Clary Sage

Salvia sclarea



Clary Sage flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 30 inches

Spacing: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: Muscatel Sage, Salvia sclarea var. turkestanica

Description:

A long-blooming perennial when pruned routinely after individual flowerings, this lavender-pink and white flowered salvia is the largest blooming perennial salvia, and spectacular in any garden composition; wonderful planted in masses or waves

Ornamental Features

Clary Sage has masses of beautiful racemes of lavender flowers with white overtones and green bracts rising above the foliage from late spring to late summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive large fragrant oval leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Clary Sage 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 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 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.

Clary Sage is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Clary Sage will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 24 inches apart. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 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 very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Clary Sage 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.