Harlequin Butterfly Bush

Buddleia davidii 'Harlequin'



Harlequin Butterfly Bush flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Summer Lilac

Description:

A valuable garden plant with fragrant purple and orange flowers in late summer when little else blooms; attracts butterflies; may treat as a perennial and cut it back to the ground each spring as it regrows vigorously and blooms on new wood

Ornamental Features

Harlequin Butterfly Bush features showy panicles of fragrant purple flowers with orange eyes at the ends of the branches from mid summer to mid fall. The flowers are excellent for cutting. It has creamy white-variegated grayish green foliage. The fuzzy narrow leaves do not develop any appreciable fall colour.



Harlequin Butterfly Bush foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Harlequin Butterfly Bush is an open multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting bees, 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.

Harlequin Butterfly Bush is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

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Planting & Growing

Harlequin Butterfly Bush will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. 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.

Harlequin Butterfly Bush makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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 grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.