Desert Sage

Salvia dorrii



Desert Sage flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Spacing: 3 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 5

Other Names: Dorr's Sage, Purple Sage, Gray Ball Sage

Description:

Spectacular deep blue-violet flowers with pinkish-purple bracts are borne in whorls above silvery-gray, aromatic foliage on this woody evergreen sub-shrub; heat and cold hardy, requiring little water; flowers over a long season; great for xeriscaping

Ornamental Features

Desert Sage has masses of beautiful clusters of fragrant violet flowers with blue overtones and rose bracts rising above the foliage from late spring to late summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. It has grayish green foliage with hints of silver. The small fuzzy oval leaves remain grayish green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Desert Sage is a 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 is a relatively low maintenance shrub, 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. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Desert Sage is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Desert Sage will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 3 feet apart. It has a low canopy. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years.

This shrub should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any 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 sandy 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 native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Desert Sage makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used 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 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.