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Variegated Shell Ginger

Alpinia zerumbet 'Variegata'

Variegated Shell Ginger foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Description:

Beautiful large variegated leaves and arching stems create a dramatic tropical effect; will not flower when used as an annual in colder zones; benefits from some mid-day heat protection; keep moist but not wet; great for containers, or along borders

Ornamental Features

Variegated Shell Ginger features showy clusters of fragrant pink flowers with white overtones at the ends of the stems from late winter to late fall. Its attractive large pointy leaves remain bluish-green in color with showy yellow variegation throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Variegated Shell Ginger is an herbaceous annual with a mounded form. 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 usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Variegated Shell Ginger is recommended for the following landscape applications;

Variegated Shell Ginger
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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

Planting & Growing

Variegated Shell Ginger will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial 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. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Variegated Shell Ginger is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used 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.

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