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Shell Bush

Ocimum labiatum

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ☉ ●

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Pink Sage, Pink Cat's Whiskers

Description:

A wonderful fast growing variety that looks and smells fantastic; small light green, heart shaped leaves with a minty scent and flavor, are perfect for culinary dishes and tea; eye catching spikes of lovely pink flowers rise above create a lovely accent

Edible Qualities

Shell Bush is an annual herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The small fragrant heart-shaped light green leaves can be harvested at any time in the season. The leaves have a minty taste and a pleasant fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Drying
- Seasoning
- Tea

Planting & Growing

Shell Bush will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing 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.



Shell Bush flowers

Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Shell Bush flowers

Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



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This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Shell Bush is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use 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.



Shell Bush in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder