Pacific Bleeding Heart

Dicentra formosa



Pacific Bleeding Heart flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 12 inches

Flower Height: 18 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 18 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 3

Description:

Lacy gray-green foliage on a compact mound with delicate, pink and lavender dangling heart-shaped flowers on nodding stems, like little jewels in the garden; likes moist, shady areas; will self seed and spread; good for beds, borders and cottage gardens

Ornamental Features

Pacific Bleeding Heart features delicate nodding shell pink heart-shaped flowers with a lavender flare dangling from the stems from early summer to early fall. Its ferny compound leaves remain grayish green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Pacific Bleeding Heart is an herbaceous perennial with a mounded form. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies 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;

- Spreading
- Self-Seeding

Pacific Bleeding Heart is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Pacific Bleeding Heart will grow to be about 12 inches tall at maturity extending to 18 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 18 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen! As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

This plant does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. 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. 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 rich soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is native to parts of North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets. It can be propagated by division.

Pacific Bleeding Heart is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers against which the thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.