Giant Potato Creeper

Solanum wendlandii



Giant Potato Creeper flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Costa Rican Nightshade, Paradise Flower

Description:

An exceptional, climbing vine offering attractive, long lasting purple to lavender flowers that fade to white; perfect for climbing fences or trellises; also great trailing for containers and hanging baskets

Ornamental Features

Giant Potato Creeper features showy panicles of lightly-scented purple round flowers with lavender overtones and yellow eyes at the ends of the branches from mid spring to mid fall. Its oval leaves remain dark green in color with curious grayish green undersides throughout the year.



Giant Potato Creeper flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Giant Potato Creeper is a multi-stemmed annual with a ground-hugging habit of growth. 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 is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Giant Potato Creeper is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Giant Potato Creeper will grow to be about 15 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. As a climbing vine, it should either be planted near a fence, trellis or other landscape structure where it can be trained to grow upwards on it, or allowed to trail off a retaining wall or slope. Although it's not a true annual, this plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. 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 should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. 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, 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.

Giant Potato Creeper is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. 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.