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The Best of Every Season

Spitfire Coleus

Solenostemon scutellarioides 'Spitfire'

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 20 inches

Spacing: 16 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Ornamental Features

Spitfire Coleus' attractive serrated pointy leaves remain coppery-bronze in color with distinctive purple veins and tinges of purple throughout the year on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Spitfire Coleus is an herbaceous 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 is a relatively low maintenance plant. The flowers of this plant may actually detract from its ornamental features, so they can be removed as they appear. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Spitfire Coleus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets



Spitfire Coleus foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Spitfire Coleus foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Spitfire Coleus will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 16 inches apart. 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 performs well in both full sun and full shade. However, you may want to keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Spitfire Coleus is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. 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.