East Bay Nursery

Velvet Centaurea

Centaurea gymnocarpa

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 7 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8a

Other Names: Dusty Miller, syn. Centaurea cineraria

Description:

Large, fluffy purple flowers appear on long white stems from late spring into summer, over striking, fine white foliage; bees and butterflies cannot resist these blooms; a great groundcover for hillsides, or neglected sites

Ornamental Features

Velvet Centaurea features delicate purple pincushion flowers with pink overtones and white centers at the ends of the stems from early to late summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive tiny tomentose narrow leaves remain white in color throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Velvet Centaurea is an herbaceous evergreen perennial with a ground-hugging habit of growth. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees and 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;

- Self-Seeding



Velvet Centaurea flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Velvet Centaurea in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Velvet Centaurea is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Container Planting



Velvet Centaurea
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Velvet Centaurea will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 7 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. 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 type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.

Velvet Centaurea is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. 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.