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Mountain Flax
Phormium colensoi

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 5 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Spacing: 3 feet

Sunlight: ☉ ●

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Lesser New Zealand Flax, Coastal Flax

Description:

An attractive variety that features vertical, sword like green leaves and scapes of yellow-orange flowers in summer; eye catching as an accent in the garden or massed along borders; also a great center for a mixed container

Ornamental Features

Mountain Flax features showy spikes of yellow tubular flowers with orange overtones rising above the foliage in mid summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive large sword-like leaves remain grayish green in color throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Mountain Flax is an open herbaceous annual with a more or less rounded form. 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. 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. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Mountain Flax is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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



Mountain Flax
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



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Planting & Growing

Mountain Flax will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 5 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 3 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, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Mountain 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.