Merlin Barrenwort

Epimedium x youngianum 'Merlin'



Merlin Barrenwort flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 12 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Spacing: 15 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: Bishop's Hat

Description:

Rich violet nodding flowers flushed with white at the base; shield-shaped green leaves have bronze coloring in spring and fall; makes a great groundcover that is tolerant of dry shade once established; also grows well in moisture if well-drained



Merlin Barrenwort foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Merlin Barrenwort's attractive heart-shaped leaves emerge coppery-bronze in spring, turning light green in color on a plant with a spreading habit of growth. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous red in the fall. It features delicate nodding violet star-shaped flowers with white centers rising above the foliage from mid to late spring.

Landscape Attributes

Merlin Barrenwort is a dense herbaceous evergreen perennial with a ground-hugging habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

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 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;

- Spreading

Merlin Barrenwort is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Merlin Barrenwort will grow to be about 10 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 15 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the ground. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in partial shade to shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any 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 rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider covering it with a thick layer of mulch in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Merlin Barrenwort 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. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.