Hot Lips Sage

Salvia microphylla 'Hot Lips'

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 5 feet

Spacing: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Baby Sage, Graham's Sage, Blackcurrant Sage

Description:

Incredible red and white two-toned blooms are borne above the fine green foliage; though less hardy to temperature it is resilient to most other atmospheric effects including pollution and seasalts

Ornamental Features

Hot Lips Sage has masses of beautiful racemes of fragrant white flowers with red overtones rising above the foliage from late summer to mid fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its small tomentose narrow leaves are green in color. The foliage often turns burgundy in fall.

Landscape Attributes

Hot Lips Sage is an herbaceous annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.



Hot Lips Sage flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Hot Lips Sage in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds 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.

Hot Lips Sage is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Hot Lips Sage in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Hot Lips Sage will grow to be about 24 inches 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 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, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selection of a native North American species. 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.

Hot Lips Sage is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use 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.