New Jersey Tea

Ceanothus americanus

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Description:

A dense, rounded shrub with bright green shiny foliage; a prolific bloomer, covered in clusters of fragrant white flowers from mid-spring to early summer; perfect for borders and rock gardens; very hardy and drought tolerant once established



New Jersey Tea flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



New Jersey Tea in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

New Jersey Tea features showy clusters of fragrant white flowers at the ends of the branches from mid spring to early summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. It has attractive green foliage with grayish green undersides. The glossy pointy leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall color. It produces red capsules in mid summer, which fade to dark brown over time. The buttery yellow stems are very effective and add winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

New Jersey Tea is a dense multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with a more or less rounded form. 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 should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting birds, 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;

- Spreading
- Disease

New Jersey Tea is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

New Jersey Tea will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often 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. This plant is capable of fixing its own nitrogen, which means that it is effectively self-fertilizing. As a result it should not require supplemental fertilizing, and if you do fertilize it, be sure to only use a low-nitrogen fertilizer to promote root growth. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America.



New Jersey Tea foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder