

ASTILBE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

INTRODUCTION

- Common name: False Spirea
- Scientific name: *Astilbe chinensis*
- Native to Asia and North America
- Herbaceous perennial with large fern-like foliage and dense plumes of flowers
- Most varieties bloom for a four to six week period in June and July
- Flowers can be white, pink, red, or purple in color
- Grows from 18" to 5' in height
- Grows in zones 4–8

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Grows in partial to full shade; needs protection from the afternoon sun
- Prefers media rich in organic matter
- Requires media to be kept moist at all times
- Feed with a 5-10-5 fertilizer in spring and again during the summer
- Plants should be divided every 3–4 years
- Mulch in winter for protection

PROPAGATION

- Commonly propagated by division of roots, either in spring or fall



- Plant root crowns shallow; cover potential new shoots with ½ inch of soil
- Water well until the new plant is established
- Plants should be spaced 12–24" apart
- Can be grown from seed
- Sow seeds in early spring indoors, or directly into the garden after the soil has warmed

DISORDERS

- Powdery mildew (*Erysiphe polygoni*)
 - White fuzzy coating on upper leaves
 - Foliage will wilt, brown, and drop
 - Reduce humidity and remove infected foliage

- *Fusarium* wilt
 - Young plants wilt and die
 - Insure proper drainage and aeration
- Spider mites
 - Heavy infestations destroy leaves
 - Spray with water or an insecticidal soap
- In general, astilbes are very resistant to pests and diseases

CONSUMER CARE

- In early spring, before new growth emerges, debris from the previous year should be removed
- Plants thrive in a shady flower bed
- Ideal for use as a border to a pond or stream
- Fronds are often used in dried flower arrangements

CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *Astilbe chinensis*
 - ‘Pumila’: dwarf astilbe, 12–15" in height, purplish rose flowers
 - ‘Purple Candles’: violet-red flowers, dark green foliage
 - ‘Visions’: raspberry flowers, bronze green foliage

- ‘Showstar’: Mix of pink, white, and rose flowers

- *Astilbe x arendsii*
 - ‘Bridal Veil’: Large drooping white flowerheads, dark glossy foliage

References

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astilbe>
<http://www.thegardenhelper.com/astilbe.html>
<http://www.yardener.com/Astilbe.html>

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