Purple Sage

Salvia leucophylla

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8b

Other Names: San Luis Purple Sage, Gray Sage



Purple Sage foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

A native variety that may eventually grow quite large; whorls of purple flowers on towering spike in spring; silvery gray-green foliage is quite aromatic; used for erosion control on banks; excellent cut or dried flowers for arrangements



Purple Sage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Purple Sage has masses of beautiful spikes of purple flowers rising above the foliage from early spring to mid summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. It has grayish green foliage with silver undersides. The fragrant narrow leaves remain grayish green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Purple Sage is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading 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.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance 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, 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.

Purple Sage is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Purple Sage will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 feet. It has a low canopy, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. 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.

Purple Sage makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use 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.