



Mexican Pepperleaf

Piper auritum

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ● ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Hoja Santa, Veracruz Pepper, Root Beer Plant

Description:

This variety produces tall vertical stems, supporting large, heart shaped leaves that are fragrant when crushed, emitting a root beer scent; widely used in Mexican cuisine; do not allow soil to dry out between waterings; impressive along borders

Ornamental Features

Mexican Pepperleaf's attractive large fragrant heart-shaped leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season on a plant with an arching habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Mexican Pepperleaf is an herbaceous perennial with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spreading

Mexican Pepperleaf is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Mexican Pepperleaf
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Mexican Pepperleaf foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Mexican Pepperleaf will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Mexican Pepperleaf 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.