Poke Milkweed

Asclepias exaltata



Poke Milkweed flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 32 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3b

Other Names: Butterfly Flower

Description:

This tall variety produces a profusion of scented pink to white flowers and is the mandatory food source for the caterpillars of the Monarch butterfly who feast on the leaves; best in well drained soil and spreads quickly by rhizomes; best in a large area

Ornamental Features

Poke Milkweed features showy fragrant nodding shell pink flowers at the ends of the stems from mid spring to mid summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its narrow leaves remain green in color with curious grayish green undersides throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Poke Milkweed 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 is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spreading

Poke Milkweed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Poke Milkweed will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 32 inches. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. It grows at a medium 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 is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any 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 somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets. It can be propagated by division.