Oregon Grape Holly

Mahonia nervosa

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Berberis nervosa, Cascade Barberry

Description:

Fabulous groundcover with dark green foliage resembling the spiny leaves of a holly ; treasured for its bold clusters of bright yellow flowers and light blue berries; plant where it will receive some snow cover

Ornamental Features

Oregon Grape Holly has attractive dark green foliage with light green veins on a plant with a spreading habit of growth. The spiny oval pinnately compound leaves are highly ornamental and turn an outstanding purple in the fall, which persists throughout the winter. It features bold racemes of fragrant yellow flowers rising above the foliage in mid spring. It produces powder blue berries from late summer to early fall.

Landscape Attributes

Oregon Grape Holly is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a ground-hugging habit of growth. 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.



Oregon Grape Holly flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Oregon Grape Holly
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting birds 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;

- Suckering
- Disease

Oregon Grape Holly is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens



Oregon Grape Holly foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Oregon Grape Holly will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub 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 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 pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. 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.