Bear's Breeches

Acanthus spinosus

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 4 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 6

Description:

Large, spiny leaves are glossy green; beautiful spikes of pink/white flowers;interesting form; remains attractive throughout the season

Ornamental Features

Bear's Breeches features showy spikes of pink hooded flowers with white overtones rising above the foliage in late summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive large spiny lobed leaves remain forest green in color throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Bear's Breeches is an open herbaceous evergreen perennial with a rigidly upright and towering form. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Bear's Breeches is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Bear's Breeches flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Bear's Breeches in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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Planting & Growing

Bear's Breeches will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 4 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant performs well in both full sun and full shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. 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 both summer and winter to conserve soil moisture and protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Bear's Breeches 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.



Bear's Breeches foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder