

Dwarf Cardamom



Dwarf Cardamom *Alpinia nutans*

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: False Cardamon, Shell Flower, Cardamom Ginger

Description:

Beautiful glossy green leaves have a distinctive cardamom fragrance; shell-like, creamy white flowers bloom prolifically in spring; keep moist but not wet in a rich soil; becomes more hardy once established; great for containers or along borders

Ornamental Features

Dwarf Cardamom features showy spikes of lightly-scented white flowers rising above the foliage in mid spring. Its attractive fragrant narrow leaves emerge light green in spring, turning dark green in color the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Dwarf Cardamom is an herbaceous annual with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. 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 is a relatively low maintenance plant, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. 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.

Dwarf Cardamom is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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



Dwarf Cardamom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Dwarf Cardamom foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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Planting & Growing

Dwarf Cardamom will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 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.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. 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 species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Dwarf Cardamom 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.