Paperwhites

Narcissus papyraceus



Paperwhites in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 16 inches

Spread: 10 inches

Spacing: 5 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Paper Whites

Description:

This lovely plant produces clusters of tiny white blooms at the end of its stems for several weeks; very showy when massed in the garden; widely presented as a container plant in colder climates

Ornamental Features

Paperwhites has masses of beautiful clusters of fragrant white star-shaped flowers with buttery yellow eyes at the ends of the stems from late winter to mid spring, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its grassy leaves remain grayish green in colour throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Paperwhites is an herbaceous annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. 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.

Paperwhites is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

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Planting & Growing

Paperwhites will grow to be about 14 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 5 inches apart. Although it's not a true annual, this 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. As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

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. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. 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 not originally from North America. It can be propagated by multiplication of the underground bulbs.

Paperwhites is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers against which the larger thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.