

Astilbe



The attractive, deeply cut foliage and feathery flower plumes of astilbe add interest to the shady garden nearly year round. They combine well with ferns, Siberian irises, and hostas to give spark and life to the shady garden. Astilbes are easily grown as long as adequate moisture can be provided. The many varieties range from only a few inches to several feet tall making it possible for the gardener to incorporate this wonderful plant into almost any garden plan. In addition, the dried flower stems look nice in the winter garden dusted with snow or sparkled with frost. If picked when only half open, the spikes make good cut flowers to be enjoyed fresh or dried for winter arrangements. Every gardener should consider the beauty astilbes can bring to the perennial bed or border.

When to Plant

Astilbes should be planted in spring or early fall.

Where to Plant

Astilbes need rich, organic soil and plenty of moisture. They do best in partly shaded locations where the plants will not dry out. Protection from the hot, afternoon sun is helpful. Astilbes are especially well-suited to the edges of ponds, streams or other water in the landscape. Good drainage is also important, especially in winter.

How to Plant

Beds for astilbes should be dug to 12 inches deep and the soil amended as needed with peat moss, compost or other organic matter which will retain moisture. Plants should be spaced 1 to 2 feet apart depending on the variety.

Long Term Care

Feed astilbes in spring with a balanced organic fertilizer. Divide overgrown clumps that have stopped flowering well. This is generally every 3 to 4 years. Divide in the spring or early fall. A top dressing of

humus-rich soil around large, established clumps is beneficial. During periods of drought, astilbes must be watered deeply and regularly. Drying out is the biggest threat to the health of astilbes.

Trouble Shooting

Astilbes are virtually disease and insect free, long-lived and easy to maintain.

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