Bitterroot

Lewisia cotyledon



Bitterroot in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 4 inches

Flower Height: 8 inches

Spread: 6 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 3

Ornamental Features

Bitterroot has hot pink star-shaped flowers with yellow eyes and white stripes at the ends of the stems in late spring, which are interesting on close inspection. Its attractive succulent oval leaves emerge light green in spring, turning forest green in colour with prominent deep purple tips the rest of the year.



Bitterroot flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Bitterroot is an herbaceous evergreen perennial with a mounded form. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Bitterroot is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use

Planting & Growing

Bitterroot will grow to be only 4 inches tall at maturity extending to 8 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 6 inches. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the ground. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It requires an extremely dry, well-drained growing location, and will usually die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in both summer and winter to conserve soil moisture and protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.

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