Common Milkweed

Asclepias syriaca

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 4 feet

Spread: 32 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Butterfly Flower, Silkweed

Description:

This variety produces a profusion of sweet-scented shell pink flowers and is the mandatory food source for the caterpillars of the Monarch butterfly who feast on the leaves; best in well drained soil and spreads quickly by rhizomes; best in a large area



Common Milkweed flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Common Milkweed features showy shell pink flat-top flowers at the ends of the stems in mid summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its narrow leaves remain grayish green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Common Milkweed is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading 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 relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. 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

Common Milkweed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use



Common Milkweed in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Common Milkweed will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 4 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 32 inches. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. It grows at a medium 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!

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.



Common Milkweed flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder