Malabar Nut

Justicia adhatoda

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: Adulsa, Vasa, Vasaka

Description:

An upright shrub or small tree featuring attractive, dark green ridged leaves, and terminal spikes of bright white tubular flowers with purplish-pink markings in spring to summer; an excellent accent choice for the garden, or containers



Malabar Nut flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Malabar Nut features showy spikes of white tubular flowers with fuchsia veins at the ends of the branches from late winter to late spring, which emerge from distinctive chartreuse flower buds. Its attractive textured oval leaves remain dark green in color throughout the year. The chartreuse stems can be quite attractive.



Malabar Nut in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Malabar Nut is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its wonderfully bold, coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced garden composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, 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 and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Malabar Nut is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing



Malabar Nut flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Malabar Nut will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground. Although it is technically a woody plant, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as a perennial in our climate if planted outdoors over the winter, usually regrowing from its base (crown) 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 full sun to partial shade. 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. To help this plant achive its best flowering performance, periodically apply a flower-boosting fertilizer from early spring through into the active growing season. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. 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. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Malabar Nut 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.