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Rubra New Zealand Flax

Phormium tenax 'Rubra'

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Spacing: 4 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Ruby Flax, Wildwood Flax

Description:

A large variety with sword-like leaves that emerge gray-green and mature to a coppery red; beautiful and eye catching as an accent in the garden or massed along borders; also a great center for a large mixed container



Rubra New Zealand Flax
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Rubra New Zealand Flax is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive large sword-like leaves emerge grayish green in spring, turning brick red in color with showy coppery-bronze variegation the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Rubra New Zealand Flax is an open herbaceous annual with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Rubra New Zealand Flax is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



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Planting & Growing

Rubra New Zealand Flax will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 4 feet apart. Although it's not a true annual, this plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. 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.

Rubra New Zealand Flax is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. 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.

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