Chalet
LANDSCAPE · NURSERY · GARDEN CENTER

Chinese Lantern

Physalis alkekengi



Chinese Lantern fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 2

Other Names: Winter Cherry, Japanese Lantern, Ground Cherry

Description:

Chinese or Japanese lanterns are grown primarily for their unique orange-red calyx that resemble illuminated lanterns; great for fall floral arrangements when cut and dried; be careful, because this plant gets around

Ornamental Features

Chinese Lantern features unusual nodding orange flowers dangling from the stems from late summer to early fall. The flowers are excellent for cutting. It features abundant showy khaki (brownish-green) capsules from early fall to late winter. Its pointy leaves are green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous orange in the fall.

Landscape Attributes

Chinese Lantern is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading 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 high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, 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;

- Invasive

Chinese Lantern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Chinese Lantern will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 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 performs well in both full sun and full shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.

Chinese Lantern 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.