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Hibiscus syriacus

Rose of Sharon, Althaea, Shrub Althaea
Malvaceae (Mallow)

Type Shrub, woody plant

Hardy range 5B to 9A

Height 10' to 15' / 3.00m to 4.60m

Spread 6' to 10' / 1.80m to 3.00m

Growth rate Slow

Form Rounded and upright or erect

Exposure Partial shade or partial sun to full sun

Persistence Deciduous

Bloom Color Blue, lavender, pink, purple, red and white

Bloom Time Summer

The flowers are very showy.

Native Habitat

China.

Crown, Branch and Twig

This plant is symmetrical with a fine texture and has an open crown.

This plant's bark is thin and not showy.

Branches or twigs are of medium thickness and are thin.

This plant is often grown with multiple trunks.

Propagation and Root Form

Propagation is from cuttings and seeds. Little pruning is required.

This plant has low flammability.

This plant's roots are deep rooted.

Althaea (spp.)

Leaf Color Green

Fall Color No change in fall color

Leaf Identification

Type: Simple

Arrangement: Alternate

Venations: Pinnate and palmate

Margins: Dentate

Shapes: Ovate and rhomboid

Length: 2in./5cm to 4in./10cm

Fruit Color Brown

The fruit is dry and irregularly shaped.

Environment

This plant tolerates some drought, occasional wetness and some salt.

This plant will grow in dry to occasionally wet soil.

Suitable soil is well-drained/loamy, sandy or clay.

The pH preference is an acidic to slightly alkaline (less than

Landscape Uses

- Container plantings
- Seashore planting
- Border
- Foundation planting
- Standard
- Specimen

Attributes and Features

- Naturalizing
- Attracts birds
- Attracts butterflies
- Persistent fruit



Culture Notes

Easily grown, shrubs are usually planted in the perennial garden because of the abundance of colorful flowers. Too much or too little water or over fertilization will cause buds to drop from this plant. This plant is capable of self-sowing to the point of being a nuisance if the soil beneath is suitable for germinating. Flowers are produced on new growth so prune in late winter, if you wish to control its size. Pruning is not necessary for flower production. Shrubs are easy to transplant bare root or balled and burlapped. Plants in flower attract hummingbirds. Plants serve as butterfly nectar sources. Pollen can cause slight to mild allergy symptoms.

Plants sometimes have poor root systems which cause the plant to fall over as it grows taller. This often originates in the nursery when plants are held in containers too long. This can be avoided by choosing plants that are small for their container and slicing any roots that circle the outside of the container. Some growers also use alternate container designs specially designed to reduce the amount of circling roots.

Planting and establishing shrubs

The most common cause of young plant failure is planting too deep. Plant the root ball no deeper than it was in the nursery. In most instances, the root flare zone (point where the top-most root in the root ball originates from the trunk) should be located just above the landscape soil surface. Sometimes plants come from the nursery with soil over the root flare. If there is soil over this area, scrape it off. The planting hole should be at least twice the width of the root ball, preferably wider. In all but exceptional circumstances where the soil is very poor, there is no need to incorporate anything into the backfill soil except the loosened soil that came out of the planting hole. Never place ANY soil over the root ball. If a row or grouping of plants is to be installed, excavating or loosening the soil in the entire bed and incorporating organic matter enhances root growth and establishment rate.

Weed suppression during establishment is essential. Apply a 3-inch thick layer of mulch around the plant to help control weed growth. Keep it at least 10 inches from the trunk. If you apply it over the root ball, apply only a one or two inch layer. This allows rainwater and air to easily enter the root ball and keeps the trunk dry. Placing mulch against the trunk or applying too thick a layer above the root ball can kill the plant by oxygen starvation, death of bark, stem and root diseases, prevention of hardening off for winter, vole and other rodent damage to the trunk, keeping soil too wet, or repelling water. Regular irrigation through the first growing season after planting encourages rapid root growth, which is essential for quick plant establishment.

Pests, Diseases and Damaging Agents

Pests: Aphids may cover the leaves with sticky honeydew. Whiteflies and spider mites can be a problem. In northern gardens, Japanese beetles can be a serious pest - they love the flowers.

Diseases: Leaf spots can infect the foliage. Canker can kill branches or entire plants. Flowers may be infected with a blight caused by a fungus.

