highly aromatic native shrub common to coastal California; a compact cultivar, great for smaller spaces; takes on a dark, almost black appearance, especially during drought, hence the name

Ornamental Features

Skylark Black Sage has masses of beautiful spikes of lavender flowers with sky blue overtones rising above the foliage from mid winter to late spring, which are most effective when planted in groupings. It has green foliage with grayish green undersides. The fuzzy narrow leaves remain green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Skylark Black Sage is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub 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 shrub 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, 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;

- Self-Seeding

Skylark Black Sage is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Skylark Black Sage will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It has a low canopy. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years. As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This is a selection of a native North American species.

Skylark Black Sage makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. It can be used either as 'filler' or as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, depending on the height and form of the other plants used in the container planting. 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.