



Piggyback Plant
Tolmiea menziesii

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ● ●

Hardiness Zone: 6a

Other Names: Youth On Age, Mother of Thousands Plant

Description:

This native woodland plant features bright green leaves for shady areas; in spring and summer, several wand-like flower stalks produce loose clusters of unusual, nodding, greenish purple to chocolate flowers with yellow anthers; fast growing and adaptable

Ornamental Features

Piggyback Plant features unusual spikes of lightly-scented brown tubular flowers with purple overtones and yellow anthers rising above the foliage from mid spring to early summer. Its attractive tomentose heart-shaped leaves emerge light green in spring, turning green in color the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Piggyback Plant is an 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 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 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.

Piggyback Plant is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets



Piggyback Plant foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Piggyback Plant will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an evergreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in partial shade to shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Piggyback Plant is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. 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. 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.