Bishop's Hat

Epimedium grandiflorum

Bishop's Hat flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 8 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Spacing: 15 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: Barrenwort, Bishop's Hat, Fairy Wings

Description:

Delicate shooting star-like flowers; shield-shaped green leaves may have reddish mottling in spring and fall; makes a great groundcover that is tolerant of dry shade once established, also grows well in moisture if well-drained

Ornamental Features

Bishop's Hat's attractive heart-shaped leaves emerge red in spring, turning green in color with distinctive antique red edges on a plant with a spreading habit of growth. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous brick red in the fall. It features delicate nodding pink star-shaped flowers with rose spurs rising above the foliage from early spring to early summer.

Landscape Attributes

Bishop's Hat is a dense herbaceous evergreen perennial with a ground-hugging habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees 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

Bishop's Hat is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Bishop's Hat will grow to be about 8 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 15 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the ground. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in partial shade to shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider covering it with a thick layer of mulch in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Bishop's Hat is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.