Purple Fennel

Foeniculum vulgare 'Purpurascens'



Purple Fennel
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 30 inches

Flower Height: 4 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

An ornamental herb grown for its airy, finely cut foliage that emerges burgundy and matures to a handsome bronzy mauve; a standout in the border with its wispy, smoky look, and is also great when massed

Edible Qualities

Purple Fennel is a perennial herb that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The fragrant ferny bluish-green leaves with showy coppery-bronze variegation and tinges of deep purple which emerge burgundy in spring are usually harvested from early summer to early fall. The leaves have a savory taste.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Seasoning

Features & Attributes

Purple Fennel has masses of beautiful chartreuse flat-top flowers held atop the stems in mid summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive fragrant ferny leaves emerge burgundy in spring, turning bluish-green in color with showy coppery-bronze variegation and tinges of deep purple throughout the season.

This is an herbaceous perennial herb with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. 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 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. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects
- Self-Seeding

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Purple Fennel is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens

Planting & Growing

Purple Fennel will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity extending to 4 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 4 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 is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate 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 somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.