Hoary Skullcap

Scutellaria incana

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 12 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Downy Skullcap

Description:

A lovely flowering native perennial, featuring spikes of showy blue-violet flowers accented in white; spectacular when in mass bloom; great for perennial borders or wildflower gardens; tolerates heat, drought, and poor, infertile soils

Ornamental Features

Hoary Skullcap has masses of beautiful racemes of blue pea-like flowers with violet overtones and a white blotch at the ends of the stems from mid to late summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. Its tomentose oval leaves remain green in color with curious grayish green undersides throughout the season. The deep purple stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Hoary Skullcap 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.



Hoary Skullcap flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Hoary Skullcap flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This plant 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 bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Hoary Skullcap is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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



Hoary Skullcap in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Hoary Skullcap will grow to be about 30 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 12 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 4 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 performs well in both full sun and full shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for sandy, acidic soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. 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. It can be propagated by division.

Hoary Skullcap 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.