Persian Shield

Strobilanthes gossypinus



Persian Shield foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Silver Persian Shield

Description:

This variety is primarily grown for its stunning foliage and texture; fine hairs on new foliage is gold, maturing to silver, on dense blue-green; pinch stems to promote bushiness; prefers morning to early afternoon sun only; can be overwintered indoors

Ornamental Features

Persian Shield's attractive large tomentose pointy leaves emerge gold in spring, turning bluish-green in color with hints of silver the rest of the year on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth. It features dainty spikes of violet trumpet-shaped flowers rising above the foliage from late fall to late winter.

Landscape Attributes

Persian Shield is a dense multi-stemmed annual 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 plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Persian Shield is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Persian Shield will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Persian Shield is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.