Iron Butterfly Ironweed

Vernonia lettermannii 'Iron Butterfly'



Iron Butterfly Ironweed
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Narrowleaf Ironweed, Letterman's Ironweed

Description:

This dense, compact, well branched variety has lovely fine textured foliage; long blooming masses of purple flowers in summer; great for borders or massed as an accent; very undemanding and drought tolerant



Iron Butterfly Ironweed in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Iron Butterfly Ironweed is covered in stunning ray-like plumes of purple flowers with fuchsia overtones at the ends of the stems from early to mid summer, which emerge from distinctive brick red flower buds. Its attractive grassy leaves remain emerald green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Iron Butterfly Ironweed is an herbaceous perennial with a mounded form. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It is a good choice for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Iron Butterfly Ironweed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Iron Butterfly Ironweed will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 18 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 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 does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selection of a native North American species. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Iron Butterfly Ironweed is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It can be used either as 'filler' or as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, depending on the height and form of the other plants used in the container planting. 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.